

Rights of the Sri Lankan Female Workers in the International grounds

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Internationally, Sri Lanka ranks low on gender equality indices, and since the 1970's it been a country of origin for low skilled labour migrants. Annual Statistics of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment states that, over 2 million Sri Lankans are working abroad, out of which 49% are females. Of these female migrants, a total of 42% migrated as domestic workers. Migrant worker remittances are the key foreign exchange earning source for Sri Lanka, amounting to a significant amount of the country's GDP, and a source of economic development for nearly one-third of the country's population. The focus of this paper is to view and examine the various challenges encountered by these Sri Lankan female workers who work in the International grounds as domestic-aid and to explore how these female workers contribute to the economy of Sri Lanka. The paper will examine the various violations of International Law with regards to these female workers and ways to avoid such violations by empowering them. Sri Lankan females choose to work as unskilled labourers and seek job opportunities in International grounds, especially in the Middle Eastern countries for the past three decades. There is a progressive increase in the number of female workers who leave Sri Lanka annually and they contribute to bringing in the highest amount of foreign currency to the country's economy. The career journey of these female workers is full of obstacles, challenges and difficulties. Since most these females leave their families behind they risk possible harms to their children left back, family disruptions, deprivation of education for these children and risk of child labor or abuse from current guardians of them. The female worker will also face lack of social and occupational security, lack of recognition, wage discrimination and most importantly difficulties in access to justice. Thus, this can be seen as significant violation of their human rights. The study was done mainly with secondary data obtained from United Nations statistics, along with data obtained from a previous research of a population consisting 300 interviews. The literature affirms that there were many cases where Sri Lankan female workers had to face refusal of payments, violation of their employment contract, physical and mental assault, sexual assaults, and sometimes even death. Sri Lanka is a member of various international treaties and therefore must find means to protect the civil and economic rights of these female workers. The paper recommends that Sri Lanka ought to imply strong policies, international agreements and national laws in order to safeguard the human rights of these female workers. The existing national laws are insufficient since the human rights of these females are violated frequently. The International Laws will provide and protect the female workers and the children left behind, but the existing Sri Lankan system fails to achieve this. This paper recommends domestic laws, policies, and, practices which can be implemented to offer solutions to address the key concerns.

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