



Representation of Migrant Women Workers and their Negotiations with the Nation: A Study of Selected Sri Lankan English Fiction

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Abstract

Migrant women workers are the main income generators of their families and they contribute to the Sri Lankan economy as a vital part of the labour force. This research explores their representations in Sri Lankan English fiction in terms of how they are perceived and negotiate with their identities. The methodology of this study includes a textual analysis of selected Sri Lankan English fiction such as Vijita Fernando's "The Homecoming" (1984), Punyakante Wijenaike's "Anoma" (1996) and Jean Arasanayagam's *The Famished Waterfall* (2004). This research aims to scrutinise the representations of migrant women workers within the dominant ideological framework where women are primarily perceived as the cultural disseminators of their nation. One of the research questions of this study is to determine the extent to which migrant women workers are considered transgressive according to the conventional beliefs and values in the mainstream society where women are symbolically equated to the nation. The other is to inquire what are the ways in which these workers come to terms with their identities, interpersonal relationships and negotiations in their journeys from home to host countries. Both questions are deliberated concerning the representation of migrant women workers in Sri Lankan English fiction. Therefore, this research concludes that the narratives of migrant women workers in Sri Lankan English fiction negotiate with their identities, families and interpersonal negotiations. It also critiques the hegemonic and heteropatriarchal perception of such domestic workers within the dominant ideological framework of the nation.

Keywords: Migrant Women Workers, Sri Lankan English Fiction, Nation, Representation, Negotiations.