

Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) in Sri Lanka: An overview

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Sri Lanka is rich in Indigenous Knowledge (IK) as is the case in many developing countries in the South Asian Region. The island is yet to be taken proper mechanism to identify, record, protect Sri Lanka's IK. The island's IK consists of different cultural heritages of main different communities. Therefore, there is a pressing need to establish a mechanism for identification and preserve IK in Sri Lanka and also it becomes a challenge due to Sri Lanka's complex social, religious and political history that mixes Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Islam beliefs and also the influence of colonization that took place in the 18th century. As seen above this island's IK consists of many different cultural heritages of above main communities. On the other hand, formation of a viable mechanism in order to identify, locate, record and protect IK in the island becomes crucial in the phase of redevelopment and reconciliation of communities which is ongoing at present. This paper highlights the great achievements obtained by Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) in the past history in the areas of Ayurveda, Agriculture, Astronomy, Architecture, Education and sustainability of Sri Lanka's ecosystem and water management. It also attempts to observe how the Sri Lankan IK system was sufficient and relevant and also supporting in maintaining a balanced healthy, social interaction and how IK need to be researched and adapted to meet the current challenges faced by the island nation. At present Sri Lanka is facing problems of poverty, conflict, inadequate education facilities, damages made to the ecosystem, non-communicable diseases such as high-blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol which increase the financial allocations for the nation's healthcare system. Hence this paper attempt to analyze the aforesaid issues and proposes that being Sri Lankans need to clearly understand our IK systems and adapt them wisely in order to face the challenges that we are facing today.

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