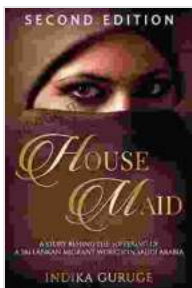


The Heartbreaking Story of Sri Lankan Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia

Sri Lanka is a country with a long history of labor migration. In recent years, Saudi Arabia has become one of the top destinations for Sri Lankan migrant workers, who are primarily employed in low-skilled jobs in the construction, domestic, and service sectors.



HOUSE MAID: A story behind the suffering of a Sri Lankan migrant worker in Saudi Arabia. by Indika Guruge

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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While the opportunity to work abroad can provide much-needed income for Sri Lankan families, the reality for many migrant workers is a far cry from the rosy picture painted by recruitment agencies. Migrant workers in Saudi Arabia often face exploitation, abuse, and even slavery-like conditions.

Reasons for Migration

The decision to migrate to Saudi Arabia is often a difficult one for Sri Lankans. Many are driven by poverty and a lack of job opportunities at home. Others are lured by the promise of high wages and a better life.

However, the reality is that most Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia are paid well below the minimum wage and are forced to live in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. They are also often subjected to long hours of work, verbal and physical abuse, and even sexual exploitation.

Challenges Faced by Migrant Workers

The challenges faced by Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia are numerous and complex. Some of the most common challenges include:

- **Exploitation and Abuse:** Migrant workers are often exploited by their employers, who may refuse to pay their wages, force them to work long hours without overtime pay, and subject them to verbal and physical abuse.
- **Unsafe Working Conditions:** Many Sri Lankan migrant workers are employed in dangerous and unsanitary working conditions, which can lead to injuries and illnesses.
- **Poor Living Conditions:** Migrant workers often live in overcrowded and unsanitary housing, which can lead to a variety of health problems.
- **Lack of Legal Protection:** Migrant workers are often not aware of their rights under Saudi Arabian law and are therefore vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

- **Trafficking:** Some Sri Lankan migrant workers are victims of trafficking, which involves being forced or deceived into working in Saudi Arabia against their will.

Urgent Need for Reform

The situation for Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia is a humanitarian crisis that requires urgent action. The government of Sri Lanka must take steps to protect its citizens from exploitation and abuse, and the government of Saudi Arabia must do more to uphold the rights of migrant workers.

Some of the reforms that are needed include:

- **Increased regulation of recruitment agencies:** Recruitment agencies should be closely regulated to ensure that they are not involved in trafficking or other forms of exploitation.
- **Better protection of migrant workers' rights:** Sri Lankan migrant workers should be made aware of their rights under Saudi Arabian law and should have access to legal aid if they need it.
- **Improved working conditions:** Saudi Arabian employers should be required to provide migrant workers with safe and sanitary working conditions and fair wages.
- **Increased cooperation between Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia:** The two governments should work together to address the challenges faced by Sri Lankan migrant workers.

The suffering of Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia is a stain on the conscience of both countries. It is a reminder that the global economy is

built on the backs of exploited workers, and that the rights of migrant workers must be protected.

The time for action is now. The governments of Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia must take steps to end the exploitation and abuse of Sri Lankan migrant workers, and to ensure that they are treated with dignity and respect.

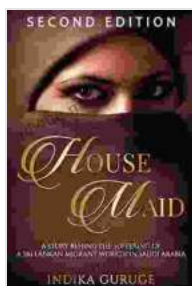


A group of Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia (Photo: The Atlantic)

Further Reading:

- Human Rights Watch: "Kafala System: Exploitation and Abuse of Migrant Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia"
- The Guardian: "Sri Lankan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia 'face abuse and exploitation'"

- Al Jazeera: "Sri Lankan migrant worker in Saudi Arabia who was tortured returns home"



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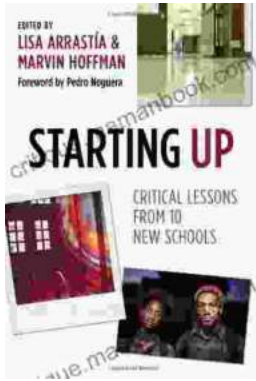
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