

## **Extinction of Sinhala Buddhist, a religious or a political issue?**

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This paper discusses the problem of extinction of Sinhala Buddhist in Sri Lanka in the perspective of social anthropology and cultural communication. A strongly held conviction is that such decay occurs in the Sinhala Buddhist as a result of the problem of popular Buddhism and the serious influence of political power and its effect on each and every sector of social and cultural development in the social system of modern democratic governance in the application of alienated western social governance system of modern democracy. This has been impractical and unproductive in the application of lonely developed historical and civilized cultures except from western recently developed modern consumerist societies.

This study was conducted in the north-eastern province focusing on ancient religious places in Girihaduseya, Welgamviharaya, Seruwila and Somawathiya. Fundamentally, this study employs qualitative methodology, with participatory observation, non-participatory observation and in depth interviews. In addition, the present scenario of governance in the western democratic model in the local political system was also investigated in this study as a content analysis. Ten case studies of religious issues and another ten cases of political issues were also subject to content analysis. The time frame was from 1994 to 2015.

In conclusion, this study assumes that the decrease of the population and the malfunction of the Buddhist religious practices in the governance of modern democracy in each and every institution were significantly affected by the inhumane, pseudo-religious and political practices that has engulfed both religious and political institutions. Meanwhile, the rapid expansion of Muslim and other ethnic groups were catalysts in the internal crisis of the Sinhala Buddhist society, as well as the application of western democratic development and a political governance project without a proper outlook in the absorption of the local political system. Finally this study suggests that the modern Buddhist and political practices should be transformed according to the early teachings of local historical and ancient cultural background. Modernity is the fact that emerges from the ancient and historical underpinnings albeit the most popular widely discussed western dominant perspective of modern social and religious thought.

**Key terms:** Extinction, Sinhala Buddhist, religious and political institutions, social anthropology, cultural communication