

The Socio-Economic Background Around the Janakapura Megalithic Burial Site

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Abstract

The Sinhala rural society occupies a distinctly unique position vis-à-vis the Asian rural societies. The studies conducted by both local and foreign sociologist and Anthropologists (Peris: 1953, Ryan: 1953, Leach: 1961, Yalman: 1967, Obeyesekere: 1967, Hettige: 1984, Spencer: 1990, Roberts: 1995, Silva: 1997) have been of great help in identifying the structure and the organization of the conventional Sinhala rural society. However, it is clearly evident that the traditional Sinhala village has undergone critical changes during recent times. In the circumstances, the study concentrated on the nature and impact of the state intervention on emerging change in the Rural Society. A village in the Mullathivu District in the Northern Province was selected as the area and the objective of this was to identify present socio-cultural background of the Janakapura area, understanding the old and present socio-cultural background comparatively, study the involvement of the governmental and non-governmental organizations for the development of the Janakapura area and identify the effect of the above-mentioned organizations for the adaptations of the socio-culture in the Janakapura area. Historical method, Comparative method and Functional method were the methods generally adopted in conducting the study while the observation method and the Interview method were used for collecting the data. The Interview method was used by way of Key Informant Discussion and Focused Group Discussions. This study has revealed that the rural village has undergone extensive changes in modern times when compared to the conventional village that existed in the past. Various policies and programmes implemented during the last few years after gaining independence, particularly land policy, social welfare programmes, open economy concept, politicisation of the rural society, green revolution, extensive diffusion of government activities into the village etc. are distinctive factors that have contributed to the modernization of the conventional rural village. It can be clearly seen that the present Sinhala rural village is closely connected with the urban society and intensively linked the National Administrative set up, as never witnessed before.

Keywords: Traditional village rural community, socio-economic factors, state intervention, rural change

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