

Gypsy Culture and Society in the Changing World: A Sociological Analysis

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Gypsies are a small primitive as well as a nomadic tribe who are struggling to face the changing world. They spread over the whole world, especially in Eastern Europe, where they are known as Romanies. In Sri Lanka gypsies are called “Ahikuntika” or “Kuthadi”. They live mostly in the North Central and the Eastern provinces. Special behavioural patterns and customs can be seen in their lives. Although they still depend on their endemic occupations, permanent settlements have also been used by this group. However, they have to encounter a lot of difficulties as a result of social change.

The objective of this research is to identify the obstacles, challengers encountered by the gypsies in Sri Lanka. The location of research is Kudagama, a small village in Ikiriwewa Grama Niladari Division of Thammbuttegama Divisional Secretariat in the Anuradhapura district. The methodology of this study is comprised with two vital research methods: they are comparative method and life historical method. Interviews and observations are used as tools of data collection. This is an in-depth study on gypsies which examined economic, social, political and cultural aspects.

It could be concluded that their traditional life style has changed, and also their activities and other customs are mixed up with those of the Sinhala community. In addition, they have confronted several problems as parents, youth and children. That includes, illiteracy, lack of health environment, alcoholism, lack of parental care, cultural alienation, child abuse by their parents, lack of job opportunities etc. Although they are willing to have access to the modern world they confront-various difficulties in adapting themselves to new social order. Finally, we can state that the Gypsies are confronting many challenges in this new world order and as a result of these challenges their traditional culture and society have undergone several changes today.

Key Words: Gypsy; sub culture; Migrant; Social change; Challenges

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