

**SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL PATTERNS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY
IN SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUTTLAM DISTRICT**



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ABSTRACT

Religion has been considered as a “phenomenon which has an unprecedented potentiality in transforming the human thinking, history and the civilization.” Religion, which can be identified as a *menti fact* (Haggett, 1977) related to the human being within the culture, can be named as a hidden agenda that is being implemented to attain the power of the world today. Although religion is introduced as one aspect of the culture or the human thinking, in a geographical context it can be defined as a complex process that spread through time and space. Studying these temporal and spatial processes is the core of the Geographical Science today.

In Sri Lanka, Christianity was firmly established through the western colonial enterprises. However, the impact of socio-economic and political influences of Christianity can still be identified in Sri Lanka specially in the coastal regions. The objective of this research is to study the spatial and temporal patterns in Christian Community, in the Puttlam district. Puttlam is selected for this study as it is known to be an area where Christianity is widely spread. Majority of the objectives of the research cannot be comprehended and explained using by statistical methods. A qualitative data collection method like Case study and life history methods has restricted explanatory prospects in such situation. Based on that, the primary data were collected through case studies done as “deep interviews” like genealogy studies among 15 households which were used to examine the accuracy of the secondary data collected. Therefore, this study foreground that there are obvious temporal and spatial diffusion patterns is effect within the said region with regards to the spread of Christianity.

When a religion spread within a particular geographical unit basically physical geographical factors strongly influence. Attraction of devotees towards a particular religion and determination of the temporal and spatial pattern of diffusion of the religion is more and strongly influenced by socio-economic geographical factors than the physical geographical factors. Similarly, with the elapse of time influence of physical geographical factors become zero and socio-economical geographical factors further contribute to attract people towards religion and its spatial diffusion. Specially, attraction of devotees towards a particular religion does not act as an independent variable but the nature of these patterns of diffusions is determined by the variables or the factors such as education, employment, living conditions, as well as the administrative structure of a country.

Key Words: *Menti fact*, Temporal, Spatial, Physical Geographical factors, Socio-economical geographical factors