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*'Pioneering Metallurgy : Origins of iron and steel making
in the southern Indian subcontinent'*

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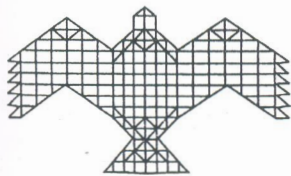
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Metal work in Pre- Modern Sri Lanka

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The present paper is a socio-historical synthesis on metal industry of Pre-Modern Sri Lanka which covers a period of about five hundred years from 15th Century to 20th Century AD. This is a period of declining of traditional industries and infiltrating of modern implements and technologies into the society. The country was under the Kandyan monarchy at the Central highlands and Western Colonial Administrators around the maritime belt of the Island during this particular period. The patronage and influence of these two different authorities towards the traditional metal industry will be assessed by the present research.

The metal industry was under the craftsmen of Sinhalese and Tamil communities who were distinguished as a different caste or castes in the feudal social context of the Island. The identification of these castes and sub-castes will be one of the main objectives of this research. Distribution pattern of these castes, their social organization, and interrelationships with other caste groups, customs and beliefs will be surveyed.

The traditional methods of metal extraction and works of village smithies of Sri Lanka will be a part of this research. Metal ores and other relevant resource centres will be plotted. Linguistic and folk traditions related to metal work will be collected and analyzed. A comparison between Sri Lankan and South Indian traditions will be attempted. In addition to field studies, thorough literature survey and analysis of oral history will be the basis of this research.
