



Faculty of Graduate Studies

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University



**Impacts of Bigamy on Women's Rights in Sri Lanka with
Special Reference to Convention on the Elimination of All
Forms of Discrimination against Women: A comparative
study with India**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Laws in
International Law

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the impact of bigamy on women's rights in Sri Lanka, by giving a special focus on the general law of the country and special reference to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Bigamy is marrying someone while already married to another without dissolving the first marriage. This is an illegal act as per the criminal law of the country. But still, it is in practice creating legal consequences. This leads to several cases of illegal marriages. Bigamy, the practice of marrying someone while already married, poses significant challenges for affected women, including emotional distress, financial instability and legal complexities. Despite being criminalized under Sri Lankan law, ambiguities in its application lead to numerous cases of illegal marriages. Sri Lanka as a member country of CEDAW must protect women's rights, especially from the grass level. But many women's rights are violated within bigamous marriages. Though there are legislations to protect women's rights and the crime of bigamy in Sri Lanka they are not productive. By comparing India, this study examines the legal mechanisms to avoid bigamy and protect women's rights, identifying successful solutions and policies. Analyzing penalties, legal protections, and support systems in India suggests legal reforms in Sri Lanka. This study seeks to concentrate on gaps in prevailing legislation and improve protections for women's rights in bigamous marriages. This research contributes to the study of women's rights violations in bigamous marriages and suggests productive measures to safeguard women's rights in Sri Lanka.

Key words – Bigamy, Women's Rights, CEDAW, Legal Framework, Legal reform