

**An Investigative Study of the Impact of British Plantation on the Traditional Society of Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract**

The caste system based on different technical grades was a major factor in considering man's status in the local social system. This system was more of a traditional formal social system than a caste system. Accordingly, each caste had its due role to play, and the role assigned to each caste in maintaining a self-sufficient system of coexistence was imperative. There were some differences in the caste system, the role of each caste was equally important for the survival of the society, so there was a reciprocal relationship between the castes and mutual respect. Local land tenure and caste service were also intertwined, and the intermediate factor that connected it was the compulsory service duty system. Accordingly, compulsory service was a service of devotion and love with mutual duties and responsibilities. The research problem here was what the Sri Lankan society looked like before expanding British plantations. This research aimed to study how the local society was self-sufficient and the social changes caused by plantations. This study was based on a qualitative research methodology. It used library observation for primary and secondary data sources such as Dispatches, Administration Reports, Blue Books, Hansard, Land Ordinances, Census Reports, Fergusons Directories, Kachchary Records etc. Secondary data in the study was extracted from several publications by local and international authors. The data were analyzed qualitatively. The British rulers ignored the traditional social system. They determined social value by considering economic status rather than caste. The Land Acts introduced in 1840 created a new dimension of personal value based on the increase or decrease of the amount of land held by an individual. However, the study found that the caste system in Sri Lanka did not change completely with the expansion of plantations. Many changes took place in urban society. But there is evidence that many elements of traditional society in rural areas continued to function.

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