Recruitment of Temporary Migrant Workers & the Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in Sri Lanka
Program Action Committee (PAC) Meeting March 31, 2017
Ministry of Foreign Employment

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Title: Recruitment of Temporary Migrant Workers & the Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in Sri Lanka

Type: Pilot Project

Duration: 12-13 months
Policy Context

- In March 2016 SLBFE banned Sub-Agents and their ID cards were requested to be returned

- Changes to incentives paid by receiving countries

- ∴ there is new interest to regulate Sub-Agents
Despite the significance of sub-agents in the recruitment process in SL, no systematic study has been devoted to the study of their involvement.

In this changing policy context, the project aims to investigate:

**Research Q:** How does the Sub-Agent’s role in the recruitment process change with the March 2016 SLBFE circular and changes in the incentive/recruitment cost payments by receiving countries?
Design

- Given the informal nature of their operation, it is tedious to study Sub-Agents

- To overcome this empirical challenge, we collect information from the two groups that receive the services of sub-agents
  - migrants
  - licensed agents
Design

Two waves of Surveys

- Each wave will survey
  - a cohort of potential migrants
  - a cohort of current migrant households

- 2 waves are spaced out by 6 months
Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in SL

Intro
details
context
Research Gap

Design
Survey
Qualitative data
Analysis

(Bilesha Weeraratne, PhD.)
Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in SL

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Sample

Sub-agents are most involved in the recruitment of FDWs

(Bilesha Weeraratne, PhD.)

Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in SL

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Sub-agents are most involved in the recruitment of FDWs
Evolving Role of Sub-Agents in SL

Distribution of Recruitment Cost of FDWs

Approx. USD 5000 sent by employer to recruit a FDW

- Incentives to mig: 49%
- Commission to Sub-Agent: 20%
- Recruitment cost: 21%
- Agency fee: 10%

(Bilesha Weeraratne, PhD.)
Sampling

- From each district two DS divisions were randomly selected

- Within each DS division, respondents were randomly selected
## Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First wave</th>
<th>Second wave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potential Migrants</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Migrants</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per District</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey

Sub-contracted to a survey company - KANTAR TNS.  
http://www.tnsglobal.com/who-we-are

CAPI based survey is ongoing
Qualitative data

- Key Informant Interviews (KII)
  - with licensed agents and regulators and if possible with Sub-Agents also
  - to augment survey data and related findings
  - semi-structured face-to-face interviews
  - maximum variation sampling
changes in migrants’ perception about

- Sub-Agents’ role
- SA’s formal status

Examine the causal effect of mig’s perception of “Sub-agent is formal” on incentives.
Thank you