

## **Caste based social stratification and development backwardness: a case study in Gampaha District of Sri Lanka**

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Social stratification is a mirror image of the progressive change in human wellbeing. This study mainly identifies the impact of caste system for development backwardness of people in the rural peripheries in Gampaha district, though it is a rapidly developing regions in Sri Lanka.

After 60 years since the Independence of the country, half of the land area and one fourth of total population in the district are still underdeveloped. For 500 years, the social structure of the area has been reacting between tradition and modernity in the struggle for enhancing a quality of life.

The case study of selected village areas in the Divisional Secretariat Divisions of *Mirigama, Attanagalla, Weke* revealed that the roots of backwardness of people have both endogenous and exogenous causes. The study areas, Radawadunna Pahala, Ethaudakanda and Kirimatiyawatta are relatively backward and stagnating amidst growing urban and industrial zones in the Gampaha district.

Majority of the families in the village of Radawadunna, Kirimatiyawatta and Ethaudakanda are victim of the long established caste system. Mostly they believe that their caste make them marginalized and backwarded from the development process. Especially, in Radawadunna, all the villagers represent the same caste. Caste mentality badly affected to the development progress in the families and the villages.

**Key words:** Development backwardness, Caste based social stratification, Tradition, Modernity, Under developedment

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