

The Sri Lankan women migrant workers in the Middle-East: A study on impact of socio-economic background of their families

Piumi Kankanamge

Assistant Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Ruhuna

Sri Lanka had been a self-sufficient society in the past. However, Sri Lankan society has been changing since its colonization by European powers. Some of the areas that had a significant influence on the changes are: Free education system, Open economy system, Modernization Urbanization and Globalization. On these stages many socio-economic crises were made in the Sri Lankan society and it affected to the family institute. After few decades the socio-economic condition of families got worsen and many people opted to go abroad. Most of them were women who migrated for housemaids jobs in Middle East. The objective of present study is based on the above notion. The research aims to find out what specific socio-economic condition of their families caused married women to migrate to the Middle East. Primary data was collected by the interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Both qualitative and quantitative data was obtained and analysed. The research area is Murutumuraya and Denagama–East Grama Niladari Divisions in the Hakmana Divisional Secretary Area. The data was collected from the 21 families of women migrant workers in the above Grama Niladari Divisions. Factors such as low income, unbearable living expenditure, collapsed family structures (divorce, husband's death, husband's drunkenness etc.), not having one's own house or a house with inadequate facilities, maintenance of families are identified as causes leading to the migration of married women. On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that married women's negative socio-economic background has a direct impact on their labour migration.

Key Words: Family institute, Impact, Middle East, Socio-economic background, Sri Lankan Women migrant workers