

A study of importance of *Shanthikarma* as soft power for country branding of Sri Lanka

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Soft power is a new type of power that can be used to brand nation and country, association with intangible power sources such as culture, ideology and institutions. Over the human civilization, many communities have developed their traditions, rituals and methods related to different fields such as dancing, music, arts, agriculture, medicine, irrigation systems and architecture in harmony with local ecosystems and nature. Sri Lanka has over 2500 years of history and it is related to traditional art including various types of dancing, music, paintings and sculptures from ancient history. *Shanthikarma* (a ritual consisting of chanting, drumming, and dancing aimed at warding off evil spirits) is a fundamental part of upcountry and low-country dancing systems in Sri Lanka. There are many forms of *Shanthikarma* practices in Sri Lanka varying from the health, protection and wellbeing of individuals as well as the society. But in modern society, *Shanthikarma* is diminishing rapidly as a result of various socio-economic transformations. Thus, the main objective of this study was to identify methods of using *Shanthikarma* to promote the identity of Sri Lanka in the field of tourism. This study is based on data from secondary sources. The literature review method was used for collecting data from relevant journal articles, research reports, textbooks and other academic works. The relevant literature was used according to the purposes of the study. The data was analyzed based on the descriptive method. Although many people have focused their attention on utilizing cultural heritage such as archaeological sites, *Perahera* to promote tourism, there is an inadequate focus on integrating methods of elements of *Shanthikarma* to increase the attraction of foreigners to Sri Lanka. Vocal elements such as *Sloka*, *Sanna*, *Stanzas*, drumming performance of *Getabera* and *Yak bera*, Dramatic items such as *Yakkam*, and Dancing items such as *Yakkenuma*, *Bulath padaya*, *Kothala padaya*, *Thelme* in *Shanthikarma* including *Kohombayak Kankari Shanthikarma*, *Gammadu*, *Dewol madu* and *Bali Shanthikarma*, *Riddiyagaya*, *Dahaata Sanniya* are main elements which can be used independently and separately to increase the attraction of foreigners. Currently, a space to perform these items in tourist hotels in Sri Lanka cannot be found. These separated vocal, dancing and dramatic items of *Shanthikarma* can be performed in a special stage of top tourist hotels and accommodations in a specific time. As well as, it can be organized several cultural events including *Shanthikarma* in the period of increasing arrivals of foreigners to Sri Lanka. There are *Thanthra* which create a mental stimulant. Thus, those artistic and psychotherapy values should be promoted as soft power for the Country branding of Sri Lanka.

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