Labor Outmigration in Tea Plantation Sector: Evidence from Nuwara-Eliya District

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This study attempts to find out the determinants of labor outmigration from tea plantation sector in Nuwara-eliya district. The cross sectional data used in the study was collected from a survey done in four largest estates in Kotmale division. From each estate 40 households were selected through multi-stage sampling techniques and finally total of 160 household were used. The gathered data were analyzed using frequency, descriptive statistics and independent samples t – test whereas, binary probit regression model was estimated to identify the impact of demographic and economic characteristics on labor outmigration. Results of frequency analysis indicated that, 80% of the respondents have at least one person is migrated and rests of the 20% them don't have migrated members in their family. And the out of 80% of migrant 51.6% of them were migrate to nearby cities while rest of 35.95% and 12.5% were migrated to capital city and abroad respectively. Results derived from independent sample t-test suggested that an average age of household head, an average working members in family, an average income from tea sector and an average other income were significantly differ across migrant and non-migrant families in the study. Results of probit model suggests that work experience in tea estate work, total income earned from tea sector were negatively impact on labor out migration whereas gender, age, working members in household and other income were positively impact on labor migration in the study. According to the respondents, the major reasons for migration from tea sector are economic problems due to low salary, low profile stigma and diversifying their livelihood portfolio. The findings of the study assist the policy makers to formulate the appropriate strategies focus on tea estate households to improve their living conditions through different ways which may reduce the labor out migration from tea sector significantly in future.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Binary probit model, Demographic and economic characteristics, Labor shortage, Migrants and non-migrants.