

AB125

A Study on the Functions of Magic in Rural Communities in Sri Lanka (with Special Reference to Mirigama Secretariat Division in Gampaha District)

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Most cultures of the world have religious beliefs that lead to the idea that supernatural powers can be compelled, or at least influenced, to act in certain ways for good or evil purposes by using ritual formulas. These formulas are, in a sense, magic. Rural people use Magic as a way of fulfilling emotional and social needs. Basically magic is divided into two categories. Those are black magic and white magic. Social systems change constantly. Magic is most valued in rural society. At present, Sri Lankan rural communities are also subjected to great changes but the faith in magic is still visible in rural communities, where magic, faiths and beliefs play a major role.

The main objective of this study is to identify the social functions of magic and explore the function and dysfunction of the visible and invisible.

The case study and the functional method were used to gather primary data. Data was collected through observation and interviews because qualitative data is very important for this research. The sample was selected using random purposive methods according to the non-probability sampling theory. The sample consists of 30% of the population of the area. The Thalahena village in Giriullagama GN division in Mirigama secretariat division of the Gampaha district was selected as the research area.

The main finding of the study is that many positive social functions are fulfilled by magic in rural communities in Sri Lanka. In this regard, magic has contributed to the improvement of mental health, developed social integration and helped people to bond with their religion.

Key words: *magic, beliefs, rural communities*

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