

The Brahmins (Temple priests) - A socio – cultural and linguistic perspective.

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The Brahmins are the temple priests of the Tamil community. These casts occupy the higher strata of the cast hierarchy of the Tamil society. The Brahmins consist nearly 1% in the Jaffna Peninsula. Most of the Brahmins in Jaffna are descendants of those who have migrated to Jaffna after the Hindu revival of 19th century which was triggered by Srilasri Arumuganavalar. All the Brahmins are Hindus. They are attached to temples either as priests or as assistants. The Brahmins wear the sacred thread: They are also strictly vegetarian.

Brahmin community significantly differs from others in their lifestyle. They have special rituals connected to their day to day life. There are "Santhiyavanthanam" "Upanayanam" etc. The artisans maintain close connection with India. This cast performs several essential religious duties for the Hindu population of the Jaffna peninsula and their existence is inseparably interwoven with other cast. My Research methodology is Participation and observation, Interviews and discussion.

I shall be focusing demonstrating how the Brahmins rituals practices vary from the others and how they are able to maintain artisan identity in the Sri Lanka.

Key words: - Brahmin, Sacred thread, strictly Vegetarian, Santhiyavanthanam, Upanayanam

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