

**EXPLOITATION OF DOMESTIC MIGRANT WORKERS FROM
SRI LANKA IN SAUDI ARABIA**



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ABSTRACT

Remittances sent by domestic migrant workers are currently Sri Lanka's main source of foreign exchange earnings; however, the migration might come with a high cost including the various violations of human and labour rights that ranges from salary exploitation to physical and sexual harassment, and sometimes even neglect or torture to the point of death. The objectives of this thesis are to analyze access to justice for women migrant workers when they return from Saudi Arabia complaining of exploitation and physical and sexual harassment, and whether an international legal system with binding bilateral contracts between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia can do anything about this. The research methodology was qualitative with a narrative approach, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and voice recordings with representatives of NGOs and nine domestic workers within districts of Colombo and Galle who had returned from Saudi Arabia. The results of the analysis showed gaps between Sri Lanka's domestic and foreign policies, (i) the bilateral agreements between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia are not legally binding, (ii) the workers complaints do not reach the legal courts; (iii) there is an absence of labour laws protecting domestic migrant workers in Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia leaving these workers vulnerable to exploitations. In conclusion, this research found that there is no access to justice for domestic migrant workers in Sri Lanka against a perpetrator in Saudi Arabia.

**KEY WORDS: ACCESS TO JUSTICE / LEGAL REDRESS / DOMESTIC
MIGRANT WORKERS / KAFALA SYSTEM**

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