

A study of the Language variety used by the Afro- Sri lankan Community of Sri Lanka. (Living in Puttalam, Kalpitya and Trincomalee)

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Afro-Sri Lankans (also known as Kaffirs or Kapiri) are a very small ethnic group in Sri Lanka who are descendants of African workers and soldiers brought to the island by Portuguese and British colonists. The research was focused on identifying the nature of this language and studies it linguistically. The majority of the words found in the songs sung by members the Afro-Sri Lankan community in Puttalam. The other Afro- Sri Lankan communities living in Trincomalee and Kalpitya were also included in this study. The research included data from approximately 50 male and female participants who volunteered from these communities. The research instruments used in this research were speech recordings and interviews. The Puttalam and Kalpitiya communities are the descendants of African soldiers and domestic slaves of Portuguese colonists. Those in the Trincomalee community are the descendants of African colonial soldiers from the British Royal Forces. The ancestors of these Africans were brought to Sri Lanka during two different eras by two different colonists. Only the communities living in Puttalam and Kalpitya use this language in their songs called the African Manja. Some scholars have identified their language as a Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole. Some of the Portuguese Burghers living in the Batticaloa District in Sri Lanka use the Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole as their second or home language. The Afro-Sri Lankans use it only in their songs. The research proved that the variety of the Portuguese creole used in Puttalam and Kalpitiya is a mixture of Portuguese and Sinhala words. The Portuguese Creole used in Batticaloa by the Portuguese Burghers is Portuguese mixed with Tamil words, leaving slight differences in lexicography and pronunciation. The Afro-Sri Lankan community living in Trincomalee is descend from British colonial subjects who had no access to the Portuguese language and do not know the language at all. The language data was analyzed based on a structural theoretical framework. The research finding was documented and preserved for future research and references.

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