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An Exploratory study on Fertility rituals practiced by Sinhalese Buddhist and their impact on the social constancy

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This paper attempts to analyze how rituals related to birth among Sinhalese promote the stability of society. It is also perceived that these rituals and associated ceremonies have been continuously focused on momentous life events such as Birth, Puberty, Marriage and death. Moreover, these life rotational events are distinctly celebrated by the society and they affixed precious importance to the kinship labyrinth within the society. When special consideration is given to explore the Fertility Rituals, which are woven around the birth of an infant, three major phases could be detected. These are, marriage to conception, the gestation period and the post-natal period. It should be mentioned that the Fertility rituals observed by the Sinhalese Buddhists request a degree of altruism which in turn elevates self-abnegation. A considerable selflessness is manifested by one's own kith and kin as well as the total community. It is evident that performance of these fertility rituals strengthens the sturdy composite vibes and celebrates group values. They usher and stimulate the associates of the rituals to help each other both at household and community level which eventually strengthen, sustain and maintain the community structure.

When analyzed the entire process associated with fertility rituals, it is not hard to notice the effectiveness of the process of socialization involved there in and one of the most important elements connected with rituals relevant to childbirth is the propagation of the concept of sacredness of life. Also, it makes possible an enduring society and transformation of its cultural values between generations. It is gleaned from our field work that the rituals on the whole still maintain their grip on the society despite the facts like modernization and westernization and increasingly competitive social fabric on the other.

Key words : *Fertility, Rituals, Sinhalese learned from our Buddhists, altruism, community*

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