

An Anthropological Analysis on the Present Face of Ancient Hydraulic Civilization in Sri Lanka: With Special Reference to the Socio Economic and Cultural Study on Kapirikgama Cascade of North Central Province

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A special feature of the Sinhala civilization of ancient Sri Lanka was its irrigation network. The purpose of this system was to impound the water in a reservoir during the rainy season and release it through channels to the rice fields during the dry season. The lands thus brought under rice civilization covered the whole of the vast plains of Rajarata, the realm of the earliest rulers of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa that lasted from the latter half of the first millennium B. C. to the thirteenth century A.D. (Seneviratna 2002: 13). The present study of the ancient irrigation work is limited to the on going situation of the Kapirikgama cascade in North Central province of Sri Lanka.

Present government (2004) has been paid its attention to the ancient Sri Lankan grandeur which has been lost from the captive of colonial rulers from 1505. This situation had become more worst under the British rulers (1796). However the Government (2004) has begun a massive irrigation project to reconstruct ten thousand damaged and devastated reservoirs which spread all over the country. Under this project we conduct a socio- economic and cultural research in Kapirikgama cascade during the month of March 2005.

Kapirikgama cascade is consisting of three 'gramaseva' divisions which named Kapirikgama, Peenagama and Konakumbukwewa. There are more than twenty reservoirs available in the Kapirikgama cascade.

Basically we collected two kinds of data named quantitative and qualitative. Through a questionnaire we gathered quantitative data. By using of interview method we able to collect ample of qualitative data.

Thereby we explore various socio -economic and cultural aspects of the rural people in the area and also the culture and beliefs which pertaining to the reservoirs of the Kapirikgama cascade of North Central province in Sri Lanka.

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