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Migration, Vulnerability and Crime: Focusing on Sri Lankan Students and Specified Skilled Workers in Japan

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Abstract: The number of foreigners in Japan has increased significantly in recent years due to the strategies the government has applied as a solution for labor shortage. However, the largely mono-cultural Japanese society has started expressing dissatisfaction highlighting the crimes committed by foreigners. Meanwhile, the number of Sri Lankans who migrate to Japan for study and work purposes has been largely increasing. Consequently, this research was conducted to understand current situations experienced by Sri Lankan students and workers in Japan and to explore the vulnerabilities and risk factors for them and suggest recommendations to mitigate such difficulties. Using convenience sampling, primary data was collected through a structured online questionnaire completed by 112 Sri Lankan migrants residing in Japan. Qualitative data were generated from 15 semi-structured interviews with Sri Lankan students, SSW workers, long-term residents, and Japanese-language instructors in Sri Lanka. The interviews were thematically analysed to identify recurring patterns of vulnerability and adaptation. The research concludes that Unwelcome, Foreigners as Temporary Outsiders, Ignorance, Insecure, Cheated - which in other words vulnerability can play some role in Crime, indicating that if the migrants are less vulnerable, apart from the organised crimes, some of the crimes too might decline to some extent. Further concluded that given Japan's labor shortages and opening doors to foreigners, the Japanese people should be made aware of the need of foreigners and how to tolerate different cultures. Intercultural events and seminars for Japanese citizens to understand how to accept differences and eliminate prejudice against foreigners and explanatory sessions of current rules and regulations to foreigners in easily understandable languages are recommended. Further, recommendations to Sri Lanka include a carefully planned curricular for Japanese language education, establishment of a proper channel between the two countries to regularise the visa process, and training programs that provide awareness of sociocultural background and legal system in Japan. These measures would prepare those who migrate to Japan for study or work purposes, ultimately contributing to sustainable development with focus on SDG4 and SDG13.

Keywords: Crime, Japanese Languages Education, Resistance of Japanese Society, Sri Lankan Students & SSW Migrants in Japan, Vulnerability

Introduction

Human beings have been moving from place to place for social, economic, or political reasons from their earliest days [1]. This ancient phenomenon is defined as 'migration,' which originates from the Latin word "migratio," meaning "a moving" or "a change of residence." Today, migration in its diverse forms and complexities has emerged as a prominent and intricate global phenomenon that transcends geographical, social, and cultural boundaries [2].

Over time, the scope and scale of migration have expanded, driven by a combination of economic opportunities, political instability, environmental changes, and social networks, prompting people to move across borders more frequently and in increasingly diverse ways. Researchers explain the movement of people internationally in terms of push-pull dynamics in which domestic economic conditions push people into more developed economies, while labor shortages and development levels in other countries. For example, since a few years ago, Japan has been pulling foreign labor [3]. With pertaining to Sri Lanka, Kaluarachchi & Jayathilake [4] assume that migration is influenced by push factors arising from unfavorable economic, political and social conditions and pull factors associated with favorable conditions in destination countries such as higher anticipated wages, robust social security systems, and political stability.

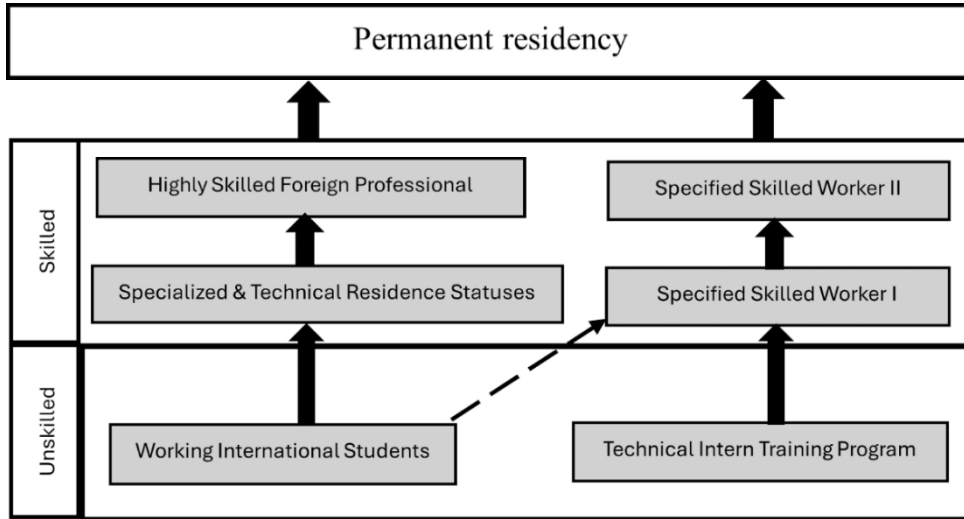
Guided by these push-pull factors, Sri Lankans primarily migrate through labor migration, educational migration, and some proportion moving for family reunification. Jayasuriya [5] observes that the economic pressure faced by the population has triggered a sudden surge in migration, especially for labor migration, with many people desperately seeking earnings elsewhere to secure better livelihoods. Consequently, the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) reports that 144,379 Sri Lankans have migrated for employment during the first six months of 2025 [6]. In this context, Japan has emerged as a prominent destination for Sri Lankan migrants. Japan, as a developed industrial nation with decreasing birth rates, ageing population and declining workforce, increasingly depends on foreign labor [7]. This alignment of labor demand in Japan with migration pressures from Sri Lanka has made Japan an increasingly accessible and desirable destination for Sri Lankan labor migration.

One of the main pathways for Sri Lankan labor migration to Japan is through the Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) program. Introduced through the 2019 amendment to the Immigration Control Act, the program created two SSW visa categories (I and II) covering 16 industries, and the program aims to address the labor shortage in Japan by admitting foreign workers with sector-specific skills, assessed through aptitude tests [8].

In regard to educational migration, the intense competition for university admission in Sri Lanka prompts many students to seek study opportunities abroad. This trend is reinforced by the broader inclination of the country's educated and highly skilled workforce to pursue better prospects overseas. As Weeraratne et al. [9] note, student migration has become one of the principal mechanisms through which these individuals access foreign educational and career pathways. In this context, Japan has become a comparatively accessible option for Sri Lankan students, offering clear pathways from study to employment, as the country has actively promoted the increase of international students, who have also become an integral part of their foreign workforce. International students in Japan are allowed to work up to 28 hours per week during the school term and up to 40 hours during vacation periods [8] which have resulted in the existence of two types of student workers in Japan: those whose primary purpose is education but engage in part-time work to offset living and tuition costs, and those whose primary purpose is employment but utilise the student visa as a pathway to entry. Many students subsequently transition into work visas, including the Specified Skilled Worker category, and some eventually obtain permanent residency through these sequential migration opportunities.

Figure 1 illustrates how Japan facilitates the migration pathways of labor and educational migration at present.

Figure 1: The Current Migration pathways leading to Permanent residency in Japan



Source: Rehm [8]

International students in Japan who are from Sri Lanka can be categorised into two groups: those who enrolled in higher education institutions, and those attending Japanese language institutes. In 2023, Sri Lanka ranked 7th in terms of the total number of international students in Japan, rising to 6th place in 2024, reflecting a noticeable increase in migration. This rise is particularly driven by enrollment in language schools, indicating a growing trend of students entering Japan with the intention of engaging in lower-skilled labor through part-time work or sequential migration pathways. Table 2 presents the total number of Sri Lankan students in Japan from 2020 to 2024, along with their share as a percentage of the overall international student population in Japan. The number of Sri Lankan students has almost doubled in 2024 compared with the previous year.

Table 1: International Students in Japan (2020-2024)

Sri Lankan students in Japan		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Total	Amount	12,269	6,819	3,857	3,762	5,238
	% of total	3.6%	2.4%	1.7%	1.6%	1.9%
At Higher Education Institutions in Japan	Amount	5,860	2,532	2,390	3,228	4,770
	% of total	2.6%	1.3%	1.3%	1.6%	2.2%
At Japanese Language Institutes in Japan	Amount	6,409	4,287	1,467	534	468
	% of total	6%	4.7%	3%	1.3%	0.8%

Source: Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) [10-14]

Literature

Migration often results in placing individuals in unfamiliar social, cultural and economic environments, rendering them a vulnerable group susceptible to a variety of risks. The Glossary on Migration of the International Organization for Migration [15] defines a Vulnerable Group as “Depending on the context, any group or sector of society that is at higher risk of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, social disadvantage, or economic hardship than other groups within the State. Gilodi et al. [16] further emphasize that groups of vulnerability are also at higher risk in periods of conflict, crisis or disasters. Migrants in vulnerable situations were similarly defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR) as “Migrants who are unable to effectively enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer’s heightened duty of care” [16]. In the context of migrants, susceptibility to these risks is compounded by the constraints of limited access to legal, social, and economic resources, which alter their well-being and interactions within the host society, along with influencing their interactions with crime, both as potential victims and, in some contexts, as perpetrators.

In the case of Japan, focusing on ‘*rainichi*’ (Japan-visiting) foreigners, Yamamoto [17] notes that several researchers have documented that immigrants face various forms of structural constraints, such as the subordinate and vulnerable position of foreign workers in the workplace, the dehumanizing condition of smuggling, and social exclusion and discrimination against them. Predominantly, these structural and social constraints are associated with economic pressures, which further aggravate the vulnerability of migrants, and Eraliev [18] elaborates this by noting that immigrants often migrate to high-income countries seeking economic opportunities but face institutional barriers that limit legitimate means to achieve culturally valued goals, such as supporting family through remittances, and increasing pressures to engage in deviant behavior compared to even the most economically deprived native-born population. Observing the societal situation on this factor with reference to Japan, Yamamoto [17] underlines the fact that the gap between the big goal they need to attain and the restricted means available to them makes unauthorized migrants likely suspects of crime in the eyes of law enforcement.

Public perceptions on migrants of Japanese people often mirror this suspicion, with the most expressing negative attitudes toward migrants ultimately aggravating their vulnerability and creating a contrast between migrants and Japanese people. As noted by Yamamoto [19], in an opinion poll conducted in 1995 by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), sixty-four percent of Japanese respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with the statement “Immigration increases the crime rate.”, which indicated that Japanese are more likely to believe that increased immigration would be a crime hazard compared to their American and German counterparts. Yamamoto further observes in another opinion poll by 2004 Asahi Shinbun, 71% of the respondents reported that they “greatly” or “somewhat” felt the fear of being victimized by foreign criminals.

In terms of finding a solution by building a relationship to this issue, findings of Otsuki [20] shows that more than half the immigrants (65.9%) supported “integrated coexistence.”, while only 19.7% of Japanese people supported it and 33.8% supported “exclusionary coexistence”, which shows the depth of the vulnerable situations experienced by migrants in Japan. As an illustration to this, the findings of Marathe & Egitim on minority-group members experience on Japanese work settings indicated that the participants experienced certain challenges including rigid workplace norms, a hierarchical yet ambiguous communication style, the language barrier, and a gender gap during their adaptation to their workplace environment which appeared to make it more challenging to communicate and build relationships with their colleagues [7]. It was also noted that most people in Japan remain opposed to immigration despite any economic rationale [21] even with a relatively small foreign population and few chances for even superficial contact.

However, as cited in Green et al. [22], despite public opinion polls frequently linking immigration to crime, empirical evidence typically demonstrates either no relationship between immigration and crime, or a negative association where areas with higher concentrations of immigrants in fact may have comparatively lower levels of crime. While overall arrests of foreign nationals for criminal offences are clearly declining, and areas like drug-related offences and immigration violations are increasing. Inoue [23] highlights that socioeconomic factors like poverty and economic hardships, and cultural and social factors like cultural differences and difficulties adapting to Japanese society, can lead to deep misunderstandings, feelings of isolation and alienation, making individuals vulnerable to negative influences that lead to foreigners’ involvement in crime.

Regarding the empirical studies on this, Coccina et al. [24] finds based on the statistics of 38 European countries, the Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDPPC) is positively associated with immigration, sexual violence, and theft, but negatively associated with unemployment rate and income inequality. In contrast to this finding, according to a panel

data of 30 OECD countries from 1988 to 2018, the short-run results and long-run results indicated that immigrants have no significant relationship with considered crimes [25].

In contrast to the Western countries, there is very little empirical work on the relationship between foreign immigrants and crime using Japanese data which demonstrate contrasting findings. Horiuchi [26] notes on a study conducted by Kobayashi in 2010, who used Japanese data from 1995 to 2006 to estimate the effects of the fraction of foreign residents in a prefecture on the prefecture's crime rates. In this study, Kobayashi concluded that a higher proportion of foreign residents is related to higher violent crime rates but found no evidence that increases in foreign population affected total crime rates or property crime rates. Horiuchi's own findings also suggest that there is a positive correlation between the percentage of foreign residents and the property crime rate and further finds that the percentage of foreign residents in a prefecture is not related to total crime rates and violent crime rates in that prefecture.

In divergence to these findings, Green et al. [22] observe a negative association between overall immigrant population size and crime. However, they also find that prefectures with higher concentrations of Chinese and Filipino nationals have relatively higher crime rates, while those with higher concentrations of Vietnamese and Koreans appear to have comparatively lower levels of crime. Further they observe that concentrations of most visa types, with the exception of the engineer/humanities visa, have a positive relationship with crime rates. This finding emphasises on the need of empirical studies with relation to migrants and crime with specification to nationality of migrants and the visa status.

In regard to Sri Lankans in Japan, despite conducting broader studies on socio-economic impacts of migration and human rights, research on the vulnerability of migrants and its relation to criminality remains underdeveloped, as no empirical studies have been identified.

Significance of the study

The number of Sri Lankan migrants in Japan has increased drastically in recent years. According to the statistics of the embassy of Sri Lanka in Japan, in 2024 the number has almost doubled within one year (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Sri Lankans residing in Japan

2023- June	2023 - December	2024 - June	2024 - December
37,251	46,949	56,179	63,472

Source: The Embassy of Sri Lanka in Tokyo, Japan [27]

The push reason for the sudden growth of Sri Lankan migrants could be the economic downfall experienced by Sri Lanka which was happening over a few decades but fast tracked by the COVID 19 outbreak. The pull reason for the sudden growth from the side of Japan is the labor shortage Japan is experiencing due to decreasing population as a result of poor birth rates as well as increase of elderly population. In 2019, Japan opened the SSW visa category to welcome blue-collar foreign workers to engage in 14 select industries [8,28], at the beginning and now they have increased it to 16 industries. From Sri Lanka they are welcoming workers to Nursing Care, Building Cleaning Management, Construction Industry, Aviation Industry, Accommodation Industry, Automobile Transportation Business, Agriculture and Food Service Industry. Within Sri Lanka there is a huge demand for Japanese languages studies as the applicants must complete Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) Level 4 or the Japan Foundation Test (JFT) Basic and the specific Skill test as the eligibility for SSW visa. The increased number of Sri Lankan population in Japan reflects the current push and pull factors in Sri Lanka and Japan.

However, Japanese society is a "largely mono-cultural nation and the Japanese people are likely to be allergic to the term 'immigrants'", there are recent incidents that Japanese people have started showing their dissatisfaction of having many foreigners. One of the classic examples is the recent political developments in Japan. Asahi Newspaper reported the following on 2nd October 2025.

Outside a train station near Tokyo, hundreds of people cheer as Sohei Kamiya, head of the surging nationalist party Sanseito, criticizes Japan's rapidly growing foreign population.

As opponents, separated by uniformed police and bodyguards, accuse him of racism, Kamiya shouts back, saying he is only talking common sense.

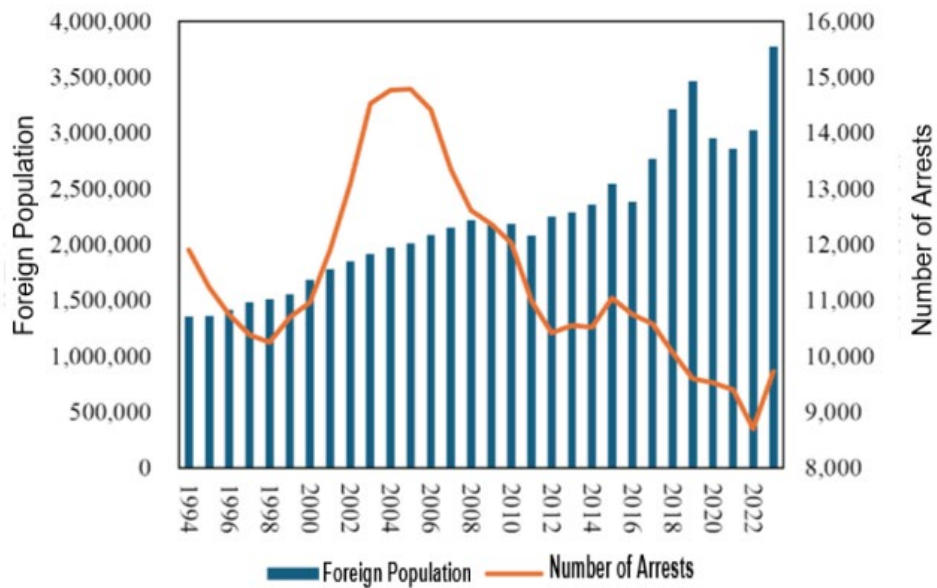
Sanseito, while still a minor party, made big gains in July’s parliamentary election, and Kamiya’s “Japanese First” platform of anti-globalism, anti-immigration and anti-liberalism is gaining broader traction ahead of a ruling party vote Saturday that will choose the likely next prime minister.

Anti-immigrant policies, which allow populists to vent their dissatisfaction on easy targets, are appealing to more Japanese as they struggle with dwindling salaries, rising prices and bleak future outlooks.

“Many Japanese are frustrated by these problems, though we are too reserved to speak out. Mr. Kamiya is spelling them all out for us,” said Kenzo Hagiya, a retiree in the audience who said the “foreigner problem” is one of his biggest concerns. [29]

More and more news covering crimes committed by foreigners are telecasted in Japanese News. Some reports highlight the number of crimes that foreigners have committed have increased. At the same time some researchers say it has to be analysed in relation to the number of increased foreigners in Japan.

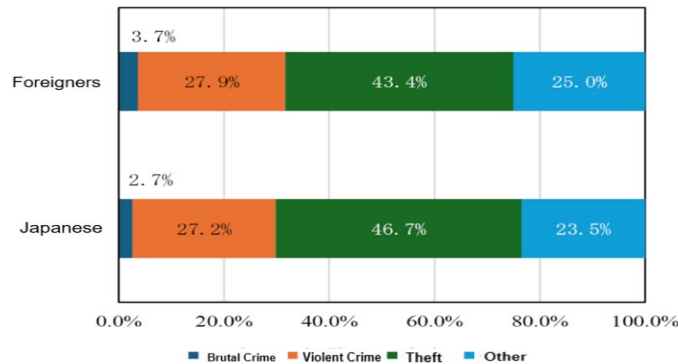
Chart 1: Trends in the foreign population and the number of arrests of foreigners for criminal offenses



Source: [30] based on crime statistics (National Police Agency) etc.

Looking at the number of arrests relative to the foreign population, it seems the number is not getting any higher.

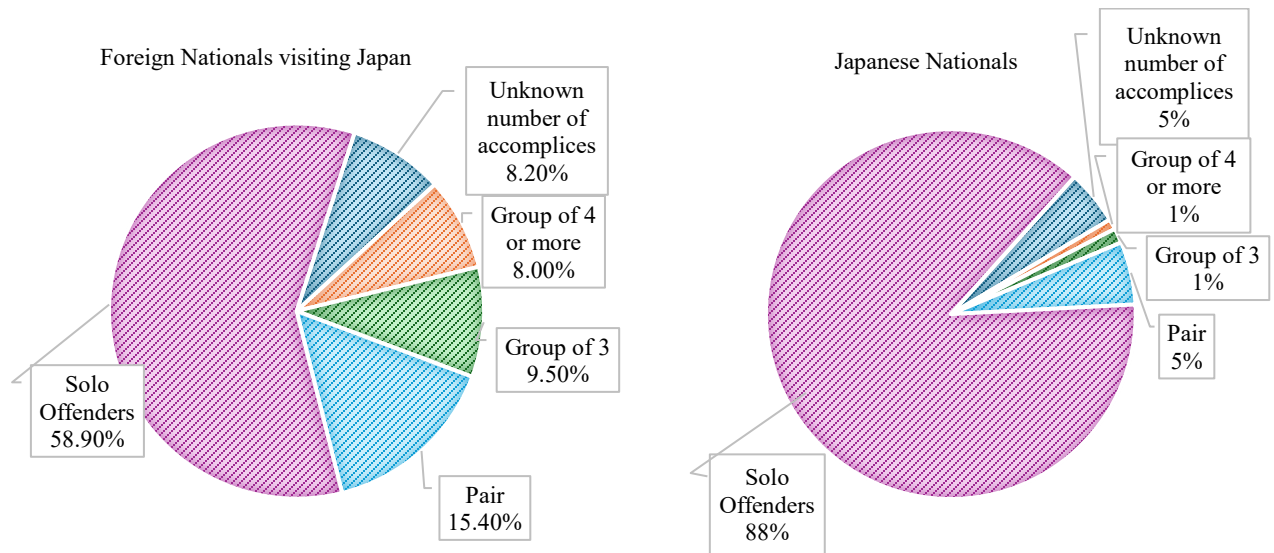
Chart 2: Breakdown of the number of people arrested for criminal offenses (Crime type, 2023)



Source: [30] based on crime statistics (National Police Agency) etc.

The breakdown of the number of people arrested for criminal offences is almost the same in foreigners and Japanese. Some say it is difficult to define as the word foreigner contains a large variety of people ranging from permanent residents to international criminals who just visit Japan for a short period.

Chart 3: Differences in the rate of complicity in criminal offenses between foreigners and Japanese nationals in Japan (2024)



Source: Police White Paper [31]

In 2024, the proportion of cases involving accomplices among criminal offenses committed by foreign nationals visiting Japan was 41.1%, approximately 3.3 times higher than that of Japanese nationals. Here the definition of foreign nationals visiting Japan are defined by Japan Police Agency as *Foreigners residing in Japan, excluding settled residents (permanent residents, spouses of permanent residents, and special permanent residents), those related to the U.S. military in Japan, and those with unknown residence status* [31].

However, as mentioned above the voices against foreigners are getting stronger in the Japanese society which is well-known for its peacefulness. Some people say that the crimes that foreigners are involved in are increasing.

The purpose of this research is to understand current situations experienced by Sri Lankan students and workers in Japan and to explore the vulnerabilities and risk factors for them. If they are facing any barriers or difficulties, make recommendations to mitigate such issues.

Methodology

Sri Lankan Students and SSW were selected as the population of this study, as they represent two major migration pathways from Sri Lanka to Japan. The sample size was determined by the limited availability of official population data on the selected population. At the time of data collection, no single official source provided up-to-date statistics on the total number of Sri Lankan students and SSW workers residing in Japan. While the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) publishes gross statistics on foreign employment for 2025, these data do not distinguish between the Sri Lankan migrants of SSW visa category in Japan and do not provide statistics on student migration. Similarly, official Sri Lankan government and embassy sources do not provide recent or comprehensive statistics on Sri Lankan students in Japan. Consequently, the probability sampling method was not achievable due to the absence of a reliable and complete sampling frame. Thus, the convenience sampling method was adopted as the sampling technique. A structured Google Forms questionnaire was disseminated through migrant networks and relevant online platforms to reach Sri Lankan students and SSW workers across different regions of Japan to collect the Quantitative data. Data collection was conducted from May 2025 to the end of November 2025 to maximize reach and participation, resulting in 112 valid responses, which constituted the final quantitative sample. Given the exploratory nature of the study and the practical challenge of reaching the dispersion of the targeted population, this sample size was considered adequate to identify patterns and vulnerabilities relevant to the research objectives.

Instruments and Data Collection

Primary data was accumulated using a structured Google Forms Questionnaire, which collected quantitative data on the demographic characteristics, information on the prior trainings they received before migration, their migration pathways and costs they bore, perceptions of daily life in Japan, experiences and concerns, and indicators of vulnerability and exposure to any criminal activities. A total of 112 respondents completed the questionnaire, which was the sample size Quantitative data. For guidance in data collection and drawing conclusions, academic writings such as research papers and journal articles and credible mass media platforms and social media materials were used to gather secondary data.

Semi-structured Interviews

Upon the completion of the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the respondents who volunteered to participate in the interview. Furthermore, additional semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers of Japanese Language Institutes in Sri Lanka and long-term Sri Lankan residents in Japan who have professional experience in multiple aspects, which provided context on structural vulnerabilities affecting newly migrated SSW workers and students in integrating with Japanese society. There were 15 interviews conducted via Zoom platforms which was the sample size Qualitative data, and prior written consent for the interviews was obtained from all participants.

The interviews were conducted in Sinhala or English according to the preference of the participant, and interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim into English. The Interviewee codenames are as below.

Table 3: Interviewee Codenames

No.	Visa/Job category	Code No.	No.	Visa/Job category	Code No.
1.	Translator	1-J-20250708-TRNS-1	9.	Student - now working	9-J-20250909-S.W-2
2.	Mechanical Engineer	2-J-20250810-MENG-1	10.	Student	10-J-20251019-STUD-3
3.	SSW-Caregiver	3-J-20250825-KAIGO-1	11.	Student	11-J-20251024-STUD-4
4.	SSW - Food	4-J-20250827-SSW-1	12.	SL Japanese Teacher	12-SL-20251101-TEACH-1
5.	Student	5-J-20250901-STUD-1	13.	Student	13-J-20251111-STUD-5
6.	Student	6-J-20250905-STUD-2	14.	SSW-Caregiver	14-J-20251115-KAIGO-2
7.	Dependent wife	7-J-20250907-DPND-1	15.	SSW-Caregiver	15-J-20251117-KAIGO-3
8.	Student - now working	8-J-20250909-S.W-1			

Source: Author generated

Bias Mitigation strategies

The Structured Google Form Questionnaire which collected Quantitative data was designed with neutral, non-leading questions and mainly providing fixed response options to reduce respondent interpretation biases. As the Google Form Questionnaire was administered uniformly, the consistency in data collection and minimizing the interviewers' influence was ensured.

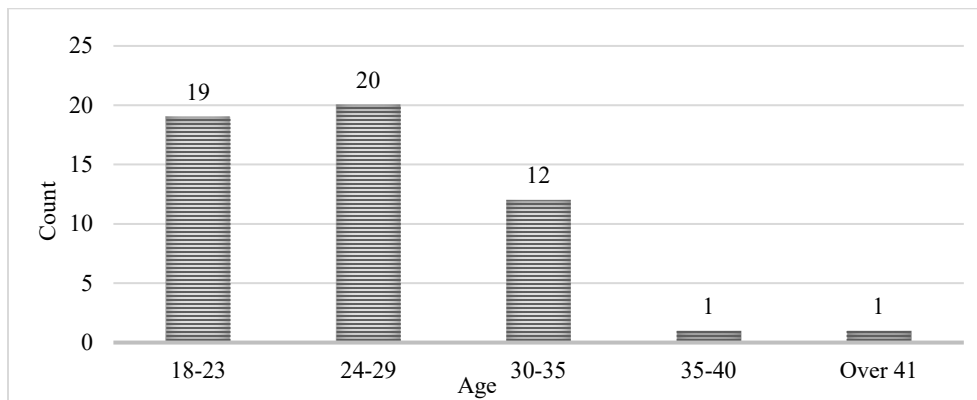
Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews were conducted without video and without collecting participants' real names, ensuring anonymity. Not even the interviewer had any access to the identity of the participants. As the participants were assigned coded identifications, no personally identifiable information was collected. The internal verbal biases were mitigated by semi-structured interviews in the participants' preferred language (Sinhala or English) and then transcribing them verbatim to preserve the accuracy of their narratives without translation loss. Further, to minimize the interpretive bias of researchers during thematic analysis, coding was conducted using inductive theme generation with repeated comparison across transcripts to ensure internal coherence.

Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

Demographic data

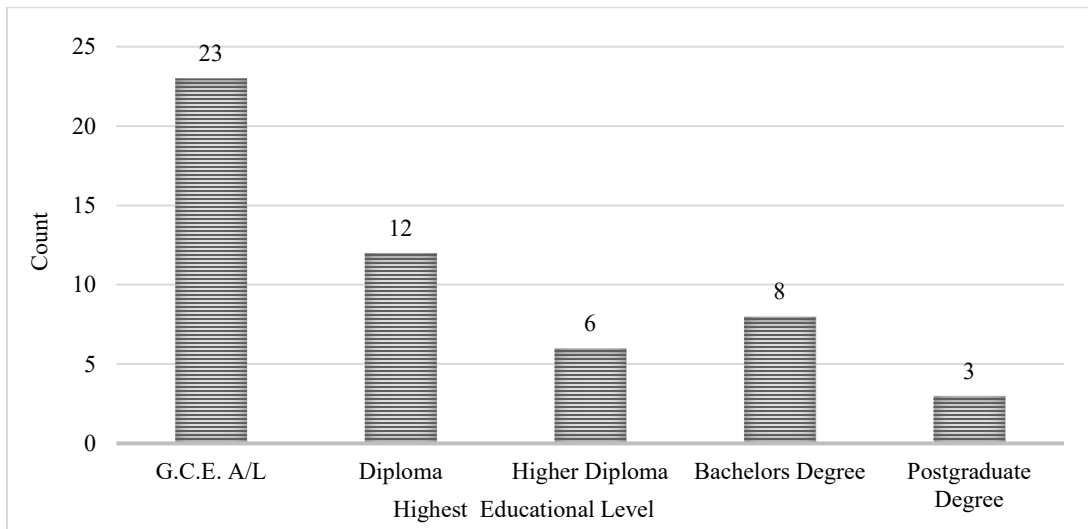
Chart 4: Age



Source: Author generated

As the figure illustrates, the study sample consists of participants ranging between 18 to 41 above. Out of which the majority falls in the 24-29 age group. The most prominent factor is apart from 2 participants over 36 the population here consists of young people of 18 to 35 in other words people from the most productive age.

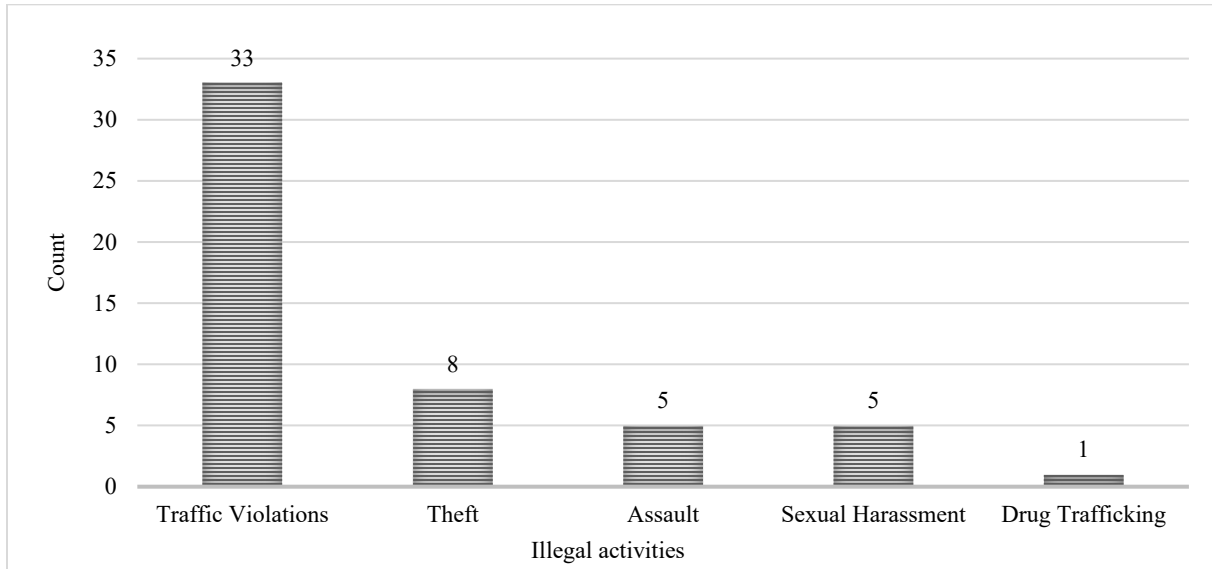
Chart 5: Highest Education Level



Source: Author generated

As has been noted in the above figure, the educational qualifications of the participants range between high school graduates to higher diploma holders. According to the research data, 8 out of 53 possess bachelor qualifications for their specific discipline.

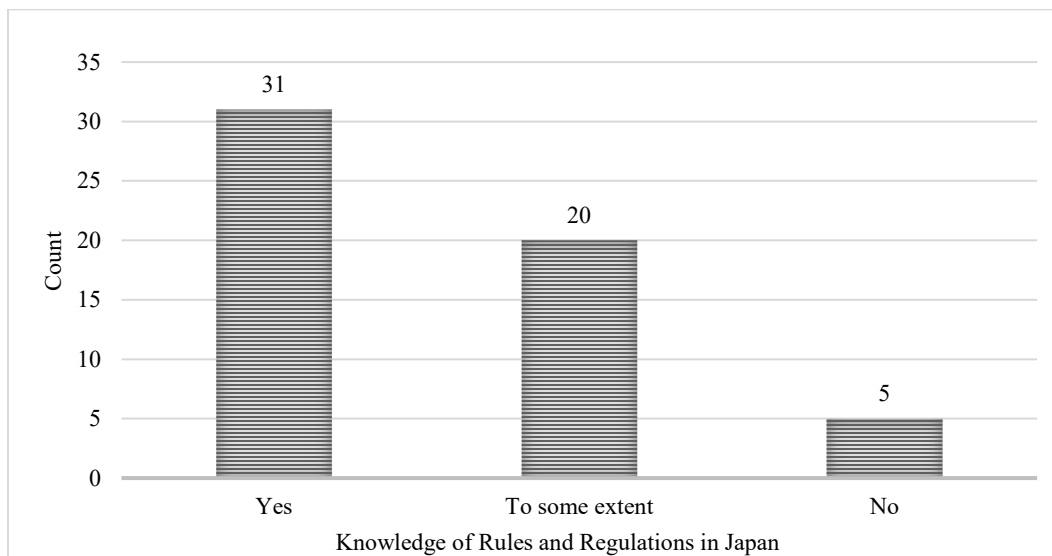
Chart 6: According to the observations of Sri Lankans in Japan, Illegal activities are partaken by Sri Lankans



Source: Author generated

The figure shows the participants’ awareness about the crimes committed by the Sri Lankans residing in Japan. Most of them think that Sri Lankans are noticeably violating traffic rules. They are also aware that other crimes such as theft, assault, sexual harassment and drug trafficking too, though the number is less, are committed by Sri Lankans in Japan.

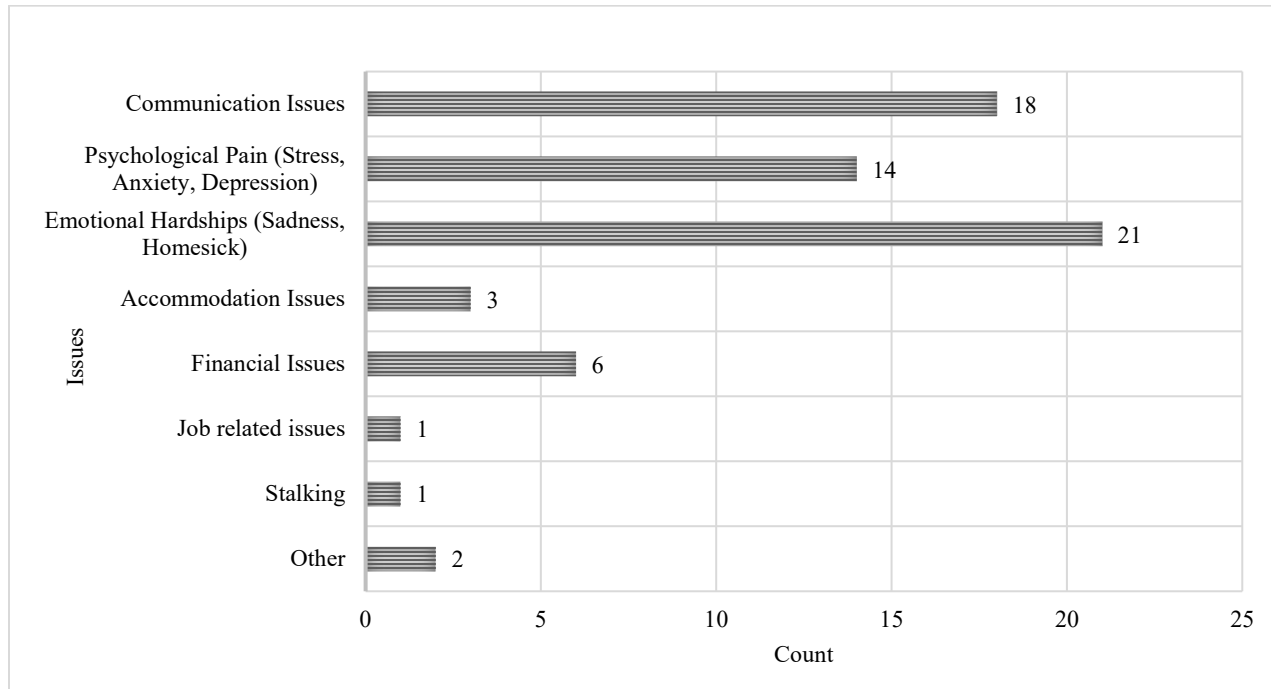
Chart 7: Knowledge of Rules and Regulations in Japan



Source: Author generated

The above table highlights how much the participants are aware of the rules and regulations in Japan. The majority has acknowledged that they are aware of the rules and regulations in Japan. Only one person has mentioned the unawareness.

Chart 8: Issues Sri Lankans face while living in Japan



Source: Author generated

When it comes to identifying the issues faced by the responders while living in Japan, several factors can be highlighted as follows, the majority are facing emotional hardships such as sadness and homesickness. 18 participants have issues related to communication. Psychological pains such as stress and anxiety are also mentioned by a remarkable number. Issues related to finance and accommodation; workplace do not seem to be major issues of the majority.

Qualitative Data Analysis

At the interviews followed by the common questions regarding basic details of why, how, and when they went to Japan, the participants were asked to talk freely about their life in Japan. Further questions were asked from what they revealed about their lives. Among the interviewees were 2 Sri Lankans who have migrated to Japan as students and now have become professionals who have been living in Japan more than 20 years, students who have gone to Japan within 1-8 years and SSW visa holders. Below is the thematic analysis conducted from the interview data.

Unwelcome

The fact that Japanese society has some resistance to “immigrants” has been discussed in several studies [32-34]. In the interviews with some participants there were references to Japanese society and the current situation related to immigrants.

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Table 4: Theme 1 Unwelcome

supporting phrases (underline)	Codes	Final Theme
2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “Japanese people knew the population was decreasing even in the 1980s. But, when it comes to welcoming immigrants, Japan is way behind compared to other countries. Due to the cultural background, they were reluctant to let immigrants come in.”	Cultural Reluctance / Resistance	Unwelcome
2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “To tell the truth, if there were enough Japanese people in the country, they would not have welcomed foreigners. That's how most of them think.”	Perception of Foreigners as Unnecessary	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “Because Japan has so much here, it's very convenient. You have everything here. Japan is like a bubble. It's a safe fable that people don't find the need to learn. About other cultures, about other people. Like perfect. It is, for them. Because they've not seen the world outside. I go to high school and junior high schools. And I talk to students about the world, other countries and other cultures. Some of them show interest. But most of them don't seem to care. “Why would I care? I would like to go to Tokyo. But why would I need to go outside?” kind of mentality. Which goes to show that it's limited education here.”	Japan as a Closed Social Bubble	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “I don't think the people are happy to welcome foreigners here. Recently there is a political candidate here. And his political slogan is “Japan First.” He says he is going to return Japan to the Japanese people. And people are openly supporting this kind of ideology. (.....) I think the scariest thing about this entire situation is not him walking around saying this, it's the amount of Japanese people supporting this notion. Following and actively supporting this notion.”	Nationalistic Attitudes	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “And that is reflected in small scales in day-to-day life for us. Because we experience micro racism in so many different aspects of life. Even when you go to a convenience store, you know when they return the money and the receipt to your hand, they just return the money, it's not an action you think so much about. But here many times, when I go to a store it's like the process of giving me a receipt takes at least two minutes because they are so careful not to make any kind of skin contact with me. It's funny. There are about twenty people behind me but all you care about is not touching my skin. So funny. (...) I can see, to Japanese people it's just given without a thought very casually.”	Micro-Racism / Everyday Exclusion	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “Some of my friends came to Japan on a visit recently. The lady on the train next to them had sanitised herself after sitting next to them. (.....) Many times, when I sit on a train people sitting next to me would get up and leave. You know if I am unhygienic, I would understand. But I know I am not unhygienic. I make it a point to shower three times a day.”	Perceived Foreigners as “Unclean” or Risky	

Supporting phrases (underline)	Codes	Final Theme
2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “Japanese people knew the population was decreasing even in the 1980s. But, when it comes to welcoming immigrants, Japan is way behind compared to other countries. <u>Due to the cultural background, they were reluctant to let immigrants come in.</u> ”	Cultural Reluctance / Resistance	Unwelcome
2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “To tell the truth, <u>if there were enough Japanese people in the country, they would not have welcomed foreigners.</u> That's how most of them think.”	Perception of Foreigners as Unnecessary	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “Because Japan has so much here, it's very convenient. You have everything here. <u>Japan is like a bubble.</u> It's a safe fable that people don't find the need to learn. About other cultures, about other people. Like perfect. It is, for them. Because they've not seen the world outside. I go to high school and junior high schools. And I talk to students about the world, other countries and other cultures. Some of them show interest. But most of them don't seem to care. <u>“Why would I care? I would like to go to Tokyo. But why would I need to go outside?”</u> kind of mentality. Which goes to show that it's limited education here.”	Japan as a Closed Social Bubble	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “I don't think the people are happy to welcome foreigners here. Recently there is a political candidate here. And his political slogan is <u>“Japan First.”</u> <u>He says he is going to return Japan to the Japanese people. And people are openly supporting this kind of ideology.</u> (.....) I think the scariest thing about this entire situation is not him walking around saying this, <u>it's the amount of Japanese people supporting this notion. Following and actively supporting this notion.</u> ”	Nationalistic Attitudes	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “And that is reflected in small scales in day-to-day life for us. Because we experience micro racism in so many different aspects of life. Even when you go to a convenience store, you know when they return the money and the receipt to your hand, they just return the money, it's not an action you think so much about. But here many times, when <u>I go to a store it's like the process of giving me a receipt takes at least two minutes because they are so careful not to make any kind of skin contact with me.</u> It's funny. There are about twenty people behind me but all you care about is not touching my skin. So funny. (...) I can see, to Japanese people it's just given without a thought very casually.”	Micro-Racism / Everyday Exclusion	
10-J-20251019-STUD-3 “Some of my friends came to Japan on a visit recently. <u>The lady on the train next to them had sanitised herself after sitting next to them.</u> (.....) <u>Many times, when I sit on a train people sitting next to me would get up and leave.</u> You know if I am unhygienic, I would understand. But I know I am not unhygienic. I make it a point to shower three times a day.”	Perceived Foreigners as “Unclean” or Risky	

Source: Author generated

Even though Japan is welcoming foreign students and workers more than any time in history, according to these participants there are some Japanese people who are not very happy or rather nervous about having foreigners around. Recently Kyoto city, which is one of the most popular tourist destinations, decided to make restrictions for the number of tourists who enter the city per day. It was because the day to day lives are disturbed by the increased number of visitors who come to Kyoto city. In the interviews, there were references like below about the foreigners with relation to tourists.

Foreigners as Temporary Outsiders

Table 5: Foreigner as Temporary Outsiders

Supporting phrases (Underlined)	Codes	Final Theme
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “Most Japanese people think of <u>foreigners as visitors</u>. They naturally think <u>foreigners would come and go back and they are here for a short time.</u>”</p> <p>14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 “Now I have a working visa. But when I got the visa, <u>I had to write a letter saying that I would go back to Sri Lanka and share my knowledge with my country.</u> I don’t know why but my lawyer prepared a letter and I signed it. With that condition I got the working visa.”</p>	<p>Temporary Status / Non-Permanence</p>	<p>Foreigners as Temporary Outsiders</p>
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “I saw a photo shared on social media. It’s a notice in a restaurant in Tokyo. It says, “Japanese Only” . I had never seen something like that in Japan before. I was shocked. <u>They have written in Japanese too “外国人は入れません”</u> which means “Foreigners can’t enter”. Maybe they were disturbed by the foreign travellers, especially Chinese and Europeans.”</p>	<p>Outsider Positioning (Uchi–Soto) Exclusionary Practices & Symbols</p>	
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 I see many foreigners every day. When I came to Japan 22 years ago, there were Japanese people everywhere and barely any foreigners. For example, in convenient stores. Now if I go to a convenient store in my nearest city, I will definitely see a foreigner working there. (...) But Japanese people, I feel, think it’s a menace. <u>They feel dealing with Japanese is easier.</u> But of course, there are some Japanese who have positive attitudes towards foreigners.”</p>	<p>Social Discomfort with Foreigners</p>	
<p>12-SL-20251101-TEACH-1 There are many Japanese who don’t like Asians. They mostly like Americans and Europeans. At 現場 (<i>genba</i>) at workplaces. In nursing care, <u>they don’t like to have our men because of their dark skin.</u> There are issues like that.</p> <p>13-J-20251115-KAIGO-2 We were taught before the interview to wear neatly. And we usually work wearing masks, so <u>we were taught to keep our eyes neatly so that we get selected at the interview.</u> That gives them a good impression. <u>Skin colour too matters. Elderly people look at us a lot.</u> Our skin is darker than their skin although they haven’t told me directly, I feel they think like that.</p>	<p>Racial / Physical Appearance Bias</p>	

<p>12-SL-20251101-TEACH-1 In some care homes, part time Japanese people don't like it when our (SSW) workers get an income higher than them. <u>Part timers don't like that.</u> <u>面白くない (not happy).</u> But some people know (foreigners) are needed. But some people don't like it.</p>	Unequal Work Acceptance	
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Source: Author generated

In general term 外国人(*gaikokujin*) means “person from an outside country” Japanese society well known for its “uchi to soto” 内と外 (relationship between inside and outside), tend to draw a clear line between insiders and outsiders. This applies to any kind of inner circle like your family, friend groups, your company vs people outside the family, outsiders from the friend groups and companies other than the one you are employed. As implied at this interview, here the foreigners are temporary visitors who are from other countries and would go back to their countries after visiting/ temporary stay. In other words, foreigners are supposed to be there temporarily. If the above restaurant really targets to keep foreign visitors away, they should have mentioned 外国人観光客” foreign visitors” but they have not done so. It clearly pinpoints foreigners in general. That includes, foreign immigrants, foreign students, foreign spouses, foreign descendants, in other words all the people from outside Japan. When it comes to SSW visas, they are originally recruited for three years and are not allowed spouses or dependents to come along. In some interviews with SSW visa holders, it was revealed that they hardly ever meet anyone other than the people in the workplace.

Supported

Another topic that appeared from the analysis is, the support Japanese society is providing for foreigners.

Table 7: Supported

Supporting phrases (Underlined)	Codes	Final Theme
<p>13-J-20251115-KAIGO-2 Even now <u>we have a Japanese and caregiver class once a week. It is done by the programme we came</u> to until we pass the caregiver exam 介護福祉士 (<i>kaigofukushushi</i>) . Conducted by Kobe city. Apart from that some <u>elderly homes support foreigners by language training and caregiver training once a week.</u></p> <p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “<u>Some companies have started communication in English, and some companies have established help desks for foreigners.</u> But I don't think the infrastructure has developed as fast as the number of foreigners who come here.”</p> <p>14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 “In the place I am working for <u>everyone is やさしい (kind) they looked after us like a family. At first, we came in the cold season, and our clothes were all ready for winter. The beds to sleep in, (quilt) and everything. The room was beautiful</u></p>	Institutional Support	
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “Though some companies provide some services to foreign staff, <u>the society is not like that.</u> To give an example, I usually take buses daily. In the route I travel there's a company where foreigners work. Maybe Indonesians or Nepalese. They always have many difficulties when taking the bus. <u>Everything is written and announced in Japanese. So, they often miss the place where they have to get off.</u> I sometimes help them. Sometimes they ask the driver. <u>And the drivers are very annoyed. They say go to the final stop and ask from the station. So, these</u></p>	Community & Public Service Support	Supported

<u>foreigners are helpless. Even in trains, only in JR and some subways, you can find English announcements.</u>		
14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 “At my previous work place <u>the nurses were little unfriendly saying we are 外人 (foreigners). She was pressuring us lying about things we didn't do. But they were warned by the higher officials.</u> We complained that we can't go on like this.	Support Variations Across Contexts	
14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 <u>we felt 安心 (relieved) as everything was ready for us. (.....) We were the first foreigners there and they even planned how we would develop, or future studies too.”</u>	Emotional Outcomes of Support	
14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 “ <u>We complained that we can't go on like this.</u> ”		

Source: Author generated

At the workplaces of the participants of this study, they are accepted and supported with care. Even when the coworkers make it difficult for them, the top officials seem to have a favourable attitude. It could be said that the Japanese people in those places have a real need for workers and they have understood the fact that Japan needs to collaborate with other countries for manpower. However, society in general does not see the real need of foreign workers which reflects in the political movements and in daily life where foreigners are treated as a burden.

Crimes

Migration and crime are considered closely related in many parts of the world [32-34]. How is it in Japan? In the interviews the participants shared their experiences in relation to crime.

Table 6: Crimes

Supporting phrases (Underlined)	Codes	Final Theme
2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “ <u>The crimes have increased now.</u> The other day they caught some Sri Lankans and Vietnamese who have stolen cables from solar power stations. These people have sold them for copper. The damage caused by this robbery was about 6 million Japanese yen.”	Perceived Increase in Crime Involving Foreigners	Crimes
1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 “ <u>I want to say that crimes have increased a lot. Sometimes we can't take a break,</u> we are often asked to go for translation work. That's how much it has increased. We don't work in such happy places.”		
13-J-20251111-STUD-5 <u>Our youngsters usually take out loans to come to Japan. But once you are here, even if you get some money, here you can find cigarettes, alcohol and nightclubs.</u> In any city there are nightclubs. (...) In the past I think Sri Lankans came here because they liked Japanese culture, to see Sakura. Now it's different. They come here for Halloween parties, clubbing and alcohol.	Economic Pressure and Exploitation Leading to Criminality	

<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 I have heard that young girls are working for night clubs. (...) Now we hear that Sri Lankans too are in this business. <u>The income is higher than the salary you get from a restaurant. They are attracted to those kinds of easy cash jobs.</u> I have heard that Sri Lankan girls are working in the Namba area in Osaka prefecture and In Tochigi prefecture too.</p>		
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “In yesterday’s news I saw a <u>Sri Lankan man caught with some suspicious thing called ‘Sevanagala guli’</u>. He has brought them here to sell. When they checked the content, it was <u>Kansa. 200 packets of a total of 2kg.</u> I thought he was very ignorant of the law here. <u>In Japan, rules for drug trafficking are very tough.</u> This person was 30 years old, and this is the end of his whole life. He won't be able to leave Japan for a long time. In jail. That’s what I think. <u>Maybe he thought the law was not that strict.</u></p>	<p>Ignorance or Misunderstanding of Japanese Law</p>	
<p>14-J-20251117-KAIGO-3 At the first company I worked for the person who was very <u>仲良く</u> (close), <u>a Japanese person stole my money.</u> It was <u>いやな気持ち</u> (disgusting). I was upset. But luckily everyone supported me even the <u>本部長</u> (General Manager) were with me until I recovered and got back to normal.</p>	<p>Criminal Activities by Non-Migrants Affecting Migrants</p>	
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “<u>The crimes have increased now.</u> The other day they caught some Sri Lankans and Vietnamese who have stolen cables from solar power stations. These people have sold them for copper. The damage caused by this robbery was about 6 million Japanese yen.”</p> <p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 <u>Once Sri Lankans were involved in credit card smuggling.</u> Get a pin number from a credit card of someone in Dubai and cheat a huge amount of money.</p>	<p>Specific Crime Types Involving Migrants/ Public Concern and Stigmatisation of Migrants</p>	
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 ‘I have heard that Sri Lankan girls are working in the Namba area in Osaka prefecture and In Tochigi prefecture too. <u>Have seen such information on SNS.</u>’</p> <p>14-J-20251111-STUD-5 If you get into those you spend all your money on those. Can’t pay back the loans. Not only once or twice. Some people go daily. <u>After going to those they post it on social media to show off.</u> Girls too are like that.</p>	<p>Media and Social Media Influence on Crime Perceptions</p>	

Source: Author generated

Ignorance

Many people from Sri Lanka seem to go to Japan without preparing themselves with proper communication skills or work-related skills. They only want to pass the minimum knowledge to pass the required exams and get a visa. They think just going to Japan will change their entire life and they will be financially better off

Table 7: Ignorance

Supporting phrases (Underlined)	Codes	Final Theme
<p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 “This is very sad to say because people are coming without thinking much. <u>They don't know the language either.</u>”</p> <p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “After coming here without a proper job, and language skills. <u>You can't even do a part time job without Japanese communication skills.</u>”</p> <p>3-J-20250825-KAIGO-1 “<u>Without knowing the language, they break rules.</u> We often see that kind of incident in the news. So embarrassing.”</p>	Lack of Language Proficiency	Ignorance
<p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 “<u>In Japan you don't see many rules like in Sri Lanka. So, our people think there are no rules. Actually, the law is very strict here.</u> It's equal for everyone. No matter how many years I was in Japan. The rules are the same for me and for a person who lands in Japan today. It works equally for everyone.</p> <p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 This society is peaceful like this because everyone follows the rules. There are not many signboards, but everyone follows the rules. As it is a peaceful society, these Sri Lankans think It doesn't matter, I don't have a license, but I just drive. <u>If your car hits someone, if a person dies or gets injured you will be definitely taken to immigration.</u> They file a case, and you will be in the police station waiting months until you go to court.</p> <p>6-J-20250905-STUD-2 <u>The reason they think that there's a lot of freedom here is because they don't know the law.</u> In any developed country, there is a system of rules and regulations. That is part of development. Even though we haven't learned about the rules and regulations in Sri Lanka, we know the things we need to follow in our daily lives by living there since childhood and by listening to the news. But in Japan, if you don't know the language here, you don't know the rules properly, and you don't know what is being said in the news properly. That is why someone feels free. <u>You just don't know the depth of the rules and regulations.</u> That's all about it.”</p>	Ignorance of Rules and Regulations	
<p>3-J-20250825-KAIGO-1 “So many accidents. Someone I know passed away recently. He couldn't read the signs properly. <u>He had entered the highway from the opposite direction.</u> They suspect he hadn't read the signboard. If he knew Japanese, it wouldn't have happened. It happened because he didn't know Japanese.”</p>	Accidents and Life-Threatening Situations Caused by Ignorance	
<p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 “The other thing is that I want to say this especially to young people, to men, these Japanese girls are beautiful, and their skin is fair. They might</p>	Legal Consequences of Ignorance	

<p>feel attracted to them when they see them. That's why they try to reach out by a little joke or hold their hands or do something. They might just touch slightly on the train. <u>That's a big offence here. If they complain, there's no forgiveness. They (Sri Lankan men) have to be careful.</u> They have to live with a strong heart.”</p>		
<p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 Young men who come to study, some of them study well. But because of bad friends they get into trouble. For instance, <u>friends say they want to go and beat someone up, and then they get together and fight, and then get suspended from school.</u> (.....) If you break the rules, you have to face severe punishments. The other thing is that in Japan, no matter how much they do, they want to keep the society peaceful. That is why punishments are implemented severely. That is not a game.</p>	Peer Influence and Social Ignorance	
<p>1-J-20250708-TRNS-1 One young Sri Lankan man I know is without insurance. <u>His leg and knee were injured. He's only 32 years old. He fell and didn't have insurance.</u> Though he went to the hospital, he couldn't get treatment. So, his leg got stiff. Now he can't sit, he can't stand. He can't walk. The doctor here says you can't have an operation here, it's a big operation, you have to go to your country and get it done. He still says no, I can't go please give me medicine for this. Poor thing. <u>The doctor says the only thing he can give is a plaster.</u> <u>He says you must go back to your country and have an operation.</u></p>	Ignorance of the Healthcare System	

Source: Author generated

Knowing Japanese language, and the basic rules of how the society functions in Japan is extremely important in living there. Without that kind of knowledge, they will be a burden and a menace to Japanese society. This may apply to any other society too. If one wants to migrate to another country, one should be sensible enough to invest time in knowing that society before migrating.

Insecurity

Japan is known for its social security and peaceful society. However, during the interviews there were references to incidents that question the social security in Japan. The following interview was with a student who has gone to Japan after learning Japanese for about 6 years in Sri Lanka and she didn't have any issues in communication. She had participated in homestay programmes twice before she went to Japan for studies. However, she realised the Japanese society she experienced in the homestay programmes or the Japanese society she learned during secondary education in Sri Lanka was not the same as the actual thing. It made her question the well-known social security in Japan.

7-J-20250905-STUD-2

“I can tell you one experience that gave me a shock. In the mansion I live in there's an auto lock. If someone wants to come to my house, they have to ring the bell, and we give access if we want that person to come in. One day the postman rang my bell. Usually, the postman rings the bell if it is a registered post that we have to sign. So, I opened the lock. Then he came to my door. He didn't give me the letter at once. I don't remember which day of the week that was but there were two holidays. Instead of giving me the letter he said 「明日と明後日休みだから遊びに行こう / (As tomorrow and the day after are holidays lets go out) I was so surprised. As I haven't met with this postman and I asked him “where's my letter?” He said there's no letter and he left. I discussed this with my teacher in Sri Lanka and got advice from her and went to the police. When I told them about the incident, they wrote down my complaint, and they said they can't check with the post office during the two holidays, but they will check it on the next working day. In the meanwhile, they checked the CCTV on the building. And everything was there until the postman made it to my floor. They have questioned him and he has mentioned that he knows me and we have messaged through LINE. He has even shown a LINE chat. That LINE chat contained my name. Then the Police summoned me and checked my phone. My LINE name and profile picture were different from the ones he had in his phone. Police checked my profile picture and when I had last changed it. I have been using the same profile picture since I made the LINE

account. (.....) So, after questioning the postman the police told me to give a 被害届 (victim report). The policeman wrote it and then read it to me. But when he was reading it, I was not satisfied as he was thinking while reading. If you are reading something you wrote you don't have to think, do you? Anyway, I have to sign it, so I told him I want to read before signing. And then he asked me if I could read Japanese. I said yes, so let me read it. He gave it to me and left that place. When I read it, I saw that he had not written what he read. It says I withdraw the victim report. So, I told the police what he has written is different, therefore I want to change the person in charge of my case. Then they apologised and wrote a correct one. But I am not satisfied with the whole thing. I talked with the International Center in the city I live in and a lawyer talked to me. He said I could file a case. But I didn't have the money nor the peace of mind. I felt I couldn't trust anyone. The postman has come to my building with a top official of the post office and has apologised to the security section of my mansion. As a punishment he was transferred to another area in the same city. (...) Language is our only weapon... If we don't know it, we don't know what's happening."

Table 8: Insecurity

Related Incident	Codes	Final Theme
The student realised the homestay experience did not match real Japanese society.	Breach of Expected Social Security	Insecurity
Postman asks her to go out and lies about having a letter.	Abuse of Professional Authority	
Postman believed she would be vulnerable and compliant.	Targeting Foreign Students as Vulnerable	
The police officer replaced the complaint with a withdrawal statement.	Manipulation and Document Falsification by Police	
She was not given a translator even though it is mandatory.	Denial of Legal Rights	
"Language is our only weapon... If we don't know it, we don't know what's happening."	Importance of Language as Protection	
She felt she couldn't trust anyone, including the police and legal system.	Mistrust Toward Institutions	
The postman was only transferred, not punished.	Lack of Fair Punishment for Offender	
She avoided legal action due to lack of peace of mind; felt insecure.	Psychological Impact on Migrant	

Source: Author generated

This incident shows another aspect of Japanese society. Here the postman must have thought he could approach this foreign student as usually students are poor and lonely away from their families. The policeman, without taking legal action against the postman, tried to cheat the foreign student thinking she cannot read Japanese script. The incident concluded without any satisfactory outcome from the student's perspective. The criminal is somewhere out there and the students can't help but feel truly insecure.

Cheated

Sri Lankans usually go to Japan expecting a better life and better opportunities than in their home country. However, in the interviews there were references to incidents that could be categorised as being cheated and experiencing unexpected hardships in Japan.

Table 9: Cheated

Supporting phrases	Codes	Final Theme
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “There are many visa scams too. As it's easy to get a visa to enter Japan now, there are many organisations that offer visas which are not genuine. <u>Even though some people have obtained a visa, they realise they have got to find jobs that suit their visa category only after they come here.</u> It's a risk. Can't find that kind of job easily. If they can't find a job for his visa category, his visa won't be renewed after one year. This kind of scams are done with the support of organised Japanese dealers too. <u>Sometime ago a crime related to visas given to Vietnamese was revealed and several people were arrested. It was in the TV news too.</u>”</p> <p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 “One of my friends came to Japan recently. <u>He had a visa called Engineering, but he didn't have a job or didn't have any language skills. Under that visa category he cannot do any other work than Engineering.</u> So, he was very desperate to find a job. I helped him to get a part time job only for survival.”</p>	<p>Visa Deception & Fraud</p>	Cheated
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 <u>Some students come here with the assurance from their agency that they will be given jobs. But the jobs given to them are illegal jobs.</u> There are dealers both in Sri Lanka and here. At the beginning when the students can't read, write or talk in Japanese, for example they are given delivery jobs. They are told to deliver an amazon parcel. <u>But actually, it's a parcel with drugs put inside a used amazon box. In Japan keeping drugs is a severe crime. Once a Sri Lankan girl was caught for keeping a box with drugs. She didn't know anything. She was asked to deliver it.</u> From this incident actually it came into limelight that there's organised crime like this.</p> <p>13-J-20251111-STUD-5 <u>I have done part-time jobs delivering parcels. It was a Yakuza group. When I got to know what they did I stopped connecting with them. I gave that up for my own goodness. If I was continuing delivery I might have been in jail by now.</u></p>	<p>Misleading Job Promises/ Illegal and High-Risk Jobs</p>	
<p>2-J-20250810-MENG-1 <u>At the beginning when the students can't read, write or talk in Japanese, for example they are given delivery jobs.</u> They are told to deliver an amazon parcel. But actually, it's a parcel with drugs put inside a used amazon box. In Japan keeping drugs is a severe crime.</p>	<p>Exploitation Due to Language Inability</p>	
<p>13-J-20251111-STUD-5 <u>Some students come here by paying quite a fortune to the agencies. The families mortgage their houses to get loans. I also came like that.</u></p>	<p>Financial Exploitation by Agencies</p>	
<p>13-J-20251111-STUD-5 <u>In the first month I came here, there were three other boys too, we didn't have any money in that first month, we were searching for dustbins to find something to eat.</u></p>	<p>Extreme Financial Hardship</p>	

<p>13-J-20251111-STUD-5 <u>They (students) can't pay back easily.</u> Usually, they save the money they earn for 28 hours per week. <u>But after paying the monthly loan they don't have any money for food. That's how they tend to shoplift. Even the girls.</u> They should think about that before getting the loan.</p>	<p>Deviant Behavior as a Survival Strategy</p>	
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Source: Author generated

Both visa related scams and illegal jobs seem to be experienced by some people who have gone to Japan looking for a better life. People may tend to risk doing jobs with illegal groups for quick cash if they do not have any earnings whatsoever for even basic needs. People are expecting a better life, but facing scams and hardships ultimately end up with sense of betrayal and broken expectations

Conclusion

In this study we focused on the current situations and barriers of the Sri Lankan Students and Specified Skilled Workers migrated to Japan. In the analysis, some common themes categorised from the interviews were highlighted and discussed with the way they were told by the participants. Unwelcome, Foreigners as Temporary Visitors, Insecurity, Ignorance, Cheated, Supported, and Crime were the themes that could be categorised in the experiences shared by the participants about their life in Japan. It came into the limelight that some of the participants felt unwelcome in Japan. This is mainly due to the current social trends and movements as well as the way some Japanese people react to the presence of the foreigners. This has been previously identified by Lie [35] and Burgess [36], they have highlighted the cultural homogeneity of the Japanese and its cautious approach towards immigration. According to what was said in the interviews, the notion that foreigners are visitors who would return to their countries after a limited period of time is rooted in Japan which is totally opposite of the concept of migration. Even early studies have identified the Immigration framework has been designed as the short-term labor need rather than long-term integration [37]. However, all the participants interviewed in this study were planning to live long term in Japan which might be the opposite of the aspirations of Japanese people. Some participants talked about how well they were supported at their workplaces which contradicts the common notion of the society that seems little anxious to get Japan back to its people. The way they were welcomed and supported clearly implies that the labor shortage is the reason for this. They desperately need workers to fulfil the demands of society. However, the general opinion of the society is that foreigners are unwanted. Several participants have reported that they receive positive responses from their workplaces. But General societal attitudes go with societal skepticism towards the migrants. The previous studies have clearly identified that although Japan is reluctant to redefine itself as a multicultural society, its aging population and shrinking workforce have forced industries to rely increasingly on foreign labor [38,39]. This is supported to build the concept that they are welcoming to the workforce as they are targeting economic purposes rather than social acceptance.

Overall arrests of foreign nationals in specific areas, such as drug-related offenses and immigration violations, are increasing in Japan. One student shared his experience in delivering unknown parcels at the early period of his stay in Japan. He didn't know much Japanese back then and he was badly in need of a job. When he got to know about the job he was doing and what was really happening, he stopped doing the job. At the same time, another participant was talking about a situation she had to face with the postman and with the way the police officer worked with her complaint. The alarming thing was the postman even had a fake chat with the girl who he knew only by her name and address as he was delivering the post. It is a huge concern that in Japan, where social security is well known worldwide, this kind of insecurity is experienced and unresolved. The two experiences highlight how much language ability could contribute to safety when living in Japan.

Although the general opinion is that migrants contribute to the increasing number of crimes, It seems, there are occasions that foreigners have become victims. Not only drug trafficking, but financial hardships might also be one huge factor that pushes students to work in nightclubs too. Although we tried to dig further into this area, we couldn't get any person willing to contribute to the study. Studies conducted by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) [40], Arudou [41] and Vogt [42] noted that foreign residents severely experienced several crimes such as harassment, frauds, labor exploitation and discriminatory policies. Further works of Liu – Farrer [43] and Yamanaka [44] highlighted that the majority of international students and technical trainees are more vulnerable to unsafe or illegal work environments. Current study also proves these factors.

In conclusion, it could be said that the themes derived from the analysis - Unwelcome, Foreigners as Temporary Visitors, Ignorance, Insecure, Cheated - which in other words vulnerability, can play some role in Crime. Which means

if the migrants are less vulnerable, apart from the organised crimes, some of the crimes too might decline to some extent. In deriving these conclusions, multiple measures were implemented to mitigate the internal biases of the study. By employing coded identifiers to ensure strict anonymity in the collection of qualitative data, participants' identities were fully protected. This approach safeguarded confidentiality and minimized bias, thereby enhancing the integrity of the analysis. Further, by conducting interviews in the preferred languages of participants, the collected narratives enabled them to be accurate. The narratives were translated only when they were quoted in the manuscript to ensure mistranslations or misinterpretations. Furthermore, a thematic analysis was followed with an inductive coding process, together with repeated cross-checking across transcripts to ensure consistency.

As Japan is in need of labor forces and they have opened doors to foreigners, the Japanese people should be made aware of the need of foreigners and how to tolerate different cultures. Intercultural events and seminars might help Japanese citizens to understand how to accept differences and eliminate prejudice against foreigners. Entire society should be shifted slowly and gradually towards multilingual settings, changing current monolingualism that would ease the current language barriers. At the same time current rules and regulations should be explained to foreigners in easily understandable languages. Parallel to this, from the side of Sri Lanka, more focus should be given to carefully planned curricula for Japanese language education, establishment of a proper channel between the two countries to regularise the visa process and proper training that includes awareness of sociocultural background and legal system in Japan would prepare those who migrate to Japan for study or work purposes. That kind of well-balanced language and sociocultural education will in long term contribute to sustainable development with focus on SDG4 Quality Education and SDG13 Peace, Justice and Strong Institution. With reference to SDG4, the findings of the study will contribute to the improvement of training programmes for youth and adults with relevant skills including vocational, communication and social skills as well as skills to promote equality, appreciate cultural diversity, peace and non-violence. Also, it will contribute to SDG13 with the awareness of the importance of law and justice in any society.

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