

## **A Study of Human Right Conception in Ancient Sri Lanka**

**W.A.L.P. Dilhara<sup>1</sup>, Thusitha U. Dissanayaka<sup>2</sup>**

### **Abstract**

Human rights can be defined as the rights owned by every human being born free to the world. The concept of human rights has interconnected with humankind's religious and cultural heritage. Religious leaders, politicians, lawyers, and the other critics have described the idea of human rights according to their philosophies and visions from different angles. However, in conclusion, the concept of human rights has prioritized the liberty, uniformity, and dignity of every human being. The objective of this research, which was done only considering the Rajarata civilization period, is to study the human right conception of ancient Sri Lanka compared with the modern concept of human rights and to identify the attitudes and policies of ancient human rights. The research method utilized during the survey is qualitative, and the information obtained via literary and archeological sources has been analyzed using the historical method of study. Although human rights have been included in the constitution of the legal frame, human rights cannot be identified as a constitutional law of ancient Sri Lanka. But most of the currently accepted human rights of the world have been gained by ancient Sri Lankans according to pieces of evidence from literary and archeological sources referred to during this research. The research proved that components that have obtained priority in modern human rights, such as life security, the right to prevent cruel tortures, the right to justice, the right to avoid arbitrary imprisonment, the right to education, religious freedom, the right of obtaining salary for the labor have even protected in ancient Sri Lankan society. In conclusion, an ancient human right concept in Sri Lankan unwritten legal system is equal to the modern concept of human rights in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Human rights; Ancient Sri Lanka; Rajarata civilization; Unwritten legal system

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<sup>1</sup> *Department of Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka; lesa@ssh.rjt.ac.lk*

<sup>2</sup> *Department of Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka; dissan@ssh.rjt.ac.lk*