

**DIASPORA HUSBANDS AND AWAITING WIVES:  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE POST-WAR  
RURAL AREA IN JAFFNA**

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**Introduction**

Diaspora is an increasingly popular term used to refer to groups of people living outside of its country of origin. With the rapid increase of telecommunication, mass media and transportation, people who are dispersed in the world have started to maintain close connections with their homelands and co-ethnics and see themselves as members of a global diaspora that span the national boundaries of the nation state( Ben-Rafael, 2013). Jaffna was battered by the war for over three decades. Normalcy is gradually returning to Jaffna finally after the end of the war in May 2009. There are main factors that cause outmigration from the country. They can be categorized into four broad types as political factors, economic factors, social and psychological factors. However, over three decades of the war-related political situation was the main factor for Tamils living outside of the country in Northern Sri Lanka including Jaffna. For instance, Sri Lankan Diasporas living in Australia, Canada or UK etc.

Within this context, one of the major issues that people of rural in post-war Jaffna face is the inability to achieve of marriage life of women. This situation is due to number of reason: women with disabilities, widowhood, divorce, dependency, abortion and illegal pregnancy, increment of unmarried women, affect of dowry system, rape, separation, addiction of western culture, male migration and Diaspora husbands etc. Women marriage issue becomes even a social problem in Jaffna after post war it is being realized by women living in rural space. There are a number of areas from the rural women in Jaffna have been severely identified as awaiting wives. Therefore, Diasporas husband and awaiting wives become an important topic in the post war rural Jaffna due to many reasons.

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## Objective

This study looks to understand the social background of awaiting wives by particularly focusing on the post war rural space in Jaffna. Also, the aim of this study is to assess the social implications of marriage on post-war rural Jaffna Diaspora husbands and awaiting wives.

## Research Questions

The research addressed two research questions,

- I. What is the casual relationship between Diaspora husbands and awaiting wives?
- II. How does a traditional rural structure exercise their marriage status within the Diaspora arena?

## Methodologies/ Experimental Design

### Research site

The study was conducted in a selected village namely Kaithady, Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat of Jaffna district, Sri Lanka, an area predominantly occupied by Tamils Hindus, but there are some Christians as well. It is located in the southern part of Jaffna district. It is an island village about 11 kilometers away from the capital of Jaffna situated on the A9 road from Kandy to Jaffna. Kaithady is divided into 7 villages which come under the administration. 10,000 the composition of the population by religion is Hindu 98 % Christians 2 % the main building blocks of the local economy of Kaithady comprise: agriculture the cultivation of paddy, coconut, vegetables, tobacco. There are a number of male migrated from their families and it has increased on during and after the post-war for many reasons.



### Sampling

This study reported the experiences of 88 members. From August 2013 to December 2016, 88 members of awaiting wives (64) and diaspora husbands (24) who were referred to the study at a rural level. They were

interviewed through the purposive sampling. This study was conducted while the wives were still on wait for a visa for over three years.

### **Data collection**

This study was conducted in qualitative methods. Qualitative research very much related to narrative and narrative story telling method. Qualitative information collected by methods such as case studies. As a primary data collection method of this study examining a real situation, the best methodology is the case study approach (Yin 2004:1) Further, the study is an explanatory one looking at the experiences of Diaspora husbands and awaiting wives in the selected rural space. The secondary data for the study was obtained from existing literature as well as recorded available in the offices of the selected area.

### **Data Analysis**

Qualitative research provides detailed description and analysis of the quality, or the substance of the human experience. The qualitative data analysis method was used as an analytical tool. This work carried out within a framework of grounded theory. Grounded theory is a particularly qualitative methodology which seeks to develop conceptual knowledge and frameworks that are grounded in the individual experience of research participants. Diaspora husbands and awaiting wives stories play the entire informant role in the method of qualitative analysis because this analysis tells us about the meaning of interpretation of their everyday lives in rural own stories, feelings, emotion, and experiences.

### **Results and Discussion**

This study was conducted while the wives were still on wait for husband visa for over three years. Findings indicate that among the study groups there was a significant factor that the most influential for awaiting wives, especially regarding awaiting wives through their day-to-day life events, situations, and their marriage experiences based on grounded theory method.

This study found that there are many reasons making the male Diaspora to the outside of rural in Jaffna. They are the economic reward,

marriage, expecting more dowry, making the geographical distance from their family, education (with students *vi sa*), political conditions were the most influential factors in the decision to Diaspora for the middle east and another part of the world. From the rural Diaspora, seeking better security, their family members and other personal circumstances influential factors in the decision to out-migration in during and after the post-war in Jaffna.

There is more male living in the Middle East countries to work as a contract based labour in post-war rural Jaffna. However, this study focused only Diasporas husbands living in Australia, Canada or UK with visa and temporary visa.

The study found that there many awaiting wives of the rural, especially the girls with age 20 - 29 after their marriage. The age was an important factor for selection of life partner. According to males seems to be independent in making decision of their partner including age for marriage. But female seems to be not like the male. Therefore, this study has found new patterns of marriage structure in the post-war rural which is identified as age range of marriage, a marriage of aged people young girls and exporting brides.

Many women have to raise their standard living and improve opportunities of their family members especially need of others, other personal wishes and some of influential factors which effect them to get marry person and waiting for husbands in the post-war rural areas. The family members, rural community/ neighbours relationship also emerged as important factors in the selection of married partner from outside of the country. It is evident from the rural area the data that female aspire to shift to the outside of the country after their marriage. Male tends to marry within the village to maintain their caste system and migrate to the village after their marriage whereas the male has a citizen for the living. In post-war rural, since, this is a *subculture* among the village as an arranged married with a great deal for getting dowry as well. Therefore, allow the most important decision of marriage to taken by the partners, their parents and community. However, the reason for waiting life is aspired by both husband and wife. The study was conducted while the 75 % wives were still on waiting for a visa for over three years. In this context, Diaspora

husbands give the more traditional wives a *new self- confidence and status* which impact their position in the household positively in rural area.

### **Conclusion**

This study especially focuses on two major components such as Diaspora husbands and awaiting wives in post war rural in Jaffna. Under these components, the result of the study confirms that the most influential social economic factors affecting the life of awaiting wives with marriage experienced in rural are, age, a level of education, a number of members of the family and way of income level etc. Also, this study has found new patterns of marriage structure in the post-war rural which is identified as age range of marriage, a marriage of aged people young girls and exporting brides. On the other hand, this study briefly discusses demographical and socio economic impact of womens age marriage and marriage life.

**Keywords:** Diaspora husbands, Awaiting wives, Post-war, Jaffna rural areas

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