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Paper: Transformability

Modernization and transformation of the rural community: Madagama Village, Galle District

The Sinhala rural society occupies a distinctly unique position vis-à-vis the Asian rural societies. The studies conducted by both local and foreign sociologists and anthropologists have been of great help in identifying the structure and the organization of the conventional Sinhala rural society. However, it is clearly evident that the traditional Sinhala village has undergone critical changes during recent times.

A village in the Galle District in the Southern Province was selected as the area, and the objective of this was to make an attempt to ascertain the nature of the structure and the organization of the society in a village in the wet zone of Sri Lanka, the linkage existing between the village and the city, identification of the government programmes implemented in the village, assess the impact of those programmes in the village and the village social life, and to identify the nature and the pattern of changes that had taken place in the village.

Historical method, comparative method and functional method were the methods generally adopted in conducting the study, while the observation method and the interview method were used for collecting the data. The interview method was used by way of key informant discussion and focus group discussions.

This study has revealed that the rural village has undergone extensive changes in modern times when compared to the conventional village that existed in the past. Various policies and programmes implemented during the last few years of colonial rule, and after gaining independence, particularly land policy, social welfare programmes, open economy concept, politylization of the rural society, green revolution, extensive diffusion of government activities into the village etc. are distinctive factors that have contributed to the modernization of the conventional rural village. It can be clearly seen that the present Sinhala rural village is closely connected with urban society and intensively linked to the national administrative set up, as never witnessed before.

Keywords: Rural community, State Intervention, Rural change, Traditional village