

Women's Rights in Urban Sri Lanka.
(With special reference to Papiliyana)

by

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(Registration Number: - GS/MA/soc/2649/06)

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Thesis submitted to the University of Sri Jayawardenapura for the
award of the Master of Arts Degree in Sociology.

Declaration of the candidate (Registration Number: - GS/MA/soc/2649/06)

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Mr. W. M Dhanapala Wijesinghe and a report on this has not been submitted in whole and in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree or Diploma.

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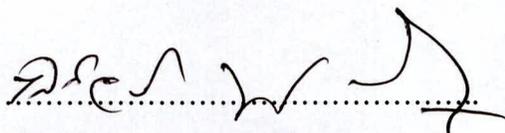
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Viva- Voice Examination M.A Degree - S.R Jasim

This is to certify that all minor corrections, additions and amendments pointed out at the Viva - Voice Examination of the thesis report submitted by S .R Jasim (Reg No:- GS/MA/soc/2649/06) have been properly done in accordance with the comments and suggestions made by examiners.



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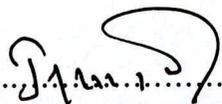
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Declaration by the Head of Department

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this thesis is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation.

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Abbreviation

CEDAW - Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CENWOR - Center for Women's Research

CTS - Conflict Tactics Scale

EPZ - Export Processing Zone

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GDI - Gender Development Index

GGGI - Global Gender Gap Index

HDI - Human Development Indicator

ILO - International Labour Organization

MFA - Multi-Fibre Agreement

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

PO - Protection Order

UN - United Nation

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

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ABSTRACT

The study was aimed to know women's role in awareness of their rights. Attempts are made to observe the importance of women to acknowledge their rights in order to gain their achievements in the social development. It deals with women who live in a semi-urban area with a mixture of different ethnic groups. The thesis examines women's contribution in decision making specialty.

The importance of the thesis is concerned with the problems related to Papiliyana women who are working as well as housewives. It probes in to how far women are aware of their rights and in which manner they have gained them. Reason as to why women's participation hinders in decision making is also a main issue.

The objectives of the study are to identify women's rights in Papiliyana, to reveal women's awareness of their rights and the level of awareness and to know as to what extent women employ their rights.

This thesis is a result of observation and field work based on women's rights. The research was administered through a structured questionnaire and by engaging in extended informal interviews with working women. Some of the house wives participate in income earning activities within the neighborhood itself and did not venture far to earn

their living. It was possible to observe Inter-personal Corporation as well as conflicts among the inhabitants.

Findings depict that women's marriage age has increased because of the increase of educational degree. Finding also reveals that personal income of urban women is the most important factors determining a higher social status while women with distressed conditions including mental and physical disabilities were found to have a lower social status. Results show that among ten pre-selected attributes relating to gender, the respondents were able to be familiar with gender prejudice with respect to household violence, society participation, inheritance of possessions rights, timing of marriage and divorce rights. When dealing with Papiliyana area, it is found that women are unaware of their rights because of lack of education, customary ideas and male supremacy.

Another area in which research has been weak or nonexistent is the informal sector and the micro enterprises or self-employment in which a substantial proportion of women are engaged.

Further research could be suggested in gender role stereotypes imbedded in the perceptions of policymakers, administrators and employers, and internalized by women and men are reflected in social and economic policies and programs and political participation.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This thesis is concerned with women's role in awareness of their rights. Attempts are made to analyze the importance of women to acknowledge their rights in order to gain their achievements in the social enhancement. It deals with women who live in a semi-urban area with a mixture of different ethnic groups. The thesis examines women's participation in decision making sphere. Thus the hypothesis of the thesis is based on the fact as to what extent women have attempted to be aware of their rights in spite of the obstacles that they face at home and in work place.

Although there are numerous programs based on women and children's lives enhancement, less concentration is paid to the awareness of women in relation to their rights. Even though we are exposed to modern knowledge, women are not passionate to protect their achievements. This statement is widely discussed in the thesis.

The patriarchal social structure, ethnicity and religion, gendered uniqueness, long-established views are some of the factors that restrict women to identify their roles in social order. The Government and existing development ideology rarely confront the power within the gendered construction.

This thesis is a result of observation and field work based on women's rights. The central question address is: Are women aware of their rights? Following from this arise several other questions: To what extent women are aware of their rights? Have they taken active decisions to avoid the discrimination they felt in terms of patriarchy, if so how they have managed to do so, how is discrimination linked with education and related aspects?

Women are the basic rudiments of the families. Their attentiveness in special fields helps he substructures – families – of the society to be more stable. Under the influence of being aware of marriage rights, the oppression of the women is decreased and their pleasure from married life is enlarged. Women's awareness depends on a variety of factors including financial, emotional, social, cognitive and political scope. Awareness of marriage rights causes persons to marry on purpose. Therefore, unwanted consequences of married life are decreased through being aware of marriage rights. Consciousness of women's rights affects on the stability of family and society. Marriage refers to a public and legal practice through which the union of a partner is formed. The family stability depends on the basic rules. Today, Human right is one of the major issues which emphasizes mainly on the women rights and denies the women preference. The main problem of the modern societies is unawareness of human rights. Lack of knowledge of such rights causes them to be ineffective. It is believed that peace is embedded in human rights. It is also argued that family rights reassurance the family immovability and these rights are robustly paid attention by social scientist.