

Impact of post-war development programmes on the archaeological record at *Yoda Weva*, Mannar: Lower Malvathu-Oya Basin Archaeology (LMBA) project 2018

W.M.T.B. Wijepala¹

Abstract

The present paper aims to discuss some key issues Cultural Heritage Management has to face with unofficial/unlawful development works commencing in the war affected areas of Sri Lanka thereby creating huge pressure on the sites and objects. The cultural heritage of the region requires a proper documentation and research approach which was not undertaken during the last few decades. Such an impact occurred on the archaeological record which could be identified from an archaeological survey and a sounding was made at the Mannar *Yoda Vava* (tank) spill under the Lower Malvathu-Oya Basin Archaeology (LMBA) project in 2018 that was done to study the glass furnaces in ancient Sri Lanka. A surface survey was carried out in an area of 3.2sq km located at the right bank of the spill canal. The ownership of the units of the land falls to both *Yoda veva* wildlife sanctuary and the Irrigation Department. The impact of the post-war development on the archaeological record occurs mostly due to the lack of proper Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and also inter-institutional dialogue or understanding that has caused to emerge some crucial challenges. It reflects a fragmentation and separation of legislation, government structures and the local community which is the underpinning reason for needing a concern for assessing/managing the material record. An approach will require to offer a better-integrated practice to create a proper communication between the government institutes as well as the local community who were mostly isolated and need an awareness of the heritage management. This paper will consider how the current development projects impact on the cultural heritage, possibilities of setting principles specially catering to local requirements while undertaking impact assessments and the measures needed to take for creating a proper conversation among the government structures and engagement of people in development projects.

Keywords: *Archaeology, Cultural heritage management, Development, Post-war Sri Lanka*

¹ *Department of Archaeology and Heritage Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka. Corresponding author's email: tbwijepala@gmail.com*