

From jungle to village and village to cyber world: social dynamics and Vadda community in Dambana (An ethno archaeological perspective)

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Abstract

Archaeology is the study of change and it focuses attention on how human societies and their material culture alter and evolve. Analysis and understanding of change lies at the heart of the archaeological endeavor. The study of social dynamics and affected factors of relatively simple societies such as Vadda people has become a main objective in ethno archaeology. This field investigation was conducted among the Vadda people in Dambana with special emphasis on the changes in material culture.

In the past, they carried out their traditional hunting and gathering life style as a simple society. Then this community adapted to the settled agro-pastoral life due to the number of social, economic and political factors. Now they have started to join with the cyber world as a result of external influences.

Not only the subsistence pattern changed but also most aspects of the life has subjected to the same phenomenon. According to the extent of adaptations two groups can be identified within the Vadda people in Dambana who have different views on the issue. One group has adapted to the Sinhalese culture and the other try to follow the traditional culture for some extent.

Number of factors such as losing the traditional lands to continue their hunting and gathering subsistence strategy due to the establishment of Maduruoya national park, deforestation and settlement expansion and development polices of the government, cultural and biological mixture with Sinhalese people, tourism and so on cause to the dynamics of the Vadda community in Dambana. The main problem they have been facing is to protect traditional elements of the culture as far as possible within the modern socio economic realities.

Key words: Ethno archaeology, Vadda community, Social dynamics, Dambana