

**NAMING, TRANSLATION AND TRANSFORMING  
SINHALA MIDDLE-CLASS WOMANHOOD:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SELECTED TEXTS  
AND THEIR TRANSLATIONS INTO SINHALA**

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The present study engages in a comparative textual analysis of selected texts to unpack their portrayal of naming practices as role-players in shaping Sinhala middle-class womanhood. The selected texts are Marie Musaeus Higgins' *Stories from the History of Ceylon for Children* and *Leela's Dreams*, and their selected Sinhala translations. The study recognizes naming and renaming as acts that translate womanhood in relation to contemporary Sinhala nationalisms of the early 20th and early 21st centuries. The purpose of the study is to explore the significance of naming practices in reconfiguring, expanding, or shrinking the category of the Sinhala middle-class woman. The study identifies Sinhala nationalism as the main force that guides the naming of Sinhala middle-class women. Sinhala nationalism engages in a clever play with naming, and the literature such as Higgins' work produced during the time endorses such play. It recognizes the importance of naming in initiating women as authentic subjects of an emergent modern Sinhala nation. Therefore, through comparative textual analysis of the selected texts and their translations, the study explores how names act as signifiers of ideal Sinhala middle-class womanhood in the backdrop of Sinhala nationalism. It also recognizes the shades of class and race that influence this act of naming the Sinhala middle-class woman. The study is interdisciplinary, as it draws from Translation Studies, Language Studies, Poststructuralism, and Feminism to provide a broader understanding of the cultural, political, and ideological factors that determined naming practices in the early 20th and early 21st centuries and how those influenced the narration and translation of names and naming by Marie Higgins and the translators of the selected texts. The analysis highlights the dominance of Sinhala nationalistic thoughts in the early 20th and early 21st naming practices of the Sinhala community. It also recognizes the presence of some residues of Anglophilia or Eurocentrism embedded in some of the naming practices of the community. The names of the period also carry culturally specific senses or meanings related to the ideal qualities and attributes that the Sinhala middle-class woman must embody. Therefore, this study concludes that naming constellates women within frameworks of tradition and authenticity that align with the Sinhala nationalist projects.

**Keywords:** Woman, naming, translation, authenticity

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