Since independence in 1948, Sri Lanka had an average annual economic growth rate of 4.2 per cent and currently it is 2.6. This growth and Sri Lanka’s market-oriented economic policy had a diverse impact on different sectors of society. With the introduction of open economy in 20th century people became more money oriented in a capitalist society. The rising of cost of living has adversely affected low income groups and the income disparity between the rich and the poor had been widened. While the focus on poverty and poverty alleviation has been a prime concern of the past governments, it continues to remain a grave issue in the country.

Thus, People found new ways of earning money rather than following traditional ways. Among the most of choices, migration for foreign employment became one of the most popular choices due to many reasons. Migration occurs for various reasons such as education, businesses, seeking refuge, training, and employment but the truth behind the migration of Sri Lankan people is mostly poverty, ongoing unemployment problem, and low economic status of salary in Sri Lanka so they choose migration to find quick answer for their economic problems.

There are about 214 million estimated international migrants in the world today which account for 3.1% of the global population. The majority of migrant workers, especially those who migrate to the Middle Easter countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, U.A.E, Qatar, Jordan, Lebanon, and Oman. Most of women from Asia who come with the expectation of working in dignified condition as domestic workers. Out of these female domestic migrant workers constitute a large proportion of today’s migrant worker population of Sri Lanka.
The number of migrant workers departed in 2015 was 263,307 out of which 172,630 (65.56%) were male and 90,677 (34.44%) were female. Out of the total departure of that year 73,278 (27.82%) are housemaids, domestic housekeeping assistants. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, U.A.E, Kuwait and Oman were the major labor receiving countries which have hired over 88.38% of Sri Lankan workers in the year 2015. (source: IT division SLBFE)

Sri Lankan migrant workers’ contribution is the largest source of income in term of foreign exchange brought to our country since 1976. When formal employment migration commenced, foreign employment has generated substantial inflows of remittance at the same time relieving the pressure on unemployment of youth by providing employment abroad. Overall inflows of migrant worker remittances amounted to $ 6980.2 million in the year 2015. this value equals to 948,936.31 million Sri Lankan rupees. One of the most salient features of these inflows is that they reach the remotest corners of the island. Of course, these remittances have contributed towards helping and easing poverty of the Sri Lankan people, but we can never forget that this money has been earned by our brothers’ and sisters’ sweat and blood.

Major sources of foreign exchange earnings from year 2014 and 2015

See the table below (source central bank of Sri Lanka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2014(jan-dec) U$$ Million</th>
<th>2015(jan-dec) U$$ Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worker’s Remittances</td>
<td>5689.7</td>
<td>5787.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; garment</td>
<td>4929.9</td>
<td>4820.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>1628.3</td>
<td>1340.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>1956.1</td>
<td>2305.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber products</td>
<td>889.8</td>
<td>761.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>Remittances Rs. Million</th>
<th>Remittances U$$ Million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>465,166</td>
<td>4116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>569,103</td>
<td>5145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Number of Migrants</td>
<td>Number of Deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>763,980</td>
<td>5985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>827,689</td>
<td>6407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>916,367</td>
<td>7018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>948,936.31</td>
<td>6980.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While migration brings many positive towards social improvement and economic development of a country, as well as an empowering experience for migrant workers, discrimination and abuse is still experienced by many in the process of migrating and at the hands of employers at destination countries.

By the time the migration rate of women as housemaids increased. The increase in female migration is attributed to a number of negative issues. Many of the sectors demanding female labor overseas have a reputation for high levels of exploitation, sexual harassment and abuse. Housemaids frequently undergo a wide range of unexpected hardships before and after their arrival in the country of employment such as employers’ denial of contract terms, unpaid wages, and loss of savings, premature termination of contract, physical and emotional abuse, sexual harassment, rape, and torture that leads to disability, even death. According to SLBFE they are receiving more complaints from female migrant rather than male.

According to national migration policy identified many form of discrimination, exploitation and abuse that migrant workers may face in the destination countries.

1. Violation of employment contracts
2. Incomplete employment contracts
3. Contact between the recruitment agent /agency and the employer
4. Hiring for non-existent jobs
5. Clauses added to the employment contract between the employer and migrant worker
6. Arbitrary termination of contracts
7. Illegal termination
8. Poor working and living condition
9. Very low wages
10. Withholding of wages

11. Work overload

12. No rest day or holiday

13. Inadequate food

14. Harassment and violence

15. Psychological abuse

16. Physical abuse and violence

17. Sexual harassment

18. Sexual violence and rape

19. Health and safety risks and lack of social protection

20. Forced labor

Also the death of migrant workers is a matter of grave concern. Unskilled workers, mainly housemaids are not eligible for legal redress under the laws of the host country and deaths under suspicious circumstances or reports of rape are merely filed as complaints and their perpetrators rarely brought to justice. There are no records of abusive employers ever being investigated or prosecuted. In the case of sexual abuse, the women domestic workers face many social barriers and other constraints in reporting such incident. The most common form of escape from situation of abuse and harassment is to run away and seek refuge in the embassy. In some case migrant workers became psychiatric patients because of sexual abuse and harassment.

Migration affects not only the migrants themselves but also their family members even if they in the country of origin. Gender relations and gender hierarchies in both sending and receiving countries determine the gender specific impact of migration. Women remaining behind when their male relatives (husband or parents) migrate may find themselves co-residing with other male relatives who may restrict their activities outside the home. In many instances, women left behind in the country of origin must undertake income generating activities to compensate for
the income lost by the departure of their male relatives if the later do not send remittances on a regular basis. Adding financial responsibilities to the other responsibilities that women have, such as child rearing, forced women to play a leading role inside their family. Naturally, this fact gave them more strength and major responsibilities.

Especially we have to know what the problems are affecting because of this women migration. Because those women named as mother, sister, wife, daughter, in our society we faced lots of social issues due to their absent.

Most of migrant children were often neglected. Because of this neglect, children at times in bad health, maternal separation and inadequate care arrangement during the migration of mother seriously affected personality development of the children. The deprivation of maternal love, affection, care and security was compounded in certain cases through the neglect or lack of awareness of father or foster care.

Most of migrant families’ children get only primary education except few of them get chance to take secondary education. On the other hand those children don’t have health protection as before. So some of them are left school and finding jobs, some are addicted to drugs, stealing, smoking etc. Most of the time we can hear the child abuse case in this situation. As result those children are deprived of their education as well as their future life too.

Also these children found lack of support both in their housework and schoolwork due to maternal absence. The eldest girl in the family seems to be at a considerable risk to give up schooling during the mother’s absence. Some may even become sexually vulnerable to male family members and friends.

Sri Lanka is a country which already has a huge number of foreign employees. The increase in female migration in Sri Lanka is attributed to a number of factors. The above chapters already point out the effects of foreign migration.

Sri Lanka is a country which has no rigid restrictions about the foreign employment. But most of the countries of the Asian region such as India, Pakistan; Bangladesh, Indonesia, Philippines have already established restriction for the foreign migrants. So Sri Lanka also needs to establish restriction for the foreign migrant especially unskilled female migrant workers. It is necessary to tackle the unauthorized export of female labor to Middle East or to Europe as well as to tackle the pretension and propaganda of false foreign agencies. Most of the western or Middle East countries have better working conditions and relatively better salaries than in Sri
Lanka; so, they may seem as a good solution to the unemployed graduates in Sri Lanka. The government can draw a policy to send only those unemployed graduates to the western countries and Middle East countries. Nonetheless, we must not be tricked by the better wages or higher salaries there; our class brothers and sisters continue to be harshly exploited by their employers, also in these countries.

Also migrant workers and their families have the right to participate in public affairs of their state of origin and to vote and to be elected at elections of that state in accordance with its legislation. If we have voting rights all government will talk about our problem otherwise they can’t hear our voice.

Also we are earning money to our country and when returning to country from jobs abroad that they will face numerous problems at home country. So we should have rights to pension scheme.

Not only this but also government policy and programme must focus on the following factors

- Bilateral agreement and mechanism for the settlement of disputes
- Migrant welfare and facilities in the sending country and host countries
- Welfare or families left behind
- Maximization of remittances and the productive use of remittances
- Skill regulation through training programs
- Set standards for and to negotiate contracts of employment
- Enter into agreements with relevant foreign authorities, governments and employment agencies in order to formalize recruitment agreement.
- Formulate and implement a model contract of employment which ensures fair wages and standard of employment
- Examine the authority of documentation issued to Sri Lanka recruits outside Sri Lanka going abroad for employment
- Stopped sending unskilled women for housemaid work. If foreign employment recruiters are given concessions to import duty free vehicles, the government could recognize the migrant workers ‘contribution to the economy by extending similar concessions.

Also when migrant workers returning to country with their family, they are facing lot of difficulties for searching schools for children because of that government shouldn’t make any arrangements for foreign workers’ children’s education in government schools in Sri Lanka.

Today, all over the world migrant workers facing same problem so we need to be unite all over the world so we can make better situation for all migrant workers. The slash in the face of the capitalist economic system, throughout history, this already regrouped, for the future of migrants life’s struggle, abandon their homeland, brother, sister, we cannot avoid the journey would quietly leave the rural abroad. There is no other way than organizing our migrant workers regardless of their race, religion, caste; this is how we can win the fight for our rights. This is not only Sri Lankan migrant workers; we need to struggle together with all the migrant workers internationally.