

## **Dilemma in nationhood in K.S. Maniam's, The Return and in a Far Country**

### **ABSTRACT**

Indians, namely the Tamils from South India are the third largest ethnic group in Malaysia. The mass movement and the displacement of the Indians, especially the South Indians began with the colonization of the British in Malaya and India. Most of them were brought in to fulfil the labour needs in the rubber plantations from 1844 to 1941. After the independence of Malaysia, these Indians decided to make Malaysia (Malaya) as their permanent home, although some of them decided to return to India. However, independence demanded loyalty and commitment towards the country. Harder still, having given up their citizenship of India, it calls for a political and emotional break up with their original land. Now these displaced Indians tried hard to establish a sense of belonging to the new home. Their loyalty towards the new nation is put to test through the rejections they encountered and the sense of duality that constantly haunted them. This study will show how these two issues contributed to a state of dilemma among the Indians residing in Malaysia through K.S. Maniam's novels, *The Return* (1981) and *In a Far Country* (1993). It is a dilemma in a true sense for these people found them in a situation where a difficult decision has to be made over two choices; India or Malaysia, ancestral civilization or the land of their livelihood. These two novels depict characters that are torn between two countries and how they struggle to establish a sense of belonging. It will also show how this dilemma of nationhood caused various peculiar and self-destructing act and its implications on them.

**Keyword:** Dilemma; Nationhood; Rejection; Duality; Identity