

Abstract

The research, **socio-cultural study of Kandyan paintings in Sri Lanka**, related to the Kandyan kingdom was carried out on the basis of micro and macro study. The research was based on four important sites located in the historic city of Central Kandy in the above territory. There were one major research objective and two secondary objectives. The main objective was to study the contemporary Kandyan social culture and the remaining two objectives were to study the visual material culture as well as the visual non-material culture. The research was based on the basic concepts and theories of the latest disciplines in visual culture and art, visual anthropology, art, society, and culture as well as art and archaeology. The research problem of this study was whether the theoretical aspects of the above new disciplines could be studied through the paintings of the Kandyan period. The research hypothesis was that the society, culture, social stratification as well as structural features of the time were reflected in the major state-owned art sites in the Central Kandyan geographical region. Based on these facts, prior research and written source data were used to select case studies and samples for the study. The paintings and figure forms in those samples were referred to the micro-study through the macro-study methodology. This research was a cluster study based on the field observation. In compiling research data, quantitative figure forms were prioritized. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative and quantitative study methods. It led to new interpretations, and the study revealed material cultural models and contemporary non-material culture as well as social practices. Specially, a large number of features such as shapes, decorations, fashion and textile designs, costumes, equipments and other accessories could be identified in the material culture used at that era. Structural features such as beliefs, customs, communication, social stratification, and caste division were also revealed in the visual non-material culture. As the outcome of the research, the political structure of public administration in the macro-study area and their applications were also revealed.

Keywords: culture, society, central Kandy, paintings, figure forms