

A study of blessings (Sethkam) composed connected to water in order to get rain in Nuwarakalawiya, Sri Lanka

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The 'Nuwarakalawiya' (area bounded by Nuwara tank, Kala tank and Padawiya tank) in Sri Lanka is widely popular for farming and agricultural activities. Those agricultural activities are mainly undertaken during the two rainy seasons, namely the 'Yala' and 'Maha'. However there is no certainty that sufficient rain water will be received during these seasons to engage in their agri based livelihood. At times of such dry periods, they used to pray for 'rain', and such mechanisms are known as 'Sethkam'.

This study was aimed at identifying such mechanisms and their influence towards people's beliefs. Data were collected through a review of literature and interviews and analysed qualitatively. Twenty interviewees (Two bikkus, ten farmers and eight female villagers) who are knowledgeable and experienced in using such mechanisms were interviewed.

The findings reveal that there are four popular mechanisms (types of sethkam) used to pray for the rain by the people in the Nuwarakalawiya. They are; Wesi Piritha, Subhuthi Bali Yagaya, Subhuthi Ambun Baliya and Niruwath Bali yagaya.

Moreover, it was identified that those mechanisms play a significant role in people's lives of Nuwarakalawiya. However there is a growing tendency to neglect those mechanisms by the younger generation in the region, hence there is an essential and urgent need to protect those mechanisms, in order to preserve the indigenous features of the Sri Lankan culture, and to ensure the sustainability of the community.

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