

STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT SRI LANKA AS DEPICTED FROM SIHALAVATTHUPPAKARANA

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Sihalavaththuppakarana was written by Dhammanandi Maha Thero of the Pattikotti Vihara in the Kantakasolapattana. According to some scholars, this was written in the 3rd century CE. Sihalavaththuppakarana provides facts about the social, religious, and economic situation in ancient Sri Lanka. The objective of the research is to examine the status of women in ancient Sri Lanka according to the facts revealed from Sihalavaththuppakarana. The research question is, "Does Sihalavaththuppakarana reveal the facts about the status of women in ancient Sri Lankan society?". This study was based on a qualitative research approach and used library observation for primary and secondary data sources. Sihalavaththuppakarana and other relevant sources were used. The data were analyzed qualitatively. According to Sihalavaththuppakarana, laywomen in ancient Sri Lanka could engage in religious activities such as offering food and clothes to Buddhist monks. There were Buddhist nuns during the period. Unmarried girls had to take permission from their fathers to become Buddhist nuns. Some women used to do religious activities with their husbands. Some parents used to arrange suitable marriages for their children. Sometimes women had to give a dowry to their husbands' side. The story of Pindapata Visuddhi describes a husband and wife who mortgaged their daughter to get money. According to the facts, women couldn't make decisions only based on their preferences in some matters. But women could engage in various activities, and they played key roles in society as nuns, mothers, etc. It can be concluded that they might have had an important place in society as revealed by Sihalavaththuppakarana.

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