

Explanation of resource use pattern between North Central and Northern part of central highland in the Early Historic Sri Lanka

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Many academic researchers who worked on the history of Sri Lanka marginalized and underrated the use and exchange of resources in the country. On a regional scale, Northern *Malayarata* (Northern part of Central Highlands) and *Nuwarakalawiya* (North Central Province) has received less attention in these studies. The use and exchange of the natural resources between the mentioned regions have not been widely discussed, but existence of such in Early Historic Period (300 B.C. A.D) are evidenced by inscriptions. The present study discusses the matter using archaeological evidence, epigraphic data as well as literary sources.

The Northern region of the central highlands of the country is rich in mineral sources. According to geological studies the *Upper Kala Oya* system originating from the Northern Central Highlands is rich in minerals such as amethyst, feldspar, mica and various types of quartz. Metal deposits were recorded vicinity of *Nalanda*. For a long period of time, people of the country used these resources and from the Early Historic period metal workmen have contributed to the Northern Highlands. The inscription at Bambaragala mentions a village called *Kolagama (Koligama)*, which is a settlement of metal workers. Also, Early Brahmi inscriptions in *Wegiriya devalaya* and *Nalanda* provide evidence about lapidary and gem industry. Artisans and merchants obtain these minerals from the deposits in highlands and sub markets in peripheral small towns of Anuradhapura done a great role in supplying to the central markets at city. Also minerals such as agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli, onyx, etc. imported from foreign countries to Anuradhapura were distributed to highland areas via these same gateways. Further, it can be seen that there were certain population groups such as Parumaka, Gahapathi, Bharata, Gamika, etc. who handled the industry as evidenced by inscriptions.

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