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Dr. M. Sriyani Gunarathne
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Tel: +94 812382852
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Contents

Human Trafficking of Rohingya people: A Review on Protection Space for Refugee Victims

Sodip Roy

PhD Candidate, Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary &
Faculty Member (Political Science), Open School, Bangladesh Open
University
Email: *sodip.roy@stud.uni-corvinus.hu*

Abstract

This study investigates the scope of protection of refugee victims of human trafficking in South and Southeast Asia with particular attention to Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh. Approximately 1.3 million Rohingya refugee in the camps in Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh tend to get rid of their 'subhuman life' by any means. They take the chance of out-migration from the camps with the help of human traffickers and smugglers in Malaysia and Thailand internationally as well as in other parts of Bangladesh domestically. Whenever some of them touch the shore, the refugee victims do not receive appropriate protection under the national and regional Human Trafficking (HT) legal frameworks. Very few studies have explored those scopes and challenges about protection of refugee victims. To that end, the study explores secondary resources related to the mobility of Rohingya people, relevant convention of ASEAN, SAARC, and national Anti-Human Trafficking Act of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia from human rights lens. And the procedure brings forth a conclusion that refugee (Rohingya) in general have limited space in protection policies of human trafficking norms while the legacy of rejection of the UN Refugee Convention underscores the human rights of Rohingya refugee as victims too in the region.

Keywords: Human Rights, Human Trafficking, Protection, Rejection, Rohingya narrative

Introduction

Human trafficking is one of the worst forms of organized global crime. Vulnerable people are highly exposed to human trafficking (Shelly, 2010). In this regard, women, refugee due to conflict and climate change become victims of this heinous crime. It happens both voluntarily and involuntarily (Aronowitz, 2009). Human trafficking and smuggling entail many social, political, economic consequences which all lead to gross human rights violations. It is difficult both for the policymaker and researchers to garner accurate data about victims and the racket of trafficking. Trafficking takes place in different forms that have a history of thousand years. However, the modern forms of trafficking began during the European colonial legacy in Africa and Asia. At that time hundreds of thousands of slaves were harbored and traded around the globe in a very organized way and in certain routes. Approximately 25 million people are trafficked every year, huge turn out from trafficking trade (US TiP Report, 2020) easily attracts the wider attention of saviors, policymakers, and academics.

Forced displacement indirectly pushes individual's safety and life to fraudulent smugglers with unlimited uncertainties (Quinn, 2016). About 1.3 million Rohingya refugee from Myanmar have been living in the squalid condition of humanitarian action in Cox's Bazar (CXB) of Bangladesh since 2017. Rohingya people have no refugee status and other legal rights in Bangladesh. They have no right to movement, right to work and self-reliance. Rohingya are 'subhuman' of the twenty-first century (Uddin, 2020). Some of them have already spent several decades and the largest influx of 2017 too is now in protracted refugee situation (PRS). They see no future here and are likely to migrate to Malaysia, Thailand and so on. Consequently, refugee grasps every chance to get rid of the current situation preferably with the help of human smugglers (McCaffrie, 2019). From March 2019 to March 2020 alone there were 15,000 recorded trafficking incidents – with actual numbers likely to be much higher (Third Pole, 2021). They undertake perilous journeys through the Bay of Bengal channel (Karim, 2019; UNHCR, 2020). But most of them cannot cross the route because of adverse weather as well as patrolling of coast guards across the sea (Khairi et al., 2018). In most cases, respective security

personnel push back the Rohingya people, even after noticing clear signs of human trafficking. A significant number of Rohingya people also drown away in the sea every year and those who are rescued, back to refugee camps in Bangladesh. A significant number of Rohingya refugee are trafficked internally in different other parts of Bangladesh too (Caballero-Anthony, 2018). Rohingya people do not receive any protection under the anti-Human Trafficking laws and conventions in any of the destination countries. But considering the magnitude of vulnerability, refugee (Rohingya) victims should be in priority in the hierarchy of protection in human trafficking norms. Therefore, this study attempts to demonstrate some of these issues: why the anti-human trafficking conventions and national laws in the respective countries do not comply with the human rights of Rohingya refugee victims. In brief, the study assesses the noble aims but inappropriate implications of human trafficking legal framework of Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia that result in more vulnerability to Rohingya people in the region. This paper argues for wider space for refugee victims of human trafficking as special category in protection strategy.

The study moves forward total in six sections. The running section delineates an overview of the problems to address in the subsequent sections. The present situation of Rohingya people and reasons behind their perilous journey got attention in this section. The next section reviewed scientific literature. It sheds light on the nature and dynamic of human trafficking of Rohingya people from Myanmar and refugee camps in Bangladesh to Malaysia, Thailand and to in other parts of Bangladesh. The third part outlines the techniques and resources applied to conduct this study. The fourth section illustrates the findings in which it demonstrates legacy of anti-trafficking laws and conventions of the respective countries and forums they belong to. It finds that these countries were more interested in formulating the laws rather than their proper implementation. The fifth section presents a discussion on the opportunity, scope, and challenges of enforcement of laws and ensuring the human rights of victims at large, considering their history, ethnicity, and geography. The final and conclusion part synthesizes the study that there are many legal

frameworks to ensure human rights of vulnerable people, but those laws and conventions are not objective in enforcement. Especially, Rohingya people in South and Southeast Asia regions are not addressed and accepted by any legal framework.

Background

Human Trafficking in South and Southeast Asia, and Rohingya refugee

The Rohingya refugee crisis began in 1978, a long time after the creation of the Burmese pluralistic state where Rohingya people could enjoy their minimum political and human rights as Burmese nationals. During that time, the military junta executed *nagamin* operation to clear the illegal immigrant from Burma and to sort out the original citizen of the territory. And some 222,000 Rohingya people fled away to Bangladesh shortly after its independence for safe shelter in 1978. Burma was transforming drastically under the military dictatorship into a failed state. The de facto military government enacted many discriminatory and contested laws since taking power in 1962. Military junta formulated the Citizenship Law 1982 which intentionally stripped of every right including the political rights of the Rohingya people in Myanmar. The direct effect of that law was the second exodus of Rohingya people in1991-1992 while 250,000 Rohingya ethnic people took shelter in the Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh (Grundy-War and Wong, 1997). Further exodus took place in 2012 and at that time 140,000 Rohingya people escaped from Myanmar to Bangladesh. But the biggest influx of 700,000 Rohingya civilians crossed the border to Bangladesh in 2017. Now there are thirty-three camps in the sub-districts of CXB and new makeshifts have sprung over rapidly in the adjacent areas.

Countries in the region are known as source, transit, and destination country for victims of human trafficking. Nation-state building and ethnic conflicts have produced millions of refugees and IDPs in this region in the post-colonial period (Roy, 2021). This region is one of the largest sanctuaries of refugee in developing world after the African continent.

Currently, Rohingya and other Burmese refugee have high frequency of human trafficking in the region. In a study by Trajano (2018) mentioned referring to different sources that 5% of the total 85% victims of human trafficking in the East Asia and Pacific region are stateless Rohingya minorities from Myanmar while an approximately similar percentage of Rohingya refugee trafficked only from Bangladesh. Traffickers often target impoverished, rural areas, promising young women who seek opportunities for a better life in the big city (Betz, 2009). Betz further claims that having no effective prevention programs, many of these victims cannot recognize the common signs of trafficking traps and fall victim to obvious falsehoods. The structural condition of the refugee is more vulnerable and trafficking prone than the women and children in normal settings. Kumar, C. (2015) claims about disparities among the South Asian (SA) countries as reasons of human trafficking. Human trafficking is the third biggest money-earning illegal trade. The author indicates the regional and international response and initiatives among the countries in SA to fight human trafficking. Along with many other efforts the study focuses on more cooperation between government and non-government organizations. It is a brief comparative scenario of human trafficking in SA countries which reflects the categories, causes and forms of human trafficking. An empirical study of Huda (2006) focuses the vulnerability of women and children to their human trafficking, thus receiving some protection as well from NGOs rather than government efforts in SA countries. Such studies highlighted some push factors of people in normal settings at large, not on the forcibly displaced people or refugees. Kumar, A. (2020) demonstrates the status of different SAARC countries about combating human trafficking based on literature review. He further maintains that regionalism among the SAARC members also undermines the fight against human trafficking in person. By identifying the categories and causes of human trafficking in SA. Kumar A. (2020) suggests strong NGO involvement in the combating efforts. In this regard, Yousaf (2018) accuses the traditional state-centric migration and trafficking policies for rampant human trafficking because these do not focus on the root causes of problems rather increase the vulnerability of the victims and displaced.

Discriminatory policies are the key factors of causes and consequences of vulnerabilities of the displaced.

Several studies have indicated refugees' unfulfilled economic, social, and psychological needs in the camps. Seltzer (2013) identifies many unavoidable factors of refugees' trafficking that emanate from a protracted situation. Among the factors: "the desperate circumstances of migration, physical and social insecurity, dissolution of family and community support structures, pressure to turn to 'survival sex' limited means of income generation and lack of legal protection". But the study did not mention anything about protection issues, nothing about the actors of protection as well. Cheung (2011) shows a comparative perspective of Rohingya refugees' protection and status of international framework to that end in Bangladesh and Malaysia. He widely delineated the overall South and Southeast Asia's refugee protection, migration issues. Most of the host countries of the region did not accede to the UNHCR Convention and that has different types of implications to refugees' rights and protection. In one point of the study, the author argues the de facto integration as intermediate solution in many of the countries that is somehow better than many implications of refugee crisis solutions. The study however addressed some responses of the states, there is nothing details about protections initiatives are taken by them. Another study on the same region illustrates that along with inadequate protection and assistance, victims are also criminalized (Caballero-Anthony, 2018). Cheung (2011) however refers to some particular policy actions and their causality, there were no in-depth discussions about their implications and effects in the field or to the refugee. Chantanvinch (2020) argues the Thailand case that it was kind of forced to adopt and formulate and upgrade their human trafficking Act because of some policy implications from US TiP and EU regulations. But it cannot implement them properly in the case of Rohingya victims because of structural gaps and complex narrative of Rohingya crisis. The study did not focus on the national and regional politics of implementation of the law and conventions in Thailand.

Risk of human trafficking of refugee is ever increasing across the globe (Wilson, 2011). "There is emerging evidence that refugees are at risk of being trafficked, both in camp and urban situations, in international airports, and at borders" (Kneebone, 2010:140). Such people deserve a distinct place in human trafficking protection regard to their experiences and needs (Anderson and Li, 2018). The existing prosecution-based fight against trafficking could not improve the situation considerably. Kneebone (2010) further asserts that having failed to prevent human trafficking by legislative and bureaucratic policies, a significant number of developed countries are emphasizing on the protection of the victims in the source or country of origin. Even in Europe refugee victims are denied necessary protection under existing legal framework (GRETA, 2014), while the total efforts found minimal in terms of the extent of the crisis. Developed countries in west oftentimes excuse the difficulties of determination and differentiation of refugee victims of human trafficking from the common victims. But the statement can be rejected that most of the victims arrived there from a refugee camp, there should be no doubt about their refugeehood.

Methodology

The study follows a qualitative approach based on secondary resources. The exploration falls into two categories. Firstly, it examines the implications of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention and respective national Anti-human trafficking in person Acts to Rohingya people. Secondly, academic studies, the UN reports, news articles, government policies and strategy papers, action reports of humanitarian and human rights organizations, and international legal frameworks for protection and management of victims are explored to delve into the study aims. In this part, inclusion and exclusion of literature have been determined based on the criteria of context, methodology, study objectives, findings, and implications. Studies on non-refugee cases are not considered to draw the conclusion and implications of this study. University library, Web of Science and Google Scholar were the main platform of the targeted

literature searching. Moreover, some of the latest data have been collected from web searching. During the exploration, the data were sorted out mainly in two blocks: occurrences and protection measures or action by the involving parties. Similarly, in the case of national and regional framework, it systematically focuses on the scope of protection for nationals and victims from the convention parties. And ranges of data sources offered a scope to cross check the authenticity of the data to some extent as well.

Findings: anti-human trafficking legal framework and protection of Rohingya victims

According to UNHCR's definition, Rohingya refugees are already passing their days in a protracted refugee situation. They tend to escape the vulnerable condition in the camps in Bangladesh. Rohingya refugee try to reach the nearest country like Thailand, Malaysia as boat people (UNHCR, 2021b). But none of the countries want to receive these boat people to their shore. They maintain a rejection to UN Refugee Convention as well as do not formulate their own refugee policy (Moretti, 2021). Whatever the conditions of the migrants, they are eventually treated under the immigration and other criminal acts of the country (Yousaf, 2018). The situation changed dramatically in two folds after the 2000s. The higher the number of Rohingya people are undertaking their journey to Thailand and Malaysia, the immigration laws turned stricter against them. Consequently, human trafficking and smuggling are high prevalence in the region in the said period. Exploitation and torture against the Rohingya people captured the world media attention and human rights activists. Frequent perilous journey of Rohingya refugee and reactions of the destination countries, put these countries in the lowest tier of US TIP at least in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Resultantly, Malaysia, Thailand, and Bangladesh formulate their anti-Human Trafficking laws in 2007, 2008 and 2012 respectively. Simultaneously, regional forums - the SAARC and the ASEAN - also enacted anti-human trafficking conventions in 2002 and 2015. And all these legal frameworks have promises to safeguard the human rights of the victims of human trafficking, here also the Rohingya refugee. Nevertheless, the world witnessed the frequent pushback of boats,

detention, and detection of mass graves in the Thai coast of the Andaman Sea (Coddington, 2021).

Thailand is a state party of the UN Human Trafficking Protocol since 2000 and ratified them in 2013 (Cheepprasop and Wahab, 2018). It adopted her law on Anti-Human Trafficking in Person in January 2008. Putting Prime Minister as the Chairman of Anti-Trafficking in Person Committee, it offers a notion of priority and sincerity of fight against human trafficking (US TIP, 2021). Accordingly, it incorporates many clauses regarding the safety and protection of the victims of human trafficking. Section 33 of the Act pledges "to provide assistance as appropriate to a trafficked person on food, shelter, medical treatment, physical and mental rehabilitation, education, training, legal aid, the return to the country of origin or domicile, the legal proceedings to claim compensation according to the regulations prescribed by the Minister, providing that human dignity and the difference in sex, age, nationality, race, and culture of the trafficked person shall be taken into account". It pledges to offer safety of assistant to prosecution in Thailand as well as the country of origin of the victims too. Upon satisfactory evidence of being trafficked victims, the victims are provided with temporary work permits and stay temporarily until their return to home country. Competent authority obliges to ensure their safety during this period too (Thailand's Anti-Trafficking Act, 2008).

Bangladesh and Malaysia did not ratify the UN Convention and Protocol on Human Trafficking in Person. They responded to some US TIP policy implications and accessed the UN convention. Both countries already have their Anti-human trafficking policies. Malaysia enacted its law in 2007. However, Malaysia had several steps to support of Rohingya people until 2000 on humanity. The scenario has got a U-turn after the 2017 genocide attempt to Rohingya (Pudjibudojo, 2019). It has declared zero tolerance for illegal and irregular migrants in the country (Yesmin, 2016). Recently, Amnesty International claimed Malaysian plan to push back of some Rohingya people as 'heinous plan' (Amnesty International, 2020). Malaysian law on human trafficking and smuggling can be applied only in case of having nationality or citizenship of any country (Clause -3), so it

has nothing to do with stateless people- Rohingya victims. In the best practice, a victim can get protection during the fourteen days of investigation under a Protection officer. If magistrate considers the report that the person is a trafficked victim, he/she shall be placed in refuge for a maximum three-month time. After that, the victim will be handled according to the Malaysia Immigration Act 1959/63. Normally, in very few cases reach up to that phase, and before that Immigration authority deports the person as early as possible from Malaysia (Ahmad, Rahim and Mohammed, 2016).

Thailand and Malaysia belong to the regional forum – ASEAN. They signed and ratified the ASEAN human trafficking convention in 2015. But the Association initiated some directives and declarations well before this mandate to combat transnational crimes in the region (Yusran, 2018). Members of the convention agreed to follow standard regulations and procedures to identify victims of trafficking in person in cooperation with non-government organizations. It was the outcome of decade-long practices of combating of transnational crime against women and children according to other soft-laws and cooperation among regional and international groups. It aims for human-rights-based anti-human trafficking tool (Rafferty, 2016). The convention has also four yardsticks of combating human trafficking: prosecution, protection, prevention, and partnership. But both Malaysia and Thailand had slow progress in recent times in identifying and protection of identified victims of trafficking for which Malaysia has downgraded in the US TIP 2021 report. Bangladesh neither ratifies the UN Refugee Conventions nor the UN Human Trafficking Protocol. It has no operational refugee policy too. Nevertheless, it is hosting the largest number of refugees at present. Rohingya people have no refugee statuses in Bangladesh, and they live on humanitarian assistance in encampment. Rohingya people attempt to escape the camps on various reasons and purposes other than vulnerability. Since the largest influx of Rohingya people in Bangladesh, 70,000 refugee have been rescued and returned to the camps from different routes of their outward migration (Tukish Policy, 2020). Besides the refugee issues, many Bangladeshi citizens have been claimed to be trafficked victims in many

countries, particularly in middle east countries. Thus, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) enacted its Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act in 2012. Like other countries Acts, it also has incorporated the strategy of Prevention, Prosecution and Protection of victims of human trafficking. This act pledges to take necessary actions for the protection of victims jointly with the help of non-government organizations (Article-32). There are provisions for necessary number of protective and rehabilitation centres for the victims, but the law does not have any defined time duration of their stay in the protective homes. Protection period would to be determined by the Tribunal and can provide support until the victims needed. Foreign nationals and stateless persons are not considered in this law, so as under its framework. Therefore, it holds no jurisdiction of treating the Rohingya refugee victims of human trafficking from camps in CXB.

Bangladesh is a founding member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and it signed the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution in 2001 (Kumar, 2015). The scope of this convention is narrower compared to other conventions and laws mentioned here. However, it can be savior of at least half of the total trafficked persons who are women and children. This convention emphasizes to prevent and solve the cases of trafficking of women and children through extradition treaties between the countries, in case of no such treaties, this convention will stand as a medium of such actions (Article 7). It only considers the trafficking cases from the nationals of the parties of this convention. There is no clear-cut provision of the protection of the victims, instead, it offers 'care and maintenance' of the victims only for interim period (Article 9). That minimum protection also only can be offered for the nationals of the member countries, no room for stateless aliens. Recently, Bangladesh has accessed the UN Conventions on TIP. So far there is no binding for Bangladesh at this stage, it will take time to notice the implications, since it at least agreed to something.

Discussion

Challenges and way out

Rohingya people have been persecuting in Myanmar since its independence in 1948. But their dispersing in the neighboring countries continued to increase from 1978. Majority of them got their sanctuary in the refugee camps in Bangladesh. And their escape journey from the camps has increased in many folds to other parts of Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia. Most of them are pushed back to sea by the Malaysian and Thai Navy (UNHCR, 2021b). After their exploitation in the trafficking rackets, there is no protection from the state actors even after having strong legal framework of anti-Human Trafficking Acts and Conventions. But "International law imposes obligations on states to protect the human rights of refugees arriving on their shores" (Amnesty International, 2020).

Thailand and Malaysia maintained the non-refoulment principle to some extent and anti-human trafficking protection notion for the Rohingya people until 2010. During the influx in 2017 in Bangladesh, they just sealed their border for Rohingya people. Malaysian examples were against any human rights principle. This country exercised its Immigration and Anti-trafficking laws to detention and deport even after noticing severe exploitation in the hands of human traffickers (Pudjibudojo, 2019). Under this Act there is no protection for stateless people such as Rohingya Muslims. Moreover, this law tends to conflate highly human trafficking with smuggling. It only offers minimum shelter and protection for the trafficked person, not any support in the case of smuggled migrants. In the case of Rohingya victims, it is difficult to determine and demarcate whether they are trafficked or smuggled because here the process and exploitation happen inclusively. Since Rohingya people bear no political identity or citizenship, they are kind of untouchable or unseeable under the Anti-human trafficking in person and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act of Malaysia. Malaysia takes on the Rohingya entrance from economic and security perspective (Yesmin, 2016). A UNHCR report estimates about 103,000 Rohingya refugee live in Malaysia (UNHCR, 2021). They struggle to survive illegally and with informal earnings (Routray, 2019).

Only a few of them have been granted legal permission to stay and work. And Malaysian government thinks that it has been doing a lot for Rohingya people and now there is no scope to accept more Rohingya. There are limited protection provisions only for trafficked victims, not any smuggled person. And the demarcation is so blurred in general and in the Malaysian Act that it can be applied purposively for criminalization too.

In a narrow sense, the national law can avoid legal protection of trafficking victims, but victims should consider in trafficking law, not in Immigration or other categories of this type of law. Most of the countries in the region neither sign nor ratify the UN Refugee Convention and UN Protocol of Trafficking in Person. All of them are a participant. Consequently, such legal vacuum eclipses the minimum scope of protection beyond the regional terrain. Only Thailand has ratified the Protocol. As per the Protocol, trafficking victims can claim refugee status (Article 14 UN Trafficking Protocol). Rohingya victims deserve protection even under the ASEAN and SAARC Convention of Human Trafficking. Article 1 (b) of the ASEAN Convention asserts to recovery and support trafficking in person with respect of their human rights. But Rohingya people have hardly any chance of protection in the convention because this convention counts stateless persons for jurisdiction of offenses (Article 2b of 10), nothing mentioned about protection of aliens. Thus, some of the victims were sent to Immigration Detention Centre in 2013 and onward (Al Imran, 2022). It has limitation in identifying victims and their recovery, their care and psychological support (Rafferty, 2019). Besides, ASEAN Convention emphasizes the States' sovereign equality during implementation of the Convention Article 4(1). Furthermore, respective security personnel hardly save Rohingya people in their shore and acknowledge push back adrift in the sea. ASEAN has practiced many non-binding policies against the TiP prior to the implementation of this convention but does not manifest those kinds of attitudes and actions of these ASEAN countries (Jovanovic, 2018). Rohingya victims are considered unseeable and unidentified in their territory. On the other hand, the SAARC convention offers a limited scope of protection of human trafficking victims. It has failed to include the notion of the Palermo Protocol. Nevertheless, they

have some legal agreements to this protocol as a singed state party. Moreover, it only addresses the case of prostitution-based trafficking among the member states. Since Myanmar has stripped of citizenship of Rohingya Muslims, there is no protection provision for them under the ASEAN convention. They will be directly treated under the Immigration Act if they enter the territory. Due to geographical location and strict bordering between Bangladesh, Rohingya people have limited scope to enter Indian territory from Bangladesh. Those who enter from Myanmar also receive the same fate under their immigration Act instead of human trafficking Act and SAARC TIP Convention.

Rohingya are framed in a different way than the scale and temporality of refugee. It is a long-term crisis and there is no way out with refugee-like protection (Coddington, 2021). But when the minimum scope and legal frameworks remain unturned, humanity falls in question. The international community also favors only humanitarian actions, urges the regional actors for meaningful solution of the crisis but cannot culminate into a political solution (Roy, 2020). Regional actors consider the Rohingya crisis as an individual crisis for a particular country. ASEAN has a Human Rights Declaration too. Most of the countries are parties of other international covenants such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child. But none of the individual or joint legal frameworks address the human rights of Rohingya people. Now the only effort left unturned is the ratification of the UN Refugee Convention or having individual refugee policy and their appropriate implementation. For instance, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) refugee convention and Dublin Regulation in EU showed their vigor in handling refugee crises. While forced migration is increasing alarmingly why not there will no refugee policy at least in the developed countries of Asia. The international community, UN, UNHCR should come forward again in discussing the issue of Asian rejection of refugee policy fruitfully. Rohingya refugee crisis brought forth the question of whether the ASEAN and SAARC can grow themselves in the individual jurisdiction. Since their mandate is not implemented properly, then what is the legitimacy of that legal framework (Barber and Teitt, 2020). ASEAN could not take

Myanmar into account for the Rohingya genocide (UNHRC, 2018) at the same time the SAARC countries are also not supporting Bangladesh in managing and resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2019; Daily NewAge, 2017).

Conclusion

Rohingya people are now the example of repeated impunity of crime by Myanmar, (re)production of vulnerability and representation of irregular mobility across the region. This study also reminded the precarity of Rohingya Muslims across the region both as refugee and human trafficking victims. They are turning to shelterless from stateless people in the world. It seems all the international laws failed before the protection of Rohingya people. Regional countries such as Malaysia and Thailand think that in case of rescue any of the Rohingya refugee from their shore, it would burden them to offer shelter for an indefinite period. Rohingyas have no place for repatriation or resettlement. Countries in this region consider Rohingya crisis as something different than the other refugee crises (Coddington, 2021). It cannot be resolved with temporary and humanitarian efforts. Moreover, Rohingya people also have no scope to legalize their refugeehood because of 'legacy of Asian rejection' of refugee convention. Consequently, the security personnel prefer to push back Rohingya refugee victims silently and avoid them knowingly.

The human rights regime has failed to save the Rohingya people from their vulnerability (Roy, 2020; Mutaqin, 2018). The anti-human trafficking Acts and regional conventions are also exercising against them. They are not provided protection under those legal frameworks, before their determination and prosecution, victims are deported to their country of origin. All the countries in South and Southeast Asia think the proper implementation of these frameworks may be a pull factor of Rohingya refugees (Khairi et al., 2018). Rohingya people are pushed back in the deep sea, they often time return to the camps in Bangladesh or give up their hope again in Rakhine state or drown away in the deep sea before any decisions from their unknown saviors. So, this study concludes that the anti-trafficking Acts and Conventions of this region cannot be implemented

properly and protect the human rights of victims in the absence of refugee policy or refugee conventions. The administrators of these human trafficking laws do not comply with the mandate and guideline, moreover, implement them quite in opposite direction where the victims face the offender-like treatment. They are reluctant to deploy and involve resources and procedures appropriately to save the victims. Scope of these anti-trafficking legal frameworks is too limited that it challenges their existence as law. Such regime does not provide sufficient space for refugee victims of human trafficking as vulnerable of the vulnerable. Refugee victims in general also should include in the special category along with women and children for protection under the human trafficking protocol irrespective of their citizenship status. Therefore, all efforts should emphasize the victims' rights as starting point of fight against human trafficking (Goodey, 2008). While this plethora of laws fails to save lives, the situation turns into a jungle instead of a human society. It is like a reversal journey of humankind regard to attitude with Rohingya victims of human trafficking.

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Finland Theory in Folklore Studies: An Introductory Discussion on the Theory as a Mode of Analysis

Sunanda Premasiri

Department of Sinhala, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
Email: *spremasiri@yahoo.com*

Abstract

Finland theory is much prominent in studying folklore. It can be identified as a mode of analysis that has been known for a long, and it can be utilized to deeply discuss or analyse folklore. Its use as an academic approach in the modern context is important. Finland theory is extremely important in studying folklore comparatively. A synonym for Finland theory can be identified as Historic-Geographical Method in Europe and many countries. This method can be considered as an interdisciplinary category and addressed multiple theoretical perspectives in the studies of cultural studies, folklore and sociology. In Finland method, a text or a tradition in society is compared with another text or a tradition. This balancing or comparison can be done with different kinds of aims and expectations. On this basis, in this paper, Finland theory can be used to reveal historical, social, cultural, and religious conditions related to the origins of the place names and the different names used to refer to cities in Sri Lanka. This study follows a qualitative research methodology and is primarily used along with the inductive approach. The primary data for this study were mainly literary sources and based on the text content.

Literature Review

For this particular study basically, I used materials from folklore theories. Analysis of the folklore and folk tales was done on specific established approaches used in folkloristic studies. I referred to Richard M. Dorson's edited book *Folklore and Folklife*. Dorson is a giant in the field of Folklore research and considers this to be a discipline which has proven its impact in the realm of folklore studies; in this book *Folklore and Folklife*, he shuns the criticism which says that the historic-geographical method has neglected the aesthetic aspects, stylistic features, and the owner's expression in a folkloric item.

Krohn (1924) who was interested in conducting studies on world folk stories is also identified as a predecessor in studying folklore through *Finland Theory* or the *Historic-geographical approach*. This approach which was found by his father Julius Krohn was expanded by Kaarle Krohn. Kaarle Krohn of Finland is known as a pioneer of this research field, particularly on *Finland Theory*. *Kalevala*, the folksong collection of Finland is known as an important item of the entire folklore realm. This text paved the way for folklore to stand as a *Science* and referring to this provided a great deal of sample reading for this particular article. Kaarle expanded his studies up to the extent of analysing how one item/genre of folklore represents the culture and nationality of a country, comparing a multitude of texts belonging to that particular genre, and eventually culminating in revealing the *original text* of that item. Comparison and Comparative Methodology were the basis of these studies conducted by Krohn. *Finland Theory* or *Historic - geographical Method* originated through the strategies Julius Krohn had employed to analyse *Kalevala Poetry* (1924).

The book *Janashruthi Vidyawa* by Nandasena Rathnapala discussed and introduced the *Finland Method* to folklore researchers in Sri Lanka, particularly to Sinhala readers. (Ratnapala, 1995: 21-22). He explains how the synonyms like *Historic- geographical Method* or at times *comparative Method* is used in folklore research for *Finland theory* and to explain it.

The article by W. F. H. Nicolaisen's (1991), "*The Past as Place: Names, Stories, and the Remembered Self*" in *Folklore* paved the way to understanding the *Finland Theory* further. Nicolaisen is a pioneer in studies on *'Place Nomenclature',* which is considered an important discipline within Folklore studies. With the aid of different stories, he had gathered, he deeply studied the cultural affairs, ideologies and time limits related to the *Place Nomenclature* on which his studies were based. As the prime outcome of his studies, he published '*Scottish Place Names'* which was awarded Chicago Folklore Prize considering the service he had done for the field of Folklore studies. In 1983, delivering a speech on **'**Names and Stories**',** he presented several issues related to the origins and expansion of traditional expressions. According to him, the traditional expressions reflect a static and superseding (unchangeable) tradition. The relationship between a tradition and its creativity is a basis for the process of Folklore. Nicolaisen discussed that diversities come into limelight when they are reconstructed or weaved and re-weaved when they are used and applied in different social contexts. Hence, he explains how such fiction are continuously exchanged by people and they gradually expand as an essential and necessary result of social bonds in this book. (Nicolaisen, 1991: 10)

Andrew Lang's article written in 1899 on *Myth, Ritual and Religion,* as well as James George Frazer's *Creation and Evolution in Primitive Cosmogonies* (1935) focused on deeply studying the cultures of people around the globe. Folklorists like Andrew Lang and Dan Ben-Amos (1992) wrote on Folktale in *Folklore, Cultural Performances, and Popular Entertainment,* which was very insightful for this particular study. Dan Ben-Amos have respectively introduced the Comparative Analytical approach and the Historic - geographical method as approaches/methods of conducting proper research on folklore which is very useful for this study as sample works on the subject. (Ben-Amos, 1992: 107-109).

To understand the range of meanings of 'culture' I referred to *'Culture'* by Ramond Williams (1981). It edescribes elaborately 'a cultured person', 'cultural interests', 'cultural activities', 'the arts' and 'humane intellectual

works'. To discuss the importance of culture while understanding folklore, reading this book is important.

Methodology

This study is guided by the qualitative research methodology and primarily used along with the inductive approach. The primary data for this study were mainly literary sources and based on the text content. Therefore, this analysis is based mainly on printed sources. For primary and secondary sources, I referred to library sources and used the content analysis research method for the analytical part. The qualitative research methodology is preferred in many academic disciplines including folklore owing to its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of the value of folklore through an examination of certain folklore genres.

The study required a descriptive and analytical treatment. The materials collected, therefore, comprise most of 'qualitative data'. Since the region of study is wide enough, it was not possible to take up intensive fieldwork. Both primary and secondary sources have been used in the collection of components of folklore theories.

Variations in the selected same story were observed as they were re-constructed under diverse societal phases can be considered as the main hypotheses of this research.

In this paper, I am hoping to implement the basic approaches to the *Method* authorized by Lang, Krohn, and Krohn and the method of studying cultural relationships introduced by Nicolaisen concerning **'***Place Names'***-** a significant research area in the field of Folklore studies.

Analysis/Discussion

Introduction

Finland Theory can be considered as an interdisciplinary category and addressed multiple theoretical perspectives in the studies of *cultural studies, folklore and sociology*.

This paper is a critical and comparative inquiry into the discourse of the historical, social and folkloristic conditions related to the origins of the place names explores their sociological and folkloristic ramification and particularly looked at the hypotheses from a folkloristic and sociological perspective. Constantly exchanged among people and gradually becoming these stories an essential and integral feature of inter-social bonds in the city of *Mahanuwara* (Nicolaisen, 1991: 10) as well as even though each story consists of a static, continuous, and complete identity, variations in the same story were observed as they were re-constructed under diverse societal phase.

In this study, several historical documents and folk stories relate to *Kandy* city and its historical importance were examined. Stories on how the name *Senkadagala* originated deal with a few themes[1]. The study consequently revealed multiple legends and folk stories dealing with names used to call *Kandy*, from 5000 B.C. up to now. But in general, there is very little information about the ancient hill country of Sri Lanka in chronicles. The most ancient story about the hill country or *Malaya Deshaya* is related to Buddha's first and third visits to Sri Lanka (Sarathi, 2011, p 01). At times, this place was also called *Malaya Mandala* or *Malaya Desha* (Seneviratna, 1989: 3). During the Anuradhapura period, it became *Kandaka Petaka*, and the Cholas in the Polonnaruwa Kingdom converted it to *Kaattu Palakei* in Tamil. Later on, for ease of pronunciation, people began to call it *Katupuluwa* (Munasinghe, 1998:1).

Finland Theory

Finland theory or Historic- geographical approach is extremely important in studying folklore. In this approach, a text or a tradition is compared with another text or a tradition. This balancing or comparison is done with different kinds of aims and expectations. In this case, it is also important to have some knowledge about certain primaeval Indo-European cultures which might have influenced Western languages and thinking. It could

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[1] A summary of each Folk story will be included here to understand the analysis clearly.

have been due to this reason that researchers like Muller have introduced Folklore as primaeval myths.

Several Humanistic studies related to music, art, religion, and literature that happened during the 18th and 19th centuries can be considered historical research. Exploring the histories has been the general concept of all these studies. Thus, it is apparent that the *Historical method* has a special place in studying the *origins* of a text etc**.** Through *comparison,* we get an opportunity not only to reveal information about a thing's location, structure, and time of origin but also it provides space to reconstruct/recreate opinions about that thing's evolution.

The variations that can be found in certain historical documents are caused by the geographical backgrounds related to them. Therefore, in studying historical documents, it is extremely important to disclose the geographical factors related to stories.

Names/Naming places is a social product and a process

In this activity, the man spontaneously reveals the information on history, culture, and beliefs related to that naming or labelling. When a place is given a name, that name establishes some uniqueness related to that place. Commonly, *words* used for place names have some connection with the *day-to-day language usage* of that particular area. Also, those words represent the culture of the people who lived in that era. Studying place names (toponymy) around the world along with folklore and linguistics disciplines through the *Geographical method* can be considered a new awakening in the field.

Finland Theory can be introduced as a discipline that has marked its authority in the field of folklore studies. In the initial stages of the folklore studies, the main focus was on establishing the Hypothetical Archetype of a folk fiction, which is in the assumption of their locations and origin. Gradually, the Finland Theory expanded to the extent of disclosing its initial geographical locations and different historical origins. That is one reason why Dorson (1972), a giant in the field of Folklore research, considers this to be a discipline which has proven its impact in the realm of folklore studies; he shuns the criticism which says that the Finland

Theory has neglected the aesthetic aspects, stylistic features, and the owner's expression in a folkloric item. Kaarle Krohn of Finland is known as a pioneer in this research field. *Kalevala***,** the folksong collection of Finland is known as an important item of the entire folklore realm. This text paved the way for folklore to stand as a *Science***.** Krohn (1924) who was interested in conducting studies on world folk stories is also identified as a predecessor in studying folklore through *Finland Theory* or the *Historic-geographical approach***.** This approach which was found by his father Julius Krohn was expanded by Kaarle Krohn. He expanded his studies up to the extent of analysing how one item/genre of folklore represents the culture and nationality of a country, comparing a multitude of texts belonging to that particular genre, and eventually culminating in revealing the *original text* of that item. Comparison and Comparative Methodology were the basis of these studies conducted by Krohn. *Historic - geographical Method* originated through the strategies Julius Krohn had employed to analyse *Kalevala poetry* (1924)**.** In folklore, this is known as *Finland method* (Ratnapala, 1995: 21-22)*.*

It is said that to identify the original sections and later additions, Krohn (1924) organized the poetic text *Kalevala* following their varieties, historical time, and geographical locations. He depicted that each item of folklore has a history of its own and it is essential to separately analyse the items which were attached to them later. But in this method, it is not important to find the exact location where these folk tales originated. He announced adding varieties of folklore according to historical and geographical elements as the basis of this method. After gathering information about all the available varieties, the relevant archetypes can be built up. Likewise, the route was taken by these varieties, the things newly added to them, and the aspects they have lost can be identified (Ratnapala, 1995: 22-23) some very important research steps for Finland Theory are included in this analysis:

1. Identifying one archetype which can be the base/root of all types of stories.
2. Ability to come into a general assumption about when and where archetypical folklore originated.

3. Explaining how different folklore items originated during different times under various geographical conditions.

4. Discuss of the geographical and historical aspects which might have influenced them.

5. Painting the footprints along which the varieties of folklore have moved.

6. Ability to identify the new portions added to the folklore and the portions dropped, and the factors that caused such addition and elimination in folklore. (It is important to organize and understand the varieties of folklore.)

Nicolaisen (1991) is a pioneer in studies on *'Place Nomenclature',* which is considered an important discipline within Folklore studies. With the aid of different stories, he had gathered, he deeply studied the cultural affairs, ideologies and time limits related to the *Place Nomenclature* on which his studies were based. As the prime outcome of his studies, he published '*Scottish Place Names'* which was awarded Chicago Folklore Prize considering the service he had done for the field of Folklore studies. In 1983, delivering a speech on **'**Names and Stories**',** he presented several issues related to the origins and expansion of traditional expressions. According to him, the traditional expressions reflect a static and superseding (unchangeable) tradition. The relationship between a tradition and its creativity is a basis for the process of Folklore. On the other hand, folklore includes responses to both social conditions and instant behaviours. Thus, it is important to recognize an individual as a cultural being rather than a person belonging to a particular cultural condition or level/ground. Even though a story displays a basic, continuous, and complete identity, its diversities come into lime light when they are reconstructed or weaved and re-weaved when they are used and applied in different social contexts. Such fictions are continuously exchanged by people, and they gradually expand as an essential and necessary result of social bonds (Nicolaisen, 1991: 10)

Researchers such as Taylor (1976), Lang (1899), and Frazer (1935) focused on deeply studying the cultures of people around the globe. Folklorists like Andrew Lang and Dan Ben-Amos have respectively

introduced the Comparative Analytical approach and Historic - geographical method as approaches/methods of conducting proper research on folklore which is very useful for this study as sample works on the subject. (Ben-Amos, 1992: 107-109).

Through this method, it is expected that one can gather information regarding a fiction's *origins, evolution, and presumptive first copy.* Another intention is to explore the diversities of a *story* that is re-created/re-constructed/re-weaved when they are continuously exchanged among people and become an essential outcome of social relations.

Finland Theory in Sri Lanka

Finland Theory is much prominent in studying folklore. This research method can be identified as a mode of analysis that has been known for a long, and it can be utilized to deeply discuss or analyse folklore. Its use as an academic approach in the modern context is important. It is also necessary to examine which folkloric items were compared through it, the aims of comparisons, what changes the comparisons underwent during the last few decades, and how much space it will have in the future academic world.

Kandy, the city on which this study is based, belongs to the Central province (Meda Rata) along with the province's other two main cities *Matale* and *Nuwara Eliya*. Both Matale and Nuwara Eliya too are historically important. Several historical documents, literature, and folklore impart knowledge on the evolution of place names of these two cities as well. In *Chulawamsa,* the 13th century chronicle, *Matale* is referred to as *Mahathila* which might imply its geographical location of it (*Mahathanithalawa*- the extended flat land) (*Culawamsa*, 1960, 42nd Chapter). In referring to *Kada Im Poth*, it was revealed that king *Gajaba* of the 2nd century A.C. had captured 2400 Cholas from the *Chola* dynasty and settled them down in *Matale* which was then named *Maha Thalya* (a huge crowd); it later came into use as *Mathale* (*Sirilak Kadaim Pota*, 1961: 77). In *Nikaya Sangrahaya* (*Nikaya Sangrahaya*, 1984: 9) and Asgiri Palm leaf (*Asgiri Talpata*, 1997: 3) this city is called *Mathula Danawaa* while

Sadharamrathnakaraya (Saddharmaratnakaraya, 1912: 303) refers to it as *Mathula Rata*.

The folklore relating to *Nuwaraeiliya* dates back to the era of *Rawana*. According to the folklore/myths, *Rawana*, the mythical king of the Demon cult, abducted *Rama*'s wife *Seetha* and confined her in *Seethaeliya* situated in *Nuwaraeliya*. *Rawana*'s army captured *Hanumantha*, the messenger of *Rama*. Folk stories further say that *Rwana*'s army set fire to Hanuman's tail. Giant monkey Hanuman ran all over the city swinging his burning tail which caused the entire city to burn; thereafter, it was called *Nuwaraeliya* (the city which was cleared) (Dewapriya, 1992: 2).

Finland Theory or Historic - geographical Method could be novel approaches in the field of local Folklore studies in Sri Lanka. But, in the first half of the 20[th]century, when Henry Parker was searching for stories parallel to local stories, he, for the first time attempted to employ Finland Theory which was then prominently used in folklore studies in his studies as well (Weerasinghe, 1986: 181). There he tried to analyse the similarities between Sinhalese and Indian stories (Parker, 1910: 33). But there are fewer pieces of evidence to show the sufficient employment of Finland Theory in folklore studies. This effort of showing the application of this method will strengthen the field and the analytical capacities and methods of the scholars of Sri Lanka in the field of folklore studies. On this basis, in this paper, this theory is used to reveal historical, social, cultural, and religious conditions related to the origins of the place name 'Kandy'- an important place in the central province, and the *different names* used to refer to this city. In this aspect of this paper, I have used as the basic approaches the *Method* authorized by Lang, Krohn, and Krohn and the method of studying cultural relationships introduced by Nicolaisen concerning **'***Place Names***'-** a significant research area in the field of Folklore studies.

The evolution of the place name '*Mahanuwara* (Kandy)'

The paper deals with the *names* used to refer to the present *Kandy* city in ancient Sri Lanka, how they evolved while focusing on similarities and differences between those names. Due to practical issues such as an

extensive expansion of folklore, social background, and geographical area, it was impossible to apply every step sequentially as it was introduced by Julius Krohn. Employment of the *Comparative Method* is related to the study of *Place Names* used in the study following its original and exact format.

In the ancient documents, the present-day *Mahanuwara / Kandy* was referred to as *Senkadagala Sri Wardanapura.* But an agreement between the historians cannot be seen on the exact period this term came into use, and when the city was physically established (Paranavithana, 1958: 42-44). Though some assume that it is a place that king *Nissankamalla* used to visit in the 12th century, Paranavithana says that an exact place name used for it could not be found (Paranavithana, 1958: 42).

As mentioned in the palm leaf *Origins of Asgiri or The Tale of the Origins of the Asgiri Temple, Senkadagala* was established during the period of king *Gajabahu* who once united the country. Most likely, this could be the *Gajabahu* XI who had reigned the country between 1131-1152 A.D. According to the myths, an ascetic called *Senkanda* was practising meditation in a cave in Maya- one of the three ancient Sri Lanka kingdoms. One day, while plucking fruits in the forest, he saw a fox chasing a rabbit. In an instant, the rabbit turned towards the fox and started chasing it. On another day he witnessed something similar; a serpent chasing a frog but eventually, the serpent became prey to the frog. The ascetic then realized that this place brings victory to people and told that to a youngster who once got lost in the forest. The youth, upon his return to the city, told this to king *Gajabahu* who then constructed a city there (*Asgiri Upata hewat Asgiri Vihara Uppatti Kataa Prakaranaya*, 2000: 10-11)

Another fiction states that the annual offerings and homage paid to the Tooth Relic (the tooth of the Buddha) during the *Dambadeni* era (before 1232 A.D.) were called *Sri Wardhana Pooja* as it brought prosperity and happiness to the land and people. It was believed that worshipping Buddha's relics bring happiness and prosperity in the births to come. Thus, *Yapahuwa,* where the Tooth relic was once kept, was also called *Sri Wardana Nuwara***.** Later on, when the Sacred Relic was brought to Kandy,

that city was named *Senkadagala Sri Wardanapura* (Munasinghe, 1998: 3-4)

But, as mentioned in *Asgiri Palm leaf*, around 1312 A.D., *Senpathi* (a military leader) *Siriwardane*, the nephew of king *Parakramabahu* IV of Kurunegala, restored the ruins, marked the city limits with walls, established *Asgiri* hermitage to enhance the city's elegance and named it *Katupulu Danawwe Senkadagala Nuwara* (*Asgiri Talpata*, 1997: 5). This record which says how *Senkadagala* could have become *Siriwardanapura* cannot be found in any other historical document (Rohanadheera, 1970: 26)

The name *Senkadagala* is also mentioned in *Ampitiya* rock inscription (*Epigrphia Zeylanica*, 1966, vol iv: 1-27,272) made by King *Wickramabahu* III in 1360 A.D., the third year of his reign, and *Sagama* inscription (Epigrphia Zeylanica, 1966, vol iv: 308) made in the ninth year of *Buwanekabahu* V in 1380 A.D.. Codrington assumed that *Sena Sammatha Wichramabahu* established *Senkadagala Sri Wardanapura* in 1472**.** His assumption was based on details in inscription, literature, and folklore (Rohanadheera, 1970: 21) Fernando believes that this region was recognized by the governing body of the country during the mid -14th century. Anyhow, he states that there are enough pieces of evidence to prove that Kandy and its adjacent areas have been populated since the ancient past (Fernando, 1958: 61).

According to the traditions of *Rajarathnakaraya, Chulawamsa, and Dumbulu* temple inscription *Senkadagala* kingdom was established in 1542 by *King Weerawickrama* or *Wickramabahu (*Rajaratnakaraya, 1970: 53; Unapurana Sahito Mahawanso, 1959: 90,9,10,11; *EZ*, vol iv: 9; Atigala, 1972: 643; *Rajarathnakaraya*) in1542 A.D., mentions about the place names *Katupula Banda Senkanda Shaila* or otherwise *Sri Wardanapuraya* (*Rajaratnakaraya*: 53)

The English rulers converted *Kanda (hill)* into Kandy for ease of pronunciation (Jayatilleka, 2008: 69-70; Munasinghe, 1998: 3-4). In the 17[th]century, during the reign of King Wimaladarmasuriya (1592), the term

Kandy came into parlance with the meaning of 'the main city of the whole country' (Jayatilleka, 2008 July: 69-70; Munasinghe, 1998: 3-4). *Medawala* copper inscription made in 1755 A.D. also mentions the words *Katupulunuwara* and *Sri Wardanapura (EZ*, vol v: 466-486). Paranavithana and Godakubura confirms the notion that modern *Kandy* should have been called *Senkanda Nuwara* in the past (*EZ*, vol v: 479).

According to the *Palkubura* copper grant Made in 1804, Kandy or *Senkanda Shaila Sri Wardanapura* was a city developed by a king called *Wickramabahu* (*EZ*, vol iii: 240-241) there are controversies about King *Wickramabhu* who is mentioned in the following legends. Mendis Rohanadeera believes that these folk tales have gradually developed after people have forgotten about the origins of the city (Rohanadheera, 1970: 24).

In this research, the discussions on the origins of the city and information on different *names* and *eras* related to it were of great importance. Order of the Evolution of the Place Name '*Mahanuwara*' can be listed as *Mahabali Nuwara, Kantaka Petaka* (early half of Anuradhapura era), *Sri Wardana Nuwara* (*Dambadeni* era, before 1232) *Kattu Palakei, Katupuluwa, Katupulu Danawwe Senkadagala Nuwara* (1312), *Senkadagala* (1360-1380), *Senkadagala Sri Wardanapuraya and Senkanda Nuwara* (1472), *Katupulubanda Senkada Shailanam Sri Wardanapuraya* (1542), *Mahanuwara* (1592), *Katupulu Nuwara* (1755), *Sri Wardanapura* and *Senkandashaila Sri Wardana Puraya* (1804), Kandy (20th century), World Heritage City (21st century). It is very clearly mentioned that the English rulers converted *Kanda (hill)* into Kandy for the ease of pronunciation, which we may write in this manner *Kanda>Kandy.* (Jayatilleka, 2008: 69-70; Munasinghe, 1998: 3-4).

Kandaka Petaka of Anuradhapura era had become *Kaattu Palakei* in the 12th century due to *Chola* influences; subsequently, it was converted into *Katupuluwa (B, C stories below)*. Again, during the *Dambadeni* period in the 14th century (1312), the place's name changed to *Katupulu Danawwe Senkadagala Nuwara Sri Wardana Nuwara (D).* Since then, up to the 16th century, Kandy was called different names such as *Senkadagala,*

Senkadagala Sri Wardanauraya, and Senkanda Nuwara (E, F, G, I stories below). The general assumption that can be made from these folk stories is that the majority of them belong to the 14th century. Historical details confirm that *Kandy* flourished as a kingdom in the 15th century (Duncan, 1990: 32). The sequence of evolution of the place name, as disclosed by folk stories can be lined up according to the ascending order of the eras and the years as;

(a) *Mahabali Nuwara>Mahaweli Nuwara>Mahanuwara* (around 5000 B.C.),

(b) *Katubulu Danawwa>Katupuluwa>Kantaka Petaka* (250-210 B.C.),

(c) *Katupuluwa> Sri Wasapura* (9th century A.D.),

(d) *Sri Wasa Puraya>Siriwardanapuraya* (1312),

(e) *Sri Wasa Puraye>Senkada Nuwara* where the army (*Sena*) of enemy were defeated (*Kanda*) (1357-1354),

(f) *Senkanda>Senkadagala* (1360-1380) [2] and

(g) *Chenkatan Nuwara>Sen Kanda Nuwara* (should belong to the period mentioned above).

Evolution of the place name *Mahanuwara* (Kandy) and its thematic backgrounds as revealed by folk tales: A comparative analysis

Folk stories based on place names can be generally classified under a few aspects. These stories were woven around themes such as;

a) historical Sri Lankan legends,
b) relationships with India,
c) regional conflicts,
d) celestial beliefs,
e) the idea of blessed land,
f) foreign invasions,

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[2] According to the *Palkumbura Sannasa* this name has been using by 1804 A.D.

g)   the uniqueness of the protagonists of the stories.

A few *tales* that come under the category of *folk stories* of different areas were selected for theoretical analysis. These tales disclose the storytellers' creativity, their structure, their original location, geographical background, and several other information related to the evolutionary features. A special service of the protagonist towards the king and the citizens led him to receive a city as a reward. The background events of that occurrence, and consequently *named the city after the protagonist can be identified as common events that build up the sequence of these stories.* The following stories are cited as examples for a better understanding of the meanings and the above-mentioned themes;

A.   In ancient Sri Lanka there lived tribal groups such as *Rassa* (demons), *Yassa* (devils), *Deva* (gods), and *Naga* (cobra). Those who immigrated to this country from India were called *Sura* (deity) whereas the indigenous people were branded as *Asura* (demons). The leader of the *Asura* team was called *Bali* or *Mahabali***.** It is said that the *Mahabali Nuwara of king Mahabali* in the *Malaya of the hill country, was converted* into *Mahaweli Nuwara* and it later became *Mahanuwara***.** The river which flows around *Mahabali Nuwara* which was first called *Mahabali Ganga* came into use as *Mahaweli Ganga* (Tundeniya, 1997: 71).

B.   *Uththiya,* the brother of King *Kelenitissa* who ruled Kelaniya, had a stealthy relationship with the king's wife. Thus, sub-king *Uththiya* had to flee for the hill country in *Malaya Region***.** He built a small palace of Bulu trees and lived there. The kingdom was built in a jungle full of thorny (*Katu*) *Bulu* trees, which later came into use as *Kalubulu Danawwa***.** Also, as the king made a fence of Katupeleli around his city, it was called *Katupuluwa.* After some time, the city was called *Kantaka Petaka* which might have meant *Katupeleli* (Tundeniya, 1999: 1-2)

C.   In the 9th century, the Mahayana devotees of Sri Lanka shifted the Natha temple, their religious headquarters, from *Rajarata* to *Katupuluwa* due to the fear of any hostile attack. After the arrival of the god *Natha* and his Queen who is said to be able to bestow all riches, *Katupuluwa* changed

its name to *Sri Wasapura***.** The place where *Sri Wasa* lived is called *'Sri Wasa'*. Thus, the name *Katupuluwa* vanished with the emergence of '*Sri Wasa'* (Munasinghe, 1998: 2).

D.   In the Anuradhapura era, Mahayana Buddhism was spreading fast in the country. Those beliefs seeped into *Katupulunuwara* and people built a temple for god *Natha* there. As god Natha is capable of granting worldly benefits to people, the area where his temple was located was called *Sri Wasapura.* Obeying the order of *Parakramabahu IV***,** his nephew *Siriwardena* built a hermitage called Asgiri in *Katupulu Danawwa*. Thereafter, *Sri Wasapura* became *Siriwardanapura***.** Before this incident, it is said that King *Nissankamalla* too came to *Sri Wasapura* and built a palace there (Munasinghe, 1998: 3-4)

E.   With the support of the Emperor *Vijayanagar* of South India, rebellious *Aryachakrawarthi* of Jaffna invaded Gampola. *Nissanka Alakeshwara***,** the minister in charge of *Sri Wasapua (Mahanuwara),* gathered armies against him and defeated him in *Sri Wasapura* following the instructions he received from god *Natha* in his dreams. Thereafter, the city where the army (*Sena*) of the enemy was defeated (*Kanda*) became popular as *Senkanda Nuwara* (Tundeniya, 1999: 7)

F.   This story is woven around a chain of miraculous events experienced by a young man near a rock in a forest. The youth observes how a wild elephant which chased him, a tiger chasing a deer, and a mongoose chasing a cobra receded after seeing a rock. The dumb founded youth meets a hermit called *Senkanda*, while he was recalling what he witnessed. The hermit tells him about the miraculous powers of the rock. The youth delivers this piece of information to *King Wickramabahu of Gampola* who was seeking appropriate land to establish a city. Then, the city was named *Senkanda* to honour the hermit (Tundeniya, 1999: 7)

G.   One day, a basket weaver went to the forest to cut some bamboo. While cutting bamboo he noticed a fox chasing a rabbit. As soon as the rabbit reached a rock which was close by, the fox stopped chasing the

rabbit and receded. In the next instant, the rabbit started chasing the fox. The basket weaver carefully examined the place where this happened and informed the king about it. The king assumed this to be a blessed land and built his kingdom there. Thereafter it was called *Senkandagala* (Parker, 1910: 3)[3].

H.   After the reign of *Buwanebahu* V, a person called *Wickramabahu* who came from *Gampola* defeated the *Bandara* clan in a place where the hermit *Senkanda* lived. He consequently built his kingdom in that blessed land. He concluded the land was to be blessed after witnessing a hunter being chased by a rabbit that was first chased by the hunter. (Codrington, vol ii: 293)

I.   Several years ago, two monks called *Rathanapala* and Rama lived in the *Hanthana* caves. They had a fraternal bond. It is said that Rathanapala built a temple on *Hanthana* mountain for god *Ishwara* or god *Chenkatan. King Wickramabahu*, being informed about this land by the two brothers, examined the land and built a city in the name of the god *Chenkatan* called *Chenkatan Nuwara*. Later, it came into use as *Sen Kanda Nuwara*. (Tundeniya, 1999: 9)

These stories bring out diverse beliefs about human history, culture, customs, traditions, and beliefs with a culturally important city in central Sri Lanka. Certain significant items/aspects, indicating a unique identity of the place (F, G, H), crucial event/occurrence-based plot (E), usually seen protagonist king, appearing a foreign or a local heroic figure (A, D, E, F, H), expressing blessings/ support of a miraculous incident or a strong belief in gods (C, E, I), the idea of establishing the major city in a blessed land (A, C, D, E, F, G, H, I) can be listed. Denominating the place in the name of that heroic figure can be identified in many stories. (A, D, F).

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[3] A rabbit chasing after a certain hunter is a common folk story among folks.

Conclusions About the Folk Stories Regarding *Mahanuwara*

With the aid of historical information related to kings and other regional leaders related to folk stories, it is possible to engage in an in-depth analysis of the eras in which certain place names originated. They also help to increase the knowledge of the religious myths and beliefs that existed in these eras. This process enables us to come to conclusions about the phases through which these place names evolved.

It is difficult to conclude the exact time in which the early stories came into being. These folk stories which carry details about the Malaya region in the hill country and King *Mahabali* too might have emanated parallel to other stories. *King Mahabali* and *Malaya region* where *Mahabali Nuwara* was situated were terms commonly related to the ancient hill country. The most legendary information on *Malaya Region* is related to Buddha's first and third arrival in Sri Lanka. As reported in *Mahawamsa, Puliyandan* in *Malaya Region* was established by the progeny of King *Vijaya* and *Kuweni* (Dheerananda, 2011: 1, *Deepawamsaya*, 2959, chapter 1, verses 46-80, *Unapurana Sahito Mahawamso,* Chapter 1, verses 19-33, Chapter 7, verse 68). Since then, until it became a significant political landmark in the 14th century, *Malaya Region* remained a focus of attention of the rulers (Dheerananda, 2011: 1-3). Therefore, to conclude the period during which this story came into being, it is necessary to dig into the era of *King Mahabali.* The antiquity of this story can be speculated when considering the information it contains *Yakka, Rassa, Naga,* and *Deva* communities that inhabited Sri Lanka in 5000 B.C. It is said that King *Mahabali's Rassa* army lived in this area (Sedaraman, 1955: 9,16). Chronicles also impart knowledge on *Sura* who migrated to Sri Lanka from India and *Asura* who were then the indigenous people of the country (Sedaraman, 1955: 2-3,12). The content of such stories (A) is of significant social value.

Some stories (B, C, D, E) woven when the belief in God *Natha* was at a peak in Kandy, also grabbed the writer's attention. They might have been fabricated by people who lived before the *Anuradhapura* period. Especially, the story (D) that mentions King *Nissankamalla* of the *Polonnaruwa* era who used to worship the god *Natha* in *Sri Wasa Pura* must belong to pre-12th century era.

The other stories that are related to King *Wickramabahu* of *Gampola* (1357-1375) must belong to the 14th century. The folk stories (F, G, H, I) which mention the ascetic/hermit *Senkanda* and worshipping of *Ishwara* in *Chenkatan* consists of clues that Hindu Brahmins used to live around *Senkadagala*, fulfilling their religious missions.

The above-mentioned information makes it clear that the place name *Kandy* has gradually evolved over a long period. In past, the whole of the hill country was identified as *Malaya Deshaya/Malaya Mandala* (A) thus, Kandy might have been called *Mahabali Nuwara* (A)**.**

For better understanding, we can describe and summarize these stories through the above-mentioned themes further.

The next set of evidence shows that *Kandaka Petaka* of Anuradhapura era had become *Kaattu Palakei* in the 12th century due to *Chola* influences; subsequently, it was converted into *Katupuluwa* (B, C)**.** Again, during the *Dambadeni* period in the 14th century (1312), the place's name changed to *Katupulu Danawwe Senkadagala Nuwara Sri Wardana Nuwara* (*D).* Since then, up to the 16th century, Kandy was called different names such as *Senkadagala, Senkadagala Sri Wardanauraya, and Senkanda Nuwara* (E, F, G, I). The general assumption that can be made from these folk stories is that the majority of them belong to the 14th century. Historical details confirm that *Kandy* flourished as a kingdom in the 15th century (Duncan, 1990: 32). The sequence of evolution of the place name, as disclosed by folk stories can be lined up, as we did earlier at the beginning, according to the ascending order of the eras and the years as (a) *Mahabali Nuwara>Mahaweli Nuwara>Mahanuwara* (around 5000 B.C.), (b) *Katubulu Danawwa>Katupuluwa>Kantaka Petaka* (250-210 B.C.), (c) *Katupuluwa> Sri Wasapura* (9th century A.D.), (d) *Sri Wasa Puraya>Siriwardanapuraya* (1312), (e) *Sri Wasa Puraye>Senkada Nuwara* where the army (*Sena*) of the enemy were defeated (*Kanda*) (1357-1354),(f) *Senkanda>Senkadagala* (1360-1380) [4] and (g) *Chenkatan*

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[4] According to the *Palkumbura Sannasa* this name has been using by 1804 A.D.

Nuwara>Sen Kanda Nuwara (should belong to the period mentioned above).

Cultural affinities related to place name: re-construction and expansion

A prominent characteristic of these stories is the belief that kings and citizens had in choosing a *blessed land* to establish a city (E, F, G, H, I). This fact is proven by the story which emphasizes *Asgiri Upatha which deals with the origins of the Asgiri hermitage.*[5] These stories also reveal the notion that the ancient people were thoroughly concerned about the uniqueness of a particular place; they also of the belief that such uniqueness can add extra value to that place.

These stories reveal a considerable amount of information on Sri Lankans' faith in the god *Natha*. They also provide examples of the expansion of Mahayana Buddhism in 9th century Sri Lanka. People thoroughly believe that God *Natha* is capable of awarding all kinds of riches and luxuries. The Mahayana devotees, who were tormented by the rival attacks, shifted their religious headquarters- the temple of God *Natha*, from Rajarata to Kandy. This story is credible as the abode of the god *Sri Wasa* and his goddess was called *Sri Wasa Pura*; consequently, *Katupuluwa* became *Sri Wasa Puraya*.

The texts that first mentioned about God *Natha* were composed during the upcountry *Gampola* era when several of the above folk tales were also made. According to the records on the medieval Sinhalese political history, the concept of the god *Natha* had not only a cultural value, but also a significant space in the state and political matters. This era can also be recognized as a time in which Hindu and Mahayana concepts influenced local culture and Sinhala Buddhists. some several inscriptions and statues confirm the facts in the folk tales which say that Sri Lankans believed in God *Natha* since the 7th century A.D (Halt, 1994: 134-136). The folk tales vividly elaborate on how this belief gradually expanded and was localized by the time of the *Gampola* period. The inscriptions of *Sagama* and

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[5] Refer page 15

Ampitiya that carry information on king *Wickramabahu* III of *Gampola* (1351) and his minister *Alakeshwara*, also affirm that belief in God *Natha* was established in the Kandyan era (Halt, 1994: 147-149).

This study also concentrated on a few stories (B, C, D, E) that emerged in a political and cultural background in which faith in God *Natha* and goddess *Thara* was quite dominant. They might have been fabricated by people who lived before the *Anuradhapura* period. The folk story which says that king *Nissankamalla* frequently visited the temple of the god *Natha* in *Sri Wasa Pura* is also very important in this respect (D).

Another story (E) says that when rebellious *Aryachakrawarthi* of Jaffna invaded *Gampola* with the support of the Emperor *Vijayanagar* of South India, *Nissanka Alakeshwara*, the minister in charge of *Sri Wasapua(Mahanuwara),* gathered armies against him and defeated him in *Sri Wasapura* following the instructions he received from god *Natha* in his dreams. Thereafter god *Natha* was called the god *Senkanda*. This tale can be considered as one which contains strong evidence of the existence of belief in the god *Natha*.

Information on the hermit *Senkanda,* worshipping of *Ishwara* in *Chenkatan*, and Hindu Brahmins who used to live around *Senkadagala*, fulfilling their religious missions is included in the folk stories (F, G, H, I). These stories vividly explain how folk life was influenced by Indian Brahmin religions since the 12th century. Indian worshipping of the god *Ishwara* might have influenced the ancient *Yakka* communities who lived in Sri Lanka (Sedaraman, 1955: 9). The monk Rathanapala of Brahmin lineage, with the assistance of magic and spell he inherited from his father, might have established the belief of *Ishwara* in the minds of devotees who gathered around the *Ishwara* temple in *Hanthana*. The records of the *Asgiri* temple, which carry details on Rathanapala, provide proof of this belief in the god *Ishwara* (*Asgiri Upata hewat Asgiri Vihara Uppatti Kataa Prakaranaya,* 2000: 10-11).

Conclusion

In this paper, *Finland Theory* or *Historic-geographical Method* was used to reveal historical, social, cultural, and religious conditions related to the origins of the various place names for '*Mahanuwara*'. This paper carried a critical and comparative inquiry into the discourse of the historical, social and folkloristic conditions related to the origins of the place names and explores their sociological and folkloristic ramifications.

Since this method is identified as a mode of analysis that has been known for a long, it can be utilized to deeply discuss or analyse folklore in future research. In this study, the aim was to present the importance of the use of the historic-geographical method as an academic approach in the modern context. Especially, selected stories for this particular study to represent a basic, continuous, and complete identity. But their differences appear when they are re-constructed in diverse social contexts. It is easy to put these stories in order when the historical information, place names, and antiquity of character names are taken into consideration. Likewise, as cited above, the stories *A* to *me*, on which the study was based, were arranged. According to Nicolaisen, and according to the findings of this study, it is obvious that these fictions were constantly exchanged among people, and they have gradually become an essential and integral feature of inter-social bonds in the city of *Mahanuwara* (Nicolaisen, 1991: 10). The static and superseding creativity of these traditional expressions and the connection between that creativity and tradition made the foundation of these folk stories.

While emphasizing the need to preserve the basic and continuous variation and very important dimensions reveal basic similarities that can be found in these stories. An accidental encounter with a 'blessed land' which is suitable to establish a city and witnessing a unique occurrence. (A wild elephant chasing an adolescent turns back seeing a rock, a tiger chasing a deer flees due to the far of a rock/the deer chasing back the tiger (F), a fox hunting a rabbit turns back seeing a rock/the fox chased by the rabbit (G), a hunter following a rabbit gives up his task being afraid of a rock/ the rabbit, in return, pursues the hunter (H) can be considered as a basic and major dimension found in the stories.) Another important dimension which

reveals basic similarities that can be found in these stories can be listed as "the person who identified or heard about the blessed land inform the king about it, the king himself examining the unique aspects of the land and deciding to establish a city, naming the city in the name of the person who facilitated the identification of the city as a unique place (ascetic *Senkanda* – F, H), naming the city symbolizing a tribal group, a *Senpathi*, or an event that caused the origins of the city (ex: King *Mahabali*- A, King *Uththiya*- B, Minister *Siriwardna*- D, *Nissanka Alakeswara* - E) and giving the name of a well-recognized god to the newly established city (God *Natha*- I).

As analysed by Krohn, after a comparative study of a few texts representing a particular folkloric genre, it is possible to expand the study up to the level of disclosing its original text. His studies were based on Comparison. Consequently, researchers expanded its scope from revealing a text's geographical location to knowing its historical roots. Through these stories, it is possible to understand how a *place name* attributes unique features after it originated and become established in any cultural society. However, these folk stories are also constantly evolving and reconstructed, and it is a characteristic of all genres of folklore.

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Parental Knowledge about Childhood Development in the Estate Sector in Sri Lanka

W.M.S.M. Kumari Thoradeniya

Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
Email: *kumari.thoradeniya@arts.pdn.ac.lk*

Abstract

The study aims to explore the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding early childhood development that parents in the estate sector in Sri Lanka employ. The estate sector in Sri Lanka consists of people who were trafficked from South India as labourers during the British colonial period. This study addresses two research questions: the first one explores whether the parents of the estate sector have any type of knowledge regarding the requirements of early childhood development. The second one is to examine the challenges that these parents have in raising their children. A qualitative research approach was used for the study and interviews and observations were used as data collection tools. Deltota, in Kandy district in Sri Lanka, was used as a research field. This selected area has 135 families and among those families, 31 respondents viz. 30 parents plus 1 midwife of the particular area. The 30 parents consist of 25 mothers and 5 fathers. Parental knowledge about childhood development in the estate sector was assessed according to the five aspects which were identified based on the literature review as "parental knowledge of childhood nutrition, knowledge of mental health, awareness of the role of parents in developing language skills of children, child protection and use of punishments and discipline on children and its impact. The study revealed that except for the first criterion, the knowledge of other aspects was very poor among the parents and the first one also not at an adequate level. Poverty, lack of education, domestic violence, cultural ideologies and parenting' is not considered important matter to be discussed and could be identified as challenges against effective parenting knowledge and practices in the estate sector of Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study recommends

employing community-level awareness programmes on parenting with a special focus on raising awareness, particularly among fathers, as they display even less knowledge or positive attitudes in this field than mothers. Long-term strategies should also be launched to enhance their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds as many of the issues in the estate sector are linked to these conditions.

Keywords: Childhood development, Estate sector, Knowledge, Parenting

Introduction

Early childhood is considered foundational for the building up of a secure, stable, and productive personality. The family environment, particularly 'parenting' is one of the most important contributors to 'early childhood development.' On the topic of parenting, parental knowledge, prevailing attitudes, and parental practices regarding child development have been identified as crucial factors in child development outcomes (Bornstein & Tamis-Lemonda, 1989; Gadsden, Ford & Breiner, 2016; Bartlett, Guzman & Ramos-Olazagasti, 2018; Jeong, et al, 2021). Since parents and the family play key roles in building up a physically, mentally and socially healthy person, parents should have some knowledge about what parenting itself is, as well as how to utilize it for child-rearing. For instance, Jane (2012) has stated 'parenting' promotes and helps the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child. Parenting refers to the intricacies of raising a child not exclusively for a biological relationship (Jane, 2012:25). This definition regarding 'parenting' highlights the areas in which parents should focus their attention and the knowledge required of them in child development.

Parenting practices can vary across countries, cultures, social classes, races, and even across time; nevertheless, the basic principles of parenting tend to be similar across all scenarios. In many countries though, especially developing countries, 'parenting' is not a much-explored topic in the research world within the field of social sciences. Several factors could contribute to this. The first reason could be that parenting, raising children and the role of parents are considered a natural as well as an extremely personal matter, alongside the belief that there is no need for specific

knowledge or skills for child-rearing. The second reason could be that there are multitudes of various other pressing issues requiring attention in the research world, hence; 'parenting' gets less attention in this milieu as a seemingly less important issue. In Sri Lanka likewise, the discourse regarding 'parenting' garners very little attention and thus limited research has been conducted in this field. Even within the little research thus far carried out, the focus has primarily been on how parenting practices influence children's mental and physical health (Sanjeevan & de Zoysa, 2018; Mudiyanse, 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding early childhood development that parents in the estate sector in Sri Lanka employ. The estate sector in Sri Lanka consists of people who were trafficked from South India as labourers during the British colonial period. These special groups of labourers were settled within the plantation areas and therefore, they were considered 'residential labourers' who were completely dependent on the estate management for all aspects of their life. Due to this situation, this group is still different from the other people in the country in terms of major social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. Researchers mainly focus on their economic, cultural and social life in numerous ways. But no attention has been paid thus far regarding the way they take care of their children and whether they have an opportunity to apply basic principles of parenting to their children. Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: the first one explores whether the parents of the estate sector have any type of knowledge regarding the requirements of early childhood development. The second one is to examine the challenges that these parents have in raising their children.

Literature Review

There may be no 'perfect' parents who know everything regarding child development. However, understanding of what parenting is, parenting styles, strategies, etc. in child development may help parents to understand what childhood is, the needs of childhood development, the impact if the development needs are not met and the possible solutions that can be taken

as well. Several well-known theorists have highlighted the importance of parenting in child development. These theories highlight the various aspects of child development but, the general opinion is that parental involvement is essential for child development.

For instance, Sigmund Freud's theory of personality highlighted that one's personality develops during childhood and the child develops his/her personality via successful completion of five psychosexual stages. According to Freud, at each stage, children have a specific need and addressing this need is important to prevent them from becoming fixated at a particular level. Freud states that to reach from one level to another successfully, the close and correct intervention of the mother, father or caregivers is essential (Freud, 1939).

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development is another child development theory that highlights the idea that children create their knowledge and understanding on their own with interaction, observation, and experiments. He further suggests that children change their intelligence as they grow and they construct a mental model of the world according to the nature, environment, experiences, observations, etc that they are exposed to. According to cognitive development theory, children pass four stages of development, and each stage denotes how knowledge emerges from the action. His theory also highlights the view that the importance of giving clear guidance and knowing how and in what ways children acquire knowledge among parents or caregivers play a major role in creating a positive model of the world for each child (Piaget, 1952).

Erick Erikson focuses on the psycho-social development of children and according to this theory, each child develops their personality via eight stages. Further, he says that in each stage the child can experience a psycho-social crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome on personality development. However, he says successful completion of each stage leads to developing a healthy personality and a child develops a strong character which uses ego and superego to solve many of the subsequent crises in a healthy manner. This theory also highlights that parental involvement is crucial to solving many of the crises that children

face at each stage, which in turn helps to shape their personality patterns (Erickson, 1995).

Most of the early child development theories focus on parental involvement in the child's personality or psychological development. However, contemporary discussions regarding parental involvement in child development highlight that overall, attention is needed to have a healthy child across many aspects. For instance, according to the American Psychological Association (2019), effective parenting practices across the world have three major goals viz: ensuring children's health and safety, preparing children for the future as valuable citizens, and transmitting cultural values. Even though these are common goals of parenting, the knowledge, attitude, and practices across the world may be different, and they may have different impacts on the children as well as society as a whole. For instance, WHO (2017) states that 250 million children, or 43% of children who live in low- and middle-income countries are unable to reach their full development potential.

A study done by Wallander, et al (2014) showed that 25% of children in Bangladesh are exposed to psycho-social risk factors such as poor stimulation, lack of learning opportunities, parental unresponsiveness, and parents' inability to understand child behaviour. According to this study, risk factors related to children are intertwined with the existing knowledge, attitudes, and practices of parents regarding childcare.

Some studies on parenting suggest that socioeconomic status plays an important role in effective parenting practices and child development as parents who live with high socio-economic status can provide a wider range of experiences, material resources, health facilities, and healthy environment, etc. whereas parents and children living under low socio-economic conditions do not have access to much of the above mentioned (Yunus & Dahlan, 2013). Specifically, research suggests that advantageous social circumstances and available resources may enhance the quality of parenting (DeGarmo & Forgatch, 1999). When analysing the research findings which highlight strong links between advantageous economic backgrounds and quality of parenting, the doors are open for researchers, policymakers, and governments to make arrangements as to

how best to promote effective parenting to children in the low socio-economic bracket.

Begum (2019) has researched parental knowledge in early childhood development among low-income urban parents in Bangladesh. The main objective of this study was to assess the knowledge, prevailing attitudes, and current practices that parents have, related to early childhood development and school readiness, and to identify the gap among knowledge attitudes and practices in child development. The author has used three criteria as essential parts child development such as parental behaviours related to infant feeding, nutrition, and child protection: socio-demographic factors, and extent and quantity of early learning activities in the home. The findings of the study revealed that parents do not have adequate knowledge regarding any of the criteria used in this study. However, the study revealed that though their knowledge regarding infant feeding, nutrition and child protection, socio-demographic factors, and extent and quantity of early learning activities were not enough, they have healthier attitudes towards child-rearing problems. Therefore, this study identifies some gaps between knowledge, attitudes, and practices those parents have in low-income societies in early childhood development.

Jeong et al, (2021) have done a global systematic review and meta-analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of parenting interventions on early childhood development. In this analysis, they have used cognitive, language, motor, and socio-emotional development, behavioural problems, and attachment as early childhood outcomes, alongside parenting knowledge, parenting practices, parent-child interactions, and parental depressive symptoms as parenting outcomes. In this analysis, they highlighted parenting interventions on stimulation, shared book reading, attachment and sensitivity, behavioural management, positive discipline and maltreatment prevention, and parental mental health as crucial to achieving positive early childhood outcomes.

It can be pointed out that the discussion of parental classification is also important in the discussion of the role of parents in child development. For the first time, Baumrind (1966) introduced three types of parenting such as authoritarian parenting, authoritative parenting, and permissive parenting.

Authoritarian parents normally have mechanisms to control, shape, and evaluate child behaviour and parents establish strict rules and standards for achieving their purpose. Authoritarian parents believe and expect that without negotiations and errors children should obey their rules and standards and errors may lead to small to larger-scale punishments. The permissive parenting style lies at the other end of the parenting style giving more independence to the children rather than controlling them, and these parents are warmer. The authoritative parenting style lies between these two extreme positions as they are responsive to a child's emotional needs while having high standards of parenting. Later Maccoby and Martin (1983) introduced another style of parenting named neglectful parenting. The authoritative parenting style is still considered the best parenting style which contributes to positive child development as these kinds of parents provide love, and attention by listening to children and avoiding punishments, and threats and instead rely on strategies such as positive reinforcement (Breiner, Ford & Gadsden, 2016; Cherry, 2020).

Considering all the facts discussed above, it can be summarized that parents should have an understanding and basic knowledge regarding child development in the following aspects:

1. Parental knowledge of childhood nutrition
2. Knowledge of mental health
3. Awareness of the role of parents in developing language skills of children
4. Child protection
5. Use of punishments and discipline on children and its impact

I will use these factors as analytical tools to describe and analyze the parental knowledge and understanding of child development in the selected area.

Methods

In this study, I have mainly employed qualitative research methods since it is important to obtain the viewpoints and perspectives on child development directly from the respondents. My array of data collection

tools included interviews and observations. Apart from this, related research outcomes and health reports from the midwife of a particular area were used as the secondary data. I selected one plantation sector in Deltota, in Kandy district in Sri Lanka. This selected area has 135 families and among those families, the sample was selected using a purposive sample method. Accordingly, the sample consisted of 31 respondents viz. 30 parents plus 1 midwife of the particular area. The 30 parents consist of 25 mothers and 5 fathers. Even though the idea was to get data from 15 couples as husband and wife in the same family, it was difficult since most of the fathers refused to discuss this matter. Parents who were in the 20 to 35 years of age category, who have children under the age of 5 years, were selected for the study since they have fresh memories as to how they take care of their children. Further, all the parents who were selected for the study had only primary school education since most of them dropped out before completing Grade 10 of their schooling due to various reasons. Accordingly, out of the 25 mothers, only 2 had sat for Ordinary Level exams while out of the 5 fathers, none had studied up to Grade 10. Even though I wanted to select different groups within the estate sector, it was hard to find educated people as they relocated to better living areas in the country. Observation is also used to understand and see how they feed, talk, treat, and even punish children. The thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data.

Background of the Estate Sector in Sri Lanka

The people who live in the estate sector are still considered a different ethnic group in the country as they differ in many of the social, economic, and cultural conditions compared to other people who live in rural and urban sectors in the country. This distinct ethnic group are known as Indian Tamils, and they were brought to the country by the then-British colonial government from mainly South India in the 19th century as labourers. Initially, they worked in a coffee plantation and later they started to work in tea and rubber plantations. This group settled along mostly the south-central areas as tea plantations existed in those areas (Hoole, 1948). After the country won independence from Britain in 1948, this group was considered as 'stateless people' and even though the government of Sri

Lanka tried to settle this issue and other socio-economic issues of this group from time to time, still these estate sector people or the Indian Tamils are having different attention, life chances and lifestyles due to the social, economic, cultural and geographical differences that they have compared with the other people in Sri Lanka.

For instance, when considering the poverty level within the estate sector, it is higher than the rural and urban sector in Sri Lanka. The following table further describes the poverty situation in the estate sector in comparison with other sectors in the country.

Table 1: Poverty headcount index by sectors

	1990/91	1995/96	2002	2006/2006	2009/2010
Sri Lanka	26.1%	28.8%	22.7%	15.2%	8.9%
Urban	16.3%	14%	7.9%	6.7%	5.3%
Rural	29.5%	30.9%	24.7%	15.7%	9.4%
Estate	20.5%	38.4%	30%	32%	11.4%

Source: Department of Census and Statistics, 2008, 2011.

The above table shows that the poverty level in Sri Lanka is reducing overall as well as across sectors considerably. However, according to the above data still, the poverty level in the estate sector remains high at 11.4% and according to the HIES (2009) report, 58.5% of the estate sector household are among the poorest and this represents 40% of households in the country (Department of Census and Statistics, 2011). The poverty level of the estate sector can be considered a vicious cycle which affects the other social, cultural, health, education, and daily practices of the people.

For instance, in terms of educational level, the least developed in the country is reported from the estate sector. Education is considered a key primary factor for upward social mobility in most developing countries and after getting independence from the British in 1948, the Sri Lankan education sector was well established. For example, the number of schools increased by over 50% while students attending schools increased by more than 300% and teachers increased by more than 400% within a period of fewer than 40 years (Ministry of Education, in Sri Lanka, 2009). Education

is compulsory for all children in Sri Lanka, and it is provided free of charge even at the university level. As a result, the literacy rate in Sri Lanka has grown to 92.3% of the population and this is the highest literacy rate in South Asia (UNESCO, 2022).

Even though the general picture of Sri Lanka is very positive in terms of education as stated above, children across all sectors are not receiving equal opportunities due to the various barriers that exist mainly in the rural and estate sectors. In particular, the children who live in the estate sector are in disadvantageous situations involving the education sector preventing them from achieving good results. Poverty can be mentioned as the main barrier for children involved with education even though primary and secondary education can be received free of charge in Sri Lanka. For instance, the school drop-out rate in the estate sector is 20% before completing primary and secondary education whereas at the national level it is 2%. This may directly influence the decreased literacy rate in the estate sector. Even though the literacy rate in Sri Lanka is 91.8% which is very close to the standard achieved by developed countries, still sector-wise, there are huge differences. For instance, the literacy rate in the estate sector is 76.9%. Further, half of the women in the estate sector complete only their primary education (Jayawardena, 2014).

Issues of child labour, teenage pregnancies, domestic violence, alcohol addiction etc. are also high in the estate sector compared with the national average in the country. For instance, according to the Family Health Bureau, the teenage pregnancy rate is 6.5% in Sri Lanka, and this is quite low compared with other South Asian countries. Even though nationally we are at a quite low level in terms of the teenage pregnancy problem, the highest teenage pregnancy rate is reported from the Tamils who live in the rural and estate sector (Thoradeniya, 2021). A study done by Munas et al (2015) shows that one in two women in the estate sector in Sri Lanka experience gender-based violence. Further, even though the poverty level is high in the estate sector, the highest percentage of alcohol users and smokers are reported from the estate sector in Sri Lanka. For instance, 39% of their population are alcohol users while urban areas and rural sectors report 17%. Smokers in the estate sector are 36% while the urban sector is

26% and the rural sector is 28% (Jayawardena, 2014). The following table further denotes the socio-economic situation of the people in the estate sector in comparison to the national level in Sri Lanka

Table 2: Socio-economic and educational status, and health care services accessibility in the estate sector compared to the national level based on Demographic and Health Surveys

Indicators	DHS 2006-2007		DHS 2016	
	Estate (%)	National (%)	Estate (%)	National (%)
Households in the lowest wealth quintile	64		71	20
Access to safe drinking water	52.4	81.1	43	90
Access to improved sanitation facility	66.3	83.0	79	90
Literacy of ever-married women aged 15-49 year	59.1	90.3	74.4	93.8
Type of occupation of women aged 15-49 years doing unskilled jobs	89.9	36.1	59.4	33.9
The female household population has no education	19.9	6.6	14.5	4.2
Male households have no education	8.0	3.3		
Distance to a health facility is a problem to access healthcare	50.6	19.5		
Need transport to access healthcare	47.4	19.3		
Under five children who did not have the birth certificate	38.0	17.2		

Source: Preiyasamy (2017:136).

The discussion above and table No 2 show that people living in the estate sector are socio-economically disadvantaged compared to other people living in the country. Women especially are in more disadvantaged positions than men in the estate sector which may directly impact child rearing and parenting as women are considered the primary caregiving parent in the estate sector commonly in Sri Lanka (Duncan, 2010; Senarathna, 2012). Most importantly it can be seen that the poverty, socioeconomic and cultural factors of the estate sector have directly influenced children's health and nutrition. For instance, underweight children under 5 years of age in the estate sector are 30% while in the urban sector it is 21% and rural sector, 17%. Accordingly, the prevalence of malnutrition is also a serious issue in the estate sector and this problem is considered a lifelong problem and operates as a life cycle (Jayawardena, 2017).

Within this kind of background, how parenting operates in the estate sector, do they know about parenting and childcaring, do they think parents should know about childhood needs are very important aspects to study. Because, on one hand, most of the research thus far has focused on the socio-economic background of estate people and other related issues such as poverty, domestic violence, child labour etc. and not much attention has been paid to how parenting operates in the estate sector. On the other hand, people living in the estate sector are struggling just to survive as indicated in table 2. Therefore, do these people consider 'parenting' an important concept is a question. This study will explore how parenting operates and how valuable this concept is, within the estate sector.

Results and Discussion

This study focuses mainly on two research questions; the first one explores whether the parents of the estate sector have adequate knowledge regarding the requirements of early childhood development. According to the literature review, five aspects were identified, based on the previous research on child development as essential aspects as each parent should have some basis of knowledge regarding child development. Therefore,

those five aspects were used as analytical tools in evaluating the parents' knowledge of child development, in the estate sector in Sri Lanka.

Parental Knowledge on Childhood Development

1. Parental knowledge of child's nutrition.

Researchers have proven that giving a child a nutritious meal and the knowledge and awareness of parents about it is a crucial factor in child development (Dipti et al, 2017; Kunwar & Pillai (2002). The most crucial time for infants to start good nutrition is 1000 days, from pregnancy until the child's second birthday. Most health experts recommend that infants should begin breastfeeding within one hour of birth, continue for six months exclusively and continue until two years with other nutritional food. This food habit helps children to be protected from diseases, boosts brain development and it can also strengthen the emotional bond between mother and child, thereby improving the child's mental health (Zilanawala, Abell & Bell, 2017).

When considering the parents, especially mothers who were interviewed, they were well aware of giving breast milk soon after the child was born, and they received this knowledge through the midwife of the particular area. Hospital staff also helped them to breastfeed soon after the child was born. But giving only breast milk for six months and other nutrition habits is not at a satisfactory level within the estate sector. When the midwife was interviewed, she said that even though she is trying to convince them of the importance of giving nutritious food and maintaining good food habits such as giving food according to time frame, etc. most of the mothers do not pay much attention to those ideas due to several reasons. When inquiring about this from the mothers they relayed that they do not breastfeed until six months since they cannot produce breast milk due to a lack of enough food for themselves. They also cannot maintain food habits since they have to work to earn their living. Therefore, most mothers and even fathers are of the view that they can give children what they eat, and I could observe most of the time they give mushed rice and some other vegetables or porridge to children even at four months of age.

During observation, it could be seen that most of the children are underweight and suffering from malnutrition. Midwife of the particular area also confirmed this; according to her half of the children are suffering from malnutrition and in her considered opinion, though poverty of the parents is a high factor, the negligence, and lack of aspirations for their children's lives, lack of knowledge and education, are also highly contribute factors for this situation.

Research also have shown that compared with the national level, malnutrition is higher among children in the estate sector. The following table further expands on this.

Table 3 : Nutritional status of under-five children in the Estate sector versus the national level in Sri Lanka

Indicators	Demographic and Health Survey		Demographic and Health Survey		World Bank
	2006-2007		2016		2017
	Estate	National	Estate	National	Estate
Stunting	42.2%	17.3%	31.7%	17.3%	36.4%
Underweight	30.1%	21.1%	29.7%	20.5%	35.9%
Wasting	13.5%	14.7%	13.4%	15.1%	16.0%
Anaemia	39.3%	32.5%			38.4%

Source: Periyasamy, 2017:138)

According to my study as well as the table above, it appears that the children in the estate sector are not getting a healthy diet and as a result, they are facing various health problems. My study confirmed that though the socio-economic problems were the main cause of this problem, the parents' negligence, as well as their unawareness of the importance of giving at least available food nutritionally, utilizing good food habits is also a contributor to this problem.

2. Knowledge of mental health

Early discussions on child development mainly focused on the personality and psychological development of children as discussed in the literature

review. The mental health of children does play a unique role in child development. These early discussions and current events have largely highlighted how parents, especially mothers, should pay attention to the mental development of children (Freud, 1939; Piaget, 1952; Erickson, 1995; Wallander, et al, 2014). The above discussion shows that for a child to develop good mental health, parents, especially mothers, need to have good knowledge and understanding about the psychological conditions and needs of their children and how to deal with psychological issues of children too.

Normally in Sri Lanka, the psychology of people is given very little attention (de Zoysa & Rita, 2011). When it comes to the estate sector, I could observe that parents and mothers do not pay any attention to the psychological conditions of children separately and they do not know how they can aid in the mental health of children. For instance, spending some time with children, talking to them, playing with them, listening to them, helping them with their bathroom needs, bathing, reading books to them, etc. may be an easy way for parents to build up psychological bonds with children and those aspects aid in the psychological development of children too. Because when parents are with children, they feel love, security, safety, belonging, etc. But most of the mothers and almost all fathers who were interviewed did not pay much attention to giving love and concern for their children. The following quotation further explains this.

> "How can we find time to be with children? We have to think and find ways to earn money by giving at least food for them. At the same time, it is not good to pet children too much as then the children's behaviour will worsen." (Interview no. 11).

Observation also revealed that parents do not respond quickly to their children's urgent needs. For instance, when it comes to children defecating, most mothers attend to wash it after their work is done. The study found out that most mothers spent their time talking to neighbours, rather than paying attention to their children, involved in things like lice finding among the women during their gossip sessions, past rumours, etc. The midwife in the particular area relayed that it is difficult to convince

parents of the importance of being with children for at least a few hours to address their concerns lovingly.

3. Awareness of the role of parents in developing the language skills of children

Children and parents' interaction, and relationship plays a vital role in developing their language and skills. Especially, communication among children, and parents often creates paths to enhance relationships, understand the family environment, values, and skills and grasp the culture of a particular society. Further, positive relationships and communication between parents and children are essential in shaping a child's literacy skills and success later in life, in terms of education (Thomas et al, 2019; Safwat, 2014).

Many researchers highlighted that reading books for children even for infants helps them to develop themselves in numerous ways. For instance, Logan et al (2019) state that babies who are read every day grasp around 78 000 words and by the time they reach 5 years of age, they have been exposed to 1.4 million words. Not only do children get familiarized with words by having books read to them, but they start to love books which in turn helps stimulate children's imagination about the world too (Massaro, 2017).

The above discussion shows that engaging in conversation with the child as much as possible, reading books to the child, etc. is a crucial foundation for the child's language ability and educational success. However, I found that the parents in the estate sector, where the study was done, never read books to children and their interactions / talking to children were also not at a satisfactory level. On one hand, most of the parents are illiterate. On the other hand, there is much negligence in spending time with children due to their social and cultural situation. This may directly influence children to drop out of school before completing their primary education as the highest school dropout rate is reported from the estate sector in Sri Lanka. It was 20% in 2019.

4.   Child protection

Any parent hopes to protect their children and it was found to be of primary concern even among the parents studied in the estate sector. Even though they have the awareness that children should be protected from many aspects, the precautions they take are not at satisfactory level. In some homes, very young children were seen alone at home, and in some cases, children were seen playing in unsafe circumstances. Poverty, parents having to work, the lack of a systematic programme to look after the children, unawareness of danger and not having a proper caring system were found to be the primary reasons for this situation.

5.   Use of punishments and discipline on children and its impact

It is essential to instil discipline in children and different cultures will adopt different strategies for this. Discipline is the directive of children's psychological, physical, moral and emotional development, enabling children to take responsibility for themselves when they grow older (Holden, 2002). To create discipline, some societies use punishments on children which is highly condemned in the contemporary research world, which maintains that physical punishment is associated with increasing child anger, anti-social behaviour, lower intellectual achievement, diminished moral internalisation and mental health problems (Smith, 2006; WHO 2021). The World Health Organization (2021) also has indicated that physical punishment is highly prevalent globally and around 60% of children aged 2 to 14 years suffer physical punishments inflicted by their parents.

Even though accurate data is not sufficient regarding physical punishments inflicted on children, Sri Lanka is one of the countries that actively use punishment as a method of creating discipline. A study done by Sathiadas et al (2020) states that 64.5% of children among 1130 respondents in the Jaffna district, Sri Lanka experienced physical punishment at their home or school. Though the country has legal provisions to stop all forms of physical punishment against children, and Sri Lanka is a partner of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children which was

established in 2016, the above study revealed that physical punishment continues to happen and is very rarely reported to the authorities.

My study also confirms that all the parents in the study believe that punishment is the best method to control their children. The following quotation represents their collective view regarding physical punishment for children.

 "These kids are very naughty miss. They can't be brought up without hitting. Only when they are hit will they realize that they have done something wrong, and our goal is to get them to behave better and get a good education" (Interview no. 20).

When the midwife was interviewed, she relayed it is really difficult to convince the parents of the negative consequences of punishments. Lack of education, distressful environment, alcoholism of parents, etc., could be seen as a direct link with the punishment of children in this research area. Many researchers have shown that parents who were victims of violence or punishments in their childhood pass on the same experience to their children (Gershoff, E. 2002; Clement, M.E. & Chamberland, C, 2009). This was borne out in my study as well as almost all mothers and fathers said that they experienced more punishments in their childhood than their children. As mentioned in the literature review above, Baumrind (1966) has stated in the discussion of 'parenting' that the most suitable parenting style is 'authoritative' as they are responsive to a child's emotional needs while having high standards of parenting. However, this study found that all the parents that were interviewed typified features of 'authoritarian parents' as they tried their level best to control children using unacceptable punishments such as hitting, even over minor issues that the mother or father might find unacceptable from their children.

Challenges of Being Worthy Parents

As the second research question, this study discovered a few challenges against effective parenting knowledge and practices in the estate sector of Sri Lanka.

1. Poverty

As indicated in table No 1, the poverty level in the estate sector in Sri Lanka remains high and its influence on all aspects of humans is a vicious cycle. For instance, since people in the estate sector do not have enough income, most people tend to begin their working life at a very early age in the informal sector or the estates, leading directly to a high school dropout rate and early marriages, etc. This again leads to teenage pregnancies and health-related issues, domestic violence, violence against children etc. My study clearly shows that since most of the families that were interviewed were struggling just to survive, little attention is paid to the well-being of their children.

2. Lack of Education

Normally, half of the women in the estate sector in Sri Lanka complete only primary education and the other half also stop their education before completing their secondary education (Jayawardena, 2014). People in the estate sector also tend to believe that parenthood is not a stage to acquire new knowledge and that it is completely a natural process; yet as mentioned in the literature review, to become a worthy mother or a father, everyone needs some knowledge on how to become a good parent. But it seems that illiteracy, not updating with information etc. highly influences parents in the estate sector towards strong punishments and even not giving nutritional meals to children. If they have awareness, willingness, and positive attitudes, they can be worthy parents even if they are facing lots of hardship in terms of poverty and other socio-economic conditions.

3. Domestic violence

Domestic violence that parents face daily in turn influences their ability to translate their knowledge into effective parenting practices.

4. Cultural Ideologies.

For instance, fathers' concerns and knowledge regarding early childhood development were very poor. This is mainly because patriarchal ideologies

still exist in the country, especially so in the estate sector. They feel that taking care of children is a woman's work and men should not be responsible for that. Further, it was observed that parents, both men and women, are very much addicted to watching movies depicting violence and it may have a direct influence on their inflicting physical punishment upon children.

5. 'Parenting' is not considered an important matter to be discussed.

As yet, 'parenting' in Sri Lanka is not considered a hot research topic and therefore, very rarely it raised concerns about it. Since there are many other problems requiring urgent attention, 'parenting' is neglected, in the estate sector in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore parental knowledge of child development in the estate sector of Sri Lanka, which consists of a group of people marginalized in terms of economic, social, and cultural factors. This study finds that both mothers and fathers have limited, rudimentary knowledge about childhood development. As per the findings, it was identified that most of the mothers had only a basic idea about the factors described under Nos.1 from the above-mentioned list. i.e., they had an idea of the importance of giving necessities to a child such as food, clothes and medicine as required. Fathers seem to not know of any of the factors on the list and they also displayed the attitude that the provision of food is the most important thing. Therefore, the findings of this study illustrate that the knowledge of the parents (both mother and father) on child development is not at a satisfactory level in the estate sector. They don't think of child-rearing as something they need to learn from anyone else or that it requires any special kind of knowledge or skills either. Their educational background has a strong link with this situation with most parents being illiterate; not having the capacity to read or write. The midwife of the area said that even though professional health workers like her try to provide some knowledge regarding child rearing, it mostly fell on deaf ears. She reported that most of the parents are of the view that there

is no meaning in teaching how to become parents, and they considered it as artificially imposed values leading only to unnecessary problems at the family level. Thus, they just shrug off and forget what they are told regarding child-rearing.

However, they do display good attitudes towards rearing children such as having ambitions and aspirations for their children to be productive people with good education and good employment, overcoming propensity to labour in the estate sector, etc. Since they have limited knowledge of parenting practices though, they attempt to enforce control of their children via very unsuitable means such as the use of strong physical punishments. Some cultural practices to appear extremely unsuitable for childhood. Accordingly, this study uncovers the gap between knowledge, attitudes, and practices those parents employ regarding childhood development.

Their socio-economic background has a strong link with this situation; mainly poverty, domestic violence, cultural ideologies, and limited education combined to have prevented parents from perceiving this field as of any importance in gaining their children a better life – something they do sincerely aspire to. Therefore, short-term and long-term steps should be taken to promote the importance of childhood development and encourage parents to pay their children more aware parental attention than in the current situation. Therefore, this study recommends employing community-level awareness programmes on parenting with a special focus on raising awareness, particularly among fathers, as they display even less knowledge or positive attitudes in this field than mothers. Long-term strategies should also be launched to enhance their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds as many of the issues in the estate sector are linked to these conditions.

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The Themes of Murals at Ajanta: An Analytical Study

Mahinda Somathilake

Department of History, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
Email*: mahindasomathilake@gmail.com*

Abstract

Of the themes that have been used for the murals of Ajanta, the representations of the Jataka stories are prominent. Some of them are repeated several times in the various caves and many of them depict/treat human form rather than the animal incarnation of the Buddha. The life story of the Buddha was also one of the most popular themes among the mural paintings of Ajanta. Besides, a more prominent place is given to the Bodhisattvas. The 'Bhava-chakra' or the wheel of life, painted at Ajanta is a unique concept of philosophical importance. With the decline of artistic standards of the site, these narrative scenes were replaced by representations of the repetitive Buddha figures or the representations of the concept of thousand Buddhas. In addition, the decorative motifs are also one of the popular themes among the painters of Ajanta. Thus, except these decorative motifs, all the other themes of the paintings of Ajanta are intensely religious in tone and mostly centred around the Jatakas or the Buddha's previous lives, incidents from the life story of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Buddhist beliefs and teachings etc. Each of the paintings tells its own story in subject matter, form and meaning. There is only one final goal of all the themes and there prevails an atmosphere of spiritual fulfilment and deep religious emotion as the main aim of the paintings. It is also evident that sometimes without detracting from the sacred purpose of the paintings they integrated the larger and fuller life of the material world into the religious themes and thereby imparted an intensely humanistic character to their paintings. Consequently, it is apparent that some mundane matters, which are available among the descriptions of some of the Jatakas, have also been included in these murals. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that there is no erotic tendency at Ajanta such

as we notice in the classical art of Europe or in the later Brahmanical sculpture of India. Thus, though the murals are fundamentally religious, they pulsate with vitality and action, showing again an interest towards secularism, which is distinctly marked.

Keywords: Ajanta, Jatakas, Paintings, Themes, The life story of the Buddha

Introduction: The Caves

The caves of Ajanta are located in the Western Ghats, in the Indhyadri or Ajanta range of hills, on the northern fringe of the Maharashtra state, in the district of Aurangabad, in India. The caves extended for a distance of about 600 yards from east to west around the concave wall of an amygdaloid trap that hem in the stream on its north or left side. The caves were excavated in the face of an almost perpendicular scarp of rock, about 250 feet high, sweeping round in a curve forming the north or outer side of a wild and lonely glen (Burgess, 1879:1). Besides the inscriptional evidence at the caves of Ajanta, the reference made by Hiuen Tsang who stayed in India for fifteen years in the first half of the seventh century AD is the earliest reference to the caves. Although it is believed that he did not visit the place, he has given some interesting details about the site (Fergusson and Burgess, 1969: 282; Ghosh, 1967: 2; Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 43; Watters, 1905: 239-240; Beal, 257-258). [1] This shows that even though the prolific activity at this monastery had come to a close by the end of the sixth century AD, the caves of Ajanta continued to be popular in the Buddhist world even later on. This speculation is further confirmed by the fact that a fragmentary Rastrakuta record of uncertain purpose, which belongs to the eighth-ninth centuries AD, is inscribed on the right wall of the landing to the left of the court of Cave No 26 (Mitra, 1996: 8).

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[1] Nevertheless, some scholars have believed that Hiuen Tsang visited Ajanta which was in the dominions of the great Chalukyan king Pulakeshin II. Ramesh Shankar Gupta and Mahajan, B.D. (1962). *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves.* Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala and Sons. 43; Watters, Thomas. (1905). *On Yuan Chwang' Travels in India*. London. 2. 239-240.

Thence, after centuries of neglect, the caves of Ajanta were discovered in the first part of the 19th century AD, the earliest recorded visitors being some officers of the Madras Army who saw the paintings in 1819 (Fergusson and Burgess, 1969: 280-281; Ghosh, 1967: 2; Dhavalikar, 1968:147-153; 1973:1; 1949:1). One inscription inscribed in Cave No 10, which belongs to the same year, clearly proves this fact. This inscription records John Smith's 28th cavalry/ 28th April 1819. It is evident that from the rediscovery by Madras Army all the subsequent writers who have treated the subject of Ajanta have adopted James Fergusson's numbering of the caves during the latter part of the nineteenth century AD (Griffiths, 1983:7). Thus, it is obvious that the caves are numbered not chronologically but as a matter of convenience, starting with the one at the outermost extremity from the entrance to the site at the east (Craven, 1976: 122; Mitra, 1996:14; Valisinha, 1948:194; Fergusson, 1879: 156; Burgess, 1874: 270; Behl, 1998: 4).

However, it is evident that many of the caves of Ajanta were completed, but at least half were still underway, when probably the political factors brought work at the site to a sudden halt (Spink, n.d. 8). However, the caves of Ajanta, including the unfinished ones, are thirty in number of which five caves are caitya-grhas (that is No. 9, 10, 19, 26, and 29) and the rest viharas. The earlier caves comprise two caitya-grhas (caves 9 and 10) and four monasteries (caves 8, 12, 13 and 15) dating from the second or first centuries BC (Mitra, 1971:175). The monasteries of this phase are small and consist of an astylar closed hall flanked on three sides by narrow cells, the latter, with rock-cut beds, serving as dormitories (Mitra, 1971:175). Cave No.6 is a double-storeyed temple and is the only one of its kind at the site as the rest have only one storey.

The caves of Ajanta fall into two distinct groups separated from each other by a fairly long interval as belonging to the second century BC and those of the fifth or sixth century AD or so, which belong to the Mahayana stage. Of these, the earliest magnificent caves at Ajanta, those belonging to the Hinayana phase are the caitya halls No 9 and 10 and the viharas No 12 and 13. Among the caitya halls at Ajanta, Cave No 10 is considered the oldest and in time, it follows the caitya halls of Bhaja and Kondane. Its

architectural forms are more highly developed than those of the earlier caitya halls, particularly the spring of the horseshoe arch on the façade (Brown, n.d. 25-30). Cave No 9 is thought to be even later. Whereas the facade screen of Cave No 10 is carved in wood and the pillars of the nave slant inward, as they would if the structure were of wood and the thrust of the roof had to be counteracted, the facade of Cave No 9 was executed in stone and pillars are perpendicular. An interesting feature of Cave No 9, reflected in the later plan of the Vihara shrine, is that the end is flat rather than in apsidal form is evoked by the disposition of the pillars behind the dagoba. However, it is generally believed that the early Buddhist rock-cut viharas at Ajanta were intended as residential quarters only. They consisted of an astylar hall surrounded by a series of cells, small square or rectangular chambers cut further into the rock. There was no provision for a shrine, but it is obvious that it was from this basic arrangement that the earliest ground plane of the later shrine vihara was developed (Weiner, 1977: 37).

During the second phase of excavation, after the initial stage of the experiment, the general layout of the monasteries is standardized, though each one of them presents some individual features of the architectural elements. It is conspicuous that following the countrywide custom, a shrine with a colossal image of Buddha is introduced in the middle of the back wall, opposite the entrance door, of the pillared hall. The latter, with a range of cells on three sides, is preceded by a pillared veranda. The shrine has many caves an antechamber in the front. Sometimes there are subsidiary shrines in the back and sidewalls. It is apparent all the pillars of the Verandas and the halls are exquisitely carved with belts of traceries. The decoration of the doorframes is also equally elegant and rich (Mitra, 1971:176).

Of these architectural forms, it is very interesting to note that the incomplete floor and unfinished columns of the grottos of Ajanta like Cave Nos 24 and 25 furnish a very good idea of the method of excavation (Mitra, 1996: 8; Behl, 1998: 30). In this process, it is evident that after the outline had been marked, excavation started from the ceiling that was finished first. The work then continued downwards by the cutting of deep alleys

with sharp and heavy instruments like the pickaxe followed by the breaking of the intervening ridges, leaving solid blocks, for pillars where necessary, till the floor was reached which was the last to receive attention. In this process, it is evident that the preliminary work of excavation was done by pickaxe and the rest, including the finish and carving, was entirely executed by hammer and chisel. Thus, after finishing the facade and the veranda the excavator went deep into the interior, attending first to the hall and next taking up the antechamber, shrine or cells as the case may be, the procedure of the excavation is the same (Mitra, 1996: 8-9). Accordingly, the excavation method of the caves was not only hewn out from top to bottom vertically but also from front to back. Thus, one can observe that the rock-cut architecture of the site is considerably different from the method of building construction of structural monuments.

The Walls and the Plasters

It is interesting to note that the work of quarrying, dressing and finishing of caves presumably went hand in hand. This is particularly evident from the fact that even the unfinished caves of Ajanta bear traces of paintings. For instance, in Cave No 4, the carvings on the pillar are unfinished, but the paintings on the ceilings are complete (Haloi, 1991: 377; Mitra, 1996: 9). Hence, it would seem that chisel-work, plastering and brushwork of painting were also taken in hand immediately and simultaneously, with the excavation of the caves. Besides, according to the method of excavation, it is obvious that the outer surface of the inner walls of the caves, cut into the hard and compact volcanic trap-rock or basalt, characterised by vesicle and amygdaloidal cavities, constituted the carrier for the plaster on which the pigments were laid. The surface of the carrier was rough and uneven, with deep furrows and chisel marks produced in the course of the excavation of the caves by the slow process of hammer and chisel strokes. Indeed, this itself was an advantage, as a tooth was provided to the plaster laid on the surface (Lal, 1967: 53).

It is observable that at Ajanta, at least three types of rock surfaces were made, i.e. the most uneven, moderately uneven and even surfaces. Of these, the most uneven surface can be seen on the ceilings and walls of the

cells in the temples. Particularly, the rough surface of the ceiling with a deep chisel mark were made to hold firmly in a strong bond to the hanging plastered grounds, so that it did not crumble easily. Moderately uneven surfaces were made on the vertical sidewalls and front walls of most of the halls of the fifth or the sixth century AD. The third type was used to bring out details of ornamental pillars, for which a very high degree of evenness of surface was felt necessary. Besides these later caves where at least three kinds of rock surfaces can be seen, it is noteworthy that the wall surfaces of the early Cave Nos 9 and 10 at Ajanta were more evenly chiselled (Haloi, 1991: 368).

Thus, it is evident that plastering the walls of caves at Ajanta was not an ordinary method, generally adopted for the customary houses (Kramrisch, 1945: 611-616; Sharma, 1927: 53-59). Lal outlined the actual ground of the painting of Ajanta in detail in the 1960s and according to him the laying of ground can generally be described as constituting of three layers: the pigments; fine plaster; and coarse plaster with two distinct lines of junctions which have been confirmed by microscopic examination of the painted stucco. Of these, the paint layer is generally about 0.1 mm in thickness. The underlying layer of fine plaster varies in thickness from cave to cave and ranges in thickness between 2 and 3 mm. The thickness of the lowest coarse of plaster below varies over a wide range, being primarily determined on a particular spot by the unevenness in the rock surface (Lal, 1967: 54).

Thus, it is obvious that altogether Ajanta paintings are composed of three major layers; the support or the carrier; the ground; and the layer of pigments. Of these, as already understood the support or the carrier is the surface of the rock, which is rough in nature. Hence, it is certain that the support is the actual base on which the paintings are executed. Generally, the surfaces of walls and ceilings at Ajanta are full of uneven spherical cavities created due to the evaporation of trapped gases during the eruption. But it is obvious that while excavating the caves; the surface of the rocky carrier was originally roughened with a chisel mark in different degrees to make better bonding and to suit the ground to be covered by painting as already noted above (Haloi, 1991: 368).

It was mentioned that the ground was mainly prepared by the application of two coats of plaster on the carrier or the support. Of these, the first coat was coarse in texture with a considerable amount of fibrous vegetable material and rock grit or sand. The unevenness of the chiselled rock surface was properly rectified by the application of this coat. This was then made smooth by another layer of mud and ferruginous earth, again mixed with fine rock powder or sand and fine fibrous vegetable material (Lal, 1967: 54; 1973: 90). This fairly rough surface was finally rendered smooth by the application of a thin layer of lime-wash, which was then painted over (Bhattacharya, 1966: 49; Lal, 1967: 54; 1973: 90). It has been revealed that this whole ground of the painting is composed of mud-plaster containing about 10 to 12 per cent of combined water and organic matter, such as vegetable fibres, paddy husks, grass and other fibrous material of organic origin and rock-grit or sand. Silica is present to extent of about 60 per cent and iron and alumina account for 27 per cent. In addition, lime and magnesia are also present to the extent of 2 to 3 per cent (Lal, 1967: 53).

Apart from these details obtainable from close observations of the paintings, it would be interesting to note the laboratory investigations and scientific analysis of the paintings of Ajanta done in the 1930s, which reveal at least two stages of plastering, i.e., rough and fine, in the preparation of the ground for the murals. Thus, as in the case of the early identifications, as recognized by Paramasivan too, clay and sand played a significant role in the paintings of the caves of Ajanta for the preparation of the rough plaster of the ground, while lime was present in a very low percentage. The presence of vegetable fibres in large quantities, along with other vegetable products, may be presumed, based on chemical analysis. It is also revealed that fine plaster was prepared out of a mixture of lime with a small percentage of Gypsum, i.e., Calcium Sulphate (Paramasivan, 1936-37: 25-36).

Paintings and the Themes

The walls, ceilings and pillars of nearly all the caves of Ajanta were once adorned with paintings. But, since the decline of Buddhism in India, the caves have been tenanted only by bats, by the dangerous little poison bees and insects that nest there and by wandering mendicants with their smoky

fires, all playing their part in the work of destruction. In addition, owing to moisture, the depredation of birds and in rare cases the vandalism of the art collector, the murals near the floor and the ceiling have been destroyed; those which survive are in the middle of the walls or on a few of the ceilings (Yazdani, 1983: 3). Consequently, it is evident that all these caves of Ajanta do not contain paintings today. For instance, Cave Nos. 6, 12, 15, 21 and 26 were once painted all over, but nothing substantial has survived. Even in the 1870s paintings to a greater or lesser extent remained in sixteen caves, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 26 according to the description given by James Burgess. Of these, the most important fragments were then to be seen in nine caves, Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 19 and 21, those in cave 17 being the most extensive (Burgess, 1879). Nevertheless, the remains are now found in thirteen caves only, the fragments that are of special interest occurring in Cave Nos 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17. The situation seems to have been the same at the beginning of the twentieth century according to the descriptions given by Lady Herringham (Harringham, 1910: 136-138).

It is to be noted at this point that at the beginning of last century, the trend as exemplified by Foucher was that to better appreciate works of art, it is necessary to understand them and that the first thing one has to do, after having duly admired their beauty, is to identify the subjects they represent (Foucher, 1919-20: 50-111). This notion indicates that themes were considered one of the major aspects of any artistic creation. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that one of the drawbacks to the identification of themes of the site is that unfortunately many of the murals have peeled off or deteriorated, due to various reasons (Lal, 1973: 83-100; Nagpall, 1988: 30-35). For instance, the shrine of Cave No 4 at Ajanta originally bore paintings, traces of which still linger in patches. Cave No 6 was also originally painted with many Buddha figures, of which hardly anything can now be made out. It is evident that on the left wall of the antechamber of the cave was painted the 'Miracle of Sravasti' and on the right wall the 'Assault' and 'Temptation of Mara' etc, but unfortunately, many of these paintings have peeled off. Similarly, Cave No 7 was once painted all over, but nothing substantial has survived. Cave Nos 12 and 15 were also originally painted as evident from the patches of plaster sticking to the

ceiling of the hall and traces of painting on the ceiling of the antechamber and shrine. In addition, most of the paintings of Cave Nos 20 and 21 have also now disappeared although in Cave No 21 a fragment of a panel representing Buddha preaching before the congregation can be seen on the left wall between the porch and the pilaster (Mitra, 1996: 72-73). In Cave No 26 also much of the painting, which had little scope for originality due to lack of plain uncovered surface, has perished.

However, a majority of the remaining paintings at the site consisted of narrative cycles containing numerous individual scenes though only small portions of the original paintings are extant. Taken collectively, these cycles are not so difficult to identify if the whole story is well preserved. Nevertheless, when large sections of these stories have been destroyed or perished, as already noted above, the identification of the themes is often extremely difficult (Schlingloff, 1987: 59). Consequently, some early scholars had mistakenly concluded that Ajanta was rich in murals representing the incidents of the history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka and that the site depicted amongst others, the arrival of Mahinda, the elk hunting of Devanampiyatissa and incidents of the monarch's reign in Sri Lanka (Bell, 1895: 57) while another painting depicted the bringing of the tooth relic into the island (Bell, 1897: 123). In addition, problems of another kind are presented by the paintings at Ajanta where narrative cycles are available. In such instances, a complex series of events in the narrative is reduced to only a few scenes in the picture. Consequently, in interpreting them, the main difficulty is in determining the remaining individual scenes based on parallels in literature and iconography.

The Jataka Stories

However, of the themes that have been used for the murals of Ajanta, it is evident that the representations of the Jataka stories are prominent. These have been predominantly used and painted on the spacious, whitish walls of the front portions of the temples, close to the main entrance, where enough sunlight is available to observe the paintings easily. From the extant paintings alone, it is evident that numerous Jataka tales are represented on the walls of the site. Interestingly enough, some of them are repeated several times in the various caves and many of them treat human

form rather than the animal incarnation of the Buddha (Huntington, 1985: 259). In this context, it is to be noted that among the earliest caves of Ajanta, in Cave No 10, which probably belongs to the second century BC, though the murals have very badly deteriorated, two Jataka stories have been successfully identified. Of these two initial stories, on the left, behind pillars 11 to 15 of the cave, is depicted the Sama Jataka (Foucher, 1972: 85-204; 1921: 50-111; Mitra, 1996: 43-44; 1971: 175-176; Yazdani, 1942: 24-27; 1945: 3; Deshpande, 1967: 35; 1991: 18; Maity, 1982: 10) and to the right of this is painted the Chaddanta Jataka (Foucher, 185-204; Mitra, 1996: 44-45; 1971: 175-176; Yazdani, 1941: 8; 1942: 24-27; 1945: 3) in a long horizontal frieze occupying the rest of the wall behind pillars 2 to 12. Besides these two stories, in the second stage, around fifth century AD, the Jataka stories of Sibi (Mitra, 1996: 20; Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 55-62), Samkhapala (Michell, 1989: 337-341), Mahajanaka (Deshpande, 1967: 35; Gupta and Mahajan, 1956: pl.xv-xix; Yazdani, Vol.I; Bhattacharya, 1991: 295), Mahaummagga (Mitra, 1996: 24; Yazdani, Vol.I; Dikshit, 1943: 115-119; Michell, 1989: 337-341) and Champeyya (Deshpande, 1967: 36; Yazdani, Vol.I; Michell, 1989: 337-341) have been painted in Cave No 1 and in Cave No 2, the Jataka stories of Hamsa (Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 62-71), Vidhurapandita (Deshpande, 1967: 36; Parimoo, 1991: 315-321; Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 62-71; Michell, 1989: 337-341), Ruru (Mitra, 1996: 32-33) and Kshantivadi (Mitra, 1996: 28-29) were painted while there are few verses written on the walls of the porch to the left of the veranda of Cave No 2 which include quotes from the Kshanti Jataka, found in the Jatakamala (The Jatakamala by Aryasura, 1891: 181-192; Lüders, 1903: 326-329). In addition, on the right-side wall of the same chamber, near the front corner of the cave, there is a figure of a king seated on a throne, which bears an inscription that early scholars uncertainly read as Chaitrivalorki raja and explained as king Chaitra of Valorka (Lüders, 1903: 326-329; Allan, 1983: 57, 62-63). The correct reading, however, is without doubt Maitribala raja and therefore obvious that the scene represents the Bodhisattva in his former birth as the king Maitribala gave in the Maitribala Jataka (Lüders, 1903: 326-329; Allan, 1983: 57, 62-6). As in the case of the Kshantivadi Jataka mentioned above, this story also forms the subject of the story of the Jatakamala (The Jatakamala by Aryasura,

1891: 41-50). It is thus evident that in the second phase, Aryasura's Jatakamala was one of the canons that were used for the selection of the themes of the paintings of Ajanta, which will be discussed later in detail.

Of the Jatakas painted in Cave No 16, two can be recognised on the front wall of the hall near the left corner and the left wall of the front aisle. The first depicts the Hasti Jataka (Michell, 1989: 337-341; The Jatakamala by Aryasura, 1891: 200) and the second shows certain episodes from the Mahaummagga Jataka (Mitra, 1996: 53-54). In the same cave fragmentary paintings of the Mahasutasoma Jataka, also represented in Cave No 17 in detail (Michell, 1989: 337-341), can be seen on the architrave above the front pillars of the Veranda (Mitra, 1996: 54). Besides, it is apparent that the walls of the hall of Cave No 17 are also all embellished with various Jatakas as in the case of Cave No 16. Starting from the front wall to the left of the main entrance is encountered the Chaddanta Jataka (Michell, 1989: 337-341; Mitra, 1996: 58), an earlier version of which we have already met with the initial paintings of Cave No 10. Meanwhile, it is significant that the Mahakapi Jataka was twice painted and the first (The Jataka or stories of the Buddha's former births, 1990)[2] is highlighted over the window and the space between the window and the small door of Cave No 17. Beyond the side door of the cave, the Hasti Jataka is represented, which occurs in Cave No 16 too (Mitra, 1996: 59). The Hamsa Jataka is also painted in Cave No 17 (Deshpande, 1967: 36; Mitra, 1980: 95), in addition to the Vessantara Jataka, which covers the entire left wall between the two pilasters of the cave (Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 88; Deshpande, 1967: 36). The adjoining story to the right of Vessantara Jataka is the Kumbha Jataka (Schlingloff, 1987: 148) and the lower half of the wall between the back pilaster and cell-door of the cave contains the representation of the second Mahakapi Jataka (Michell, 1989: 337-341; Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 88-100; Mitra, 1996: 61). Besides, it is believed that the battle scene painted above the Mahakapi Jataka may be related to

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[2] There are two Jataka stories of Mahakapi in the Pali Jataka collection, which have been used for the paintings of Ajanta. See the Jataka nos. 407 and 518 of EB Cowell's version of The Jataka or stories of the Buddha's former births, (Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, (reprinted) 1990.)

the Mahasutasoma Jataka, the subject matter of the back wall to the left of the antechamber of Cave No 17 (Schlingloff, 101; Gupta and Mahajan, 90-100), though some have mistakenly suggested that this is an episode quoted from the Sakra Jataka (Dehejia, 1997: 222-223).[3]

In addition, on the back wall to the right of the antechamber also of Cave, No 17 can be recognised by a few other Jataka stories. The one occupying the major portion of the upper half of the wall is the Sarabhamiga Jataka (Mitra, 1996: 63). To the right of the Sarabhamiga Jataka is represented the Machcha Jataka (Mitra, 1996: 63) and below the Sarabhamiga Jataka, between the two cell-doors, is the representation of the Matiposaka Jataka (Michell, 1989: 337-341). The next Jataka story, beyond the cell door of Cave No 17 is the Sama Jataka (Michell, 1989: 337-341; Mitra, 1996: 64). Besides, the Mahisa Jataka is also painted on the right wall to the left of the cell door of the cave (Griffiths, 1983: 13; Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 90-100) while the next Jataka story is that of Sibi (Deshpande, 1967: 37; Mitra, 1996: 66). In addition, the Sasa Jataka is also painted on the wall of the back aisle of the cave (Schlingloff, 1987: 123-128). The subject of the next painting covering the front wall to the left of the window of the cave has been identified as the Ruru Jataka, though there is an absence of the essential details of the story (Michell, 1989: 337-341; Mitra, 1996: 67). It is apparent that the rest of the wall up to the door of the cave contains the Nigrodhamiga Jataka (Gupta and Mahajan, 1962: 90-100; Mitra, 1996: 67-68; Michell, 1989: 337-341). Remarkably, of these Jataka tales, the scenes of the Sasa and the Kumbha Jatakas suggest that the literary source of the artists is the Jatakamala, as in the case of some of the murals in Cave No 2 (Schlingloff, 1987: 28, 148).

In contrast, from the extant paintings alone it is obvious that the following Jatakas have been represented at the caves of Ajanta: Sibi, Sankapala, Kshantivadi, Maitribala, Mahakapi, Sama, Chaddanta, Vessantara, Mahasutasoma, Matsya, Hasti, Mahajanaka, Champeyya, Mahaummagga, Hamsa, Vidurapandita, Sarabhamiga, Ruru, Matiposaka, Kumbha, Sasa,

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[3] However, it is certain that there is no any story by the name of Sakka Jataka in the Pali Jataka collection.

Mahisha and Nigrodgamiga etc. Of these various stories, in Cave Nos 1 and 16, the Mahaummagga Jataka story was painted twice, while the Sibi Jataka has been painted in Cave Nos. 1 and 17. Similarly, in Cave Nos. 2 and 17 also the Ruru and Hamsa Jataka stories were painted twice, while the Jataka stories of Mahasutasoma and Hasti have been painted in Cave Nos. 16 and 17. In addition, the Jataka stories of Chaddanta and Sama have been painted in Cave Nos. 10 and 17 though the chronological gap between the paintings is considerably wide. Although it is thus evident that some of the Jataka stories have repeatedly been painted in the caves of Ajanta, as in the case of the Buddhist reliefs (Ray, 1994: 146)[4] it is needless to state that the sequence of events or the scenes of narration of these same Jatakas is conspicuously different from each other. Most probably these depended on the various tastes of the painters, donors and the incumbents of the caves and also according to the available space on the walls.

Life Story of the Buddha

As in the case of the Jataka stories, the life story of the Buddha was also one of the most popular themes in the mural painting of Ajanta. Of these, though the subject matter of the earliest paintings of cave Cave Nos. 10 and 9 at Ajanta has not been fully identified (Deshpande, 1989: 19), in the middle part of the best-preserved scene of Cave No 10, Yazdani recognized a Bodhi tree, the tree of enlightenment and he, therefore, identified the scene as the arrival of a king with his retinue to worship the Bodhi tree (Yazdani, 1942: 24-27; 1945:3; 1941: 8; Mitra, 1971: 175-176; Deshpande, 1991: 18). Pursuing this thought further, Yazdani called the next scene to the right, in the middle of which a wheel of law is to be seen the royal party worshipping the stupa. Consequently, he believed that the painting must depict the arrival and then the return journey of the same king, whom he identified as one of the Andhra kings of the second century BC (Yazdani, 1942: 24-29). Contrary to this view, Schlingloff has more convincingly identified this scene as a representation of the "war of the

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[4] As H.P. Ray pointed out that even when the same story is depicted there are variations in the pictorial representations depending both on the space available and as well as the creative genius of the artists. The winds of change: Buddhism and the maritime links of early south Asia, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994, p.146.

relics" and the other scenes of the frieze as also the depictions of the major events of the life story of the Buddha; more precisely the Bodhisattva in Tusita heaven, Maya Devi's dream, Siddhartha's birth, his walk of seven steps, his first meditation etc which were also represented in the early Indian reliefs (Schlingloff, 1987: 3-9). However, it is particularly to be noted that these paintings do not represent the Buddha in human form instead various symbols have been used as in the case of Barhut and Sanchi sculptures.

In the paintings of the later period of Ajanta, the two sidewalls of the antechamber of Cave No 1 depict two important incidents from the Buddha's life. The one on the left represents the Assault and Temptation of Mara on the eve of Enlightenment. The other on the right wall of the antechamber of the same cave is painted with the Miracle of Sravasti or the concept of thousand Buddhas, which will be discussed later in detail. If the scene represents an illustration of the Miracle of Sravasti, the story tells that to confound the six heretical teachers, Buddha performed a few miracles in the presence of a group of spectators headed by king Prasenajit of Sravasti. Thus, one of the miracles was his multiplying himself into innumerable Buddhas in different mudras, poised on lotuses (Mitra, 1996: 19-20). Accordingly, it is obvious that unlike the earliest paintings at the site, in these paintings the Buddha has been represented in human form in various attitudes.

Besides, of the scenes of the life story of the Buddha painted in Cave No 2, the top panel above the cell door can be identified as the Tusita heaven, the abode of the last Bodhisattva before his descent into the human world. The princely figure, with an aureole around his head and seated in the teaching attitude, is the Bodhisattva. In the next panel, the nativity scene of Siddhartha is painted on the left wall of the hall between the front pilaster and the third cell door. Although much damaged, it is apparent that the bottom left panel depicts the bed chamber of queen Maya who dreamt of a white elephant entering her womb. The elephant, the form in which Bodhisattva alighted from the Tusita heaven, is not very clear in the panel, as the portion has suffered much. A royal couple is painted above the panel,apparently, Maya saying something regarding her dream to her

husband Suddhodana. The scene to its right relates to the interpretation of Maya's dream. When Maya told her dream to the king, he sent for the Brahmanas, who declared that the queen had conceived a son destined to become either a universal monarch i.e., 'Chakravarti' or a 'Buddha.' Consequently, the next scene shows a beautiful princess, apparently Maya, standing in a pensive mood between the pillars. Below is shown the birth scene of prince Siddhartha; Sakra holds the baby in his hands, while Maya stands holding the branch of a tree. The seven steps, which Siddhartha took immediately, afterwards are painted to the right of the scene (Mitra, 1996: 30-31).

In addition, the right wall of Cave No 16 is also devoted to the illustration of incidents from the life story of the Buddha. Though the painting is much darkened and effaced today, some of the incidents can be easily made out. Among these: the sleeping figure of Maya, to the left of which in a circular pavilion, is a royal couple, apparently Suddhodana and Maya, conversing over the prospect of the dream which the latter had; the birth of prince Siddhartha; the prediction of Asita; Siddhartha's first meditation during the ploughing festival; the prince at school and his practice of archery; sleeping Yasodhara and Siddhartha's great renunciation; Sujata's offering of milk-rice the offering of Tapassu and Bhalluka; Buddha with his begging-bowl on the street of Rajagaha etc are preserved. Similarly, on the left wall of the hall of the same cave is observable a masterly depiction of the pathos and sentiments in the fainting of a beautiful princess at the sight of a crown held by a servant, which is popularly known as the 'dying princess.' She is identified with Sundari, the wife of Nanda; the latter's religious conversion forming the subject of the panel also relates to the life story of the Buddha (Mitra, 1996: 52-53; Begley, 1968: 25-33; Coomaraswamy, 1922: 121-123; Dey, 1950: 20 & pl. v; Rosenned, 1905: 161, fig. 24). Thus, it is evident that the painters of the cave have portrayed these major events of the life story of the Buddha at least in thirty-one scenes, which are not, placed according to their temporal sequence (Dehejia, 1997: 226) as in the case of the Jataka stories.

Of the other caves at the site, it is apparent that the front wall of the porch of Cave No 17 depicts the subjugation of Nalagiri, one of the eight great

miracles in the life of the Buddha (Shankar and Mahajan, 1956)[5] through the rest of the incidents have not been preserved. Nevertheless, the walls of the antechamber of the same cave are also painted with the incidents from the life story of the Buddha depicting some of the other miracles of the Buddha. Of these, the right wall depicts the well-known Miracle of Sravasti. The incidents following the miracle were delineated in three vertical scenes on the left wall. Of these, on the top Buddha is preaching the Abhidamma to his mother in the Tavatimsa heaven; in the middle is his descent at Samkissa from the heaven in the company of Sakra and Brahma using stairs provided by Sakra, another miracle of the life of the Buddha; down below is the great assembly at Samkasya where Buddha made known to the world the wisdom of Sariputta by putting him more and more difficult questions (Mitra, 1996: 68-69).

However, as pointed out by Foucher, since most of these episodes of the miracles are independently depicted in the murals at Ajanta, the meaning of the eight miracles cannot be separated from the eight major places associated with the Buddha's earthly life and activities (Foucher, 1914: 147-184). Accordingly, these eight miracles may be divided into two main groups, each associated with a place where it occurred the spot being in turn revered as a pilgrimage centre. The main group: Birth at Lumbini, related to which are also the dream of Queen Maya and the great renunciation; Illumination or the Enlightenment, related to it the defeat of Mara at Bodhgaya; the First Sermon at Migadaya near Saranath: Extinction or the final attainment at Kushinagar. The second group are the Miracle at Sravasti; Descent from the Tusita heaven at Sankissa; the monkey offering honey to the Buddha at Varanasi; Taming of the elephant Nalagiri at Rajagaha (Parimoo, 1982: 2). Thus, it is apparent that while not all the episodes are actual miracles or pratiharyas, for instance, the birth by itself is not a miracle, nevertheless, once the Buddha was deified and ceased to be a historical person, all these incidents took on the significance

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[5] Nevertheless, Coomaraswamy has mistakenly interpreted this as the Nalagiri Jataka. Ananda Coomaraswamy, History of Indian and Indonesian art, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, (reprinted) 1972, p.89.

of miracle or miraculous occurrence interwoven around them (Parimoo, 1982: 1).[6]

In addition to these miracles, the back wall of the antechamber, to the left of the door of the same cave i.e., Cave No 17 depicts Yasodhara putting forward Rahula, the latter begging his patrimony of Buddha who puts forward his begging bowl (Mitra, 1996: 68-69). It is interesting to note that the left wall, opposite the sixth pillar of Cave No 19 also represents Buddha giving his begging bowl to Rahula, the latter pushed to the front by his mother Yasodhara (Mitra, 1996: 71) though the other incidents of the series are not clear.

Thousand Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Divine Beings

It is evident that with the decline of the artistic standards of Ajanta, the narrative scenes were replaced by representations of the repetitive Buddha figures in various attitudes. Of these, the countless Buddha figures included in the Miracle of Sravasti though likely to be allied with the life story of the Buddha as mentioned above, are certain representations of the concept of thousand Buddhas as the painted records themselves suggest that the figures are 'Budhasahasa' (Allan, 1983: 64; Mitra, 1996: 29; Deshpande, 1967: 39; Dehejia, 1997: 293). Thus, it is significant that at Ajanta the side walls of the shrine, walls of the antechamber, part of the left wall of the hall and left half of the back wall of Cave No 2 were painted with countless Buddhas in various attitudes though some scholars have counted 1055 of them, measuring about cm 20 high and covering a surface of 22 square metres (Foucher, 1972: 160). In this manner, the scene is repeated no less than six times in the cave, but only in the portrayal on the rear left wall of the cave does it retain its original character.

Similarly, in the damaged painting on the back wall to the left of the shrine, between the cell door and the door of the left aisle of the Cave No 16 the Miracle of Sravasti or the thousand Buddhas in the same form can also be recognised. In addition, in the same cave, after the incident of Nanda's

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[6] It is to be noted that since the actual meaning of pratiharya is miracle in the sense of a magician's tricks in that sense, only the miracle at Sravasti is appropriately a miracle.

conversion, a panel appears abruptly containing seated figures of Buddha in two rows. Beyond this is another panel representing Buddha seated in teaching attitude (Mitra, 1996: 29, 52). The walls of the hall of Cave No 19 are also painted with figures of Buddha on different panels.

Apart from these repetitive Buddha figures, it is noteworthy that the topmost panel on the doorway of Cave No 17 depicts the figures of seven Manushi Buddhas of Vipassi, Sikhi, Vessabhu, Kakuchchanda, Konagama, Kaśyapa and Śakyamuni together with Maitreya the future Buddha, seated under their respective Bodhi trees. Similarly, on the right wall of the shrine of Cave No 22, these seven Manushi Buddhas are also painted with Maitreya, under their respective Bodhi trees. Interestingly enough the names of each of the Buddhas and the Bodhi trees are also written below and above each representation (Mitra, 1996: 56,74). Accordingly, it is obvious that the theme of the thousand Buddhas or the Miracle of Sravasti became popular and also the rows of Buddha figures one above the other came to be painted during the last phase of Ajanta. Indeed, this repetitive theme reflects the artistic tendency of the age though the paintings lack the vigour, imagination and delicacy of the earlier ones (Deshpande, 1967: 39).

Besides these Buddha figures, it is obvious that in Ajanta paintings a more prominent place is given to the Bodhisattvas (Sastri, 1974: 66). The depiction of these Bodhisattva figures at the site not as attendants of Buddha but as viable subjects also came into vogue. Of such figures, the two attractive Bodhisattvas painted in Cave No 1 are conspicuous. Of large dimensions they are yet weightless; full-bodied in solid rounded plasticity, they are yet melting in karuna and seemingly in motion in the midst of a radiantly moving and rejoicing world, they seem to have become stilled into silence before a great realisation (Majumdar and Pusalker, 1954: 544). Of the two, the one on the left is the most famous Bodhisattva, which is five feet nine and a half inches from knee to tiara, two feet five and a half inches across the shoulders and one foot from chin to forehead through the lower legs, from above the knees, are missing (Zimmer, 1955: 187). According to the Buddhist belief he is the lotus holder, Padmapani, who dwells now on earth, performing the functions of Gautama Buddha until

the Buddha of the future, Maitreya, appears (Burgess, 1970: 14).[7] Consequently, at Ajanta he is shown as a prince of noble birth and breeding, wearing the jewels of the highborn, aloof but not detached from the beings who crowd around him, seeking salvation (Upjohn and others, 1949: 421-422). Among these, to his left is probably his consort, also holding a lily, a dark beauty brightened by the highlight on the nose and the lips. Between them is a chāmara bearer wearing a blue long coat, while to the left of the Bodhisattva is a dark macebearer wearing a white long-coat. The other figure on the right of the cave leaning in a graceful pose against a personage is wearing a long coat. The fine ornamentation of his diadem is captivating. To his right is a king offering him lilies on a tray. Of the two dark ladies near the bottom, of whom only the busts have survived, one is offering lilies to the other: commonly labelled as 'Dark Princess,' the latter's features are extremely delicate and refined (Mitra, 1996: 18-19).

Similarly, in Cave No also three large-sized Bodhisattvas are painted, one on the back wall of the hall, two on the front wall of the hall and three on the front wall of the shrine. Of the latter, the one to the left of the doorway does not represent Maitreya, as is commonly supposed, but Avalokitesvara in the role of the saviour of mankind threatened with the eight great perils of lion, elephant, fire, snake, robber, water, fetters and demon (Mitra, 1996: 30). In addition, in Cave No 17 the nine Bodhisattvas are also painted with four unadorned disciples standing in front and five lay devotees in the background, bejewelled and crowned (Waddell, 1893: 8-11).

These figures of the Bodhisattvas have all the qualities that youth, high birth, noble character and religious temperament can produce: strong masculine limbs, a broad chest, and a fine neck; a high intellectual forehead; large, meditative eyes; firm lips and an elegant nose etc. It is

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[7] It is noteworthy that Avalokitesvara, Padmapani or Karunarnava in Tibetan is the "on looking lord" called also Abhayamudra "the remover of fear." Avalokitesvara is held in special reverence in Tibet as the protector of the country and the Dalai Lamas are regarded as his successive incarnations. J Burgess, Report on the Elura cave temples and the Brahmanical and Jain caves in western India, Archaeological Survey of Western India, Vol.V, 1882, Indological Book House, (reprinted) 1970, p.14.

particularly apparent that the eyebrows, slightly raised and the highlight on the nose and chin give an air of spirituality to the countenance. The supple body is full of latent vigour. It is the youthful body of a noble prince, standing with a graceful bearing. On the head is a high crown or tiara with large blue sapphires, emblematic of royal birth. The jewellery is not profuse but select: a pearl necklace with a sapphire in the centre; longer strings of pearls across the chest and around the arms. Long black hair fall uncoiled on the shoulders. The serene compassionate face is full of renunciation, yet gentle in its expression, without scorn or disgust for the sweetness of life (Zimmer, 1955: 189).

Besides, when considering the theme of heavenly beings, the representation of figures of apsaras instantly comes to one's mind since it was one of the popular themes among the ancient Buddhist mural painters of Asia, though there is hardly any extant evidence among the Buddhist mural paintings of India. Among the exceptional remains, the apsara painting of Cave No 17 at Ajanta occupies an important place. Although the left part of the doorway on the outer back wall of the veranda of the cave is much damaged, gods flying amidst clouds, celestial nymphs and musicians have been painted on the left of the fairly well-preserved upper part. Of these, particularly attractive is the figure of the apsara with a turban-like headgear.

Other Themes

Apart from the above-mentioned themes that have been used by the mural painters of Ajanta, the 'Bhava-chakra' or the wheel of life, painted on the left wall of the veranda of Cave No 17 at Ajanta is a unique concept of philosophical importance. The painting, which is still typical for all Buddhist countries (Portfolio of Buddhist art: Historical and modern, 1906: 2; Waddell, 1892: 133-135), represents two giant green hands hold the wheel that is partly obliterated and when complete must have had eight compartments, further divided into sixteen in all. It is assumed that this wheel of causation represents an analogy with a Tibetan version (Waddell, 1894: 367; 1893: 8-11; Vogel, 1936: 61). and some scholars have concluded that this represents an earlier conception of 'Samsara' as

narrated in the Saundarananda of Ashvaghosha (Deshpande, 1967: 38), wherein Ananda thero while pointing out the absurdity of Nanda's infatuation with paradise, tells him of the real nature of the world encompassed by the disasters of birth, disease and death and revolving still in the cycle of existence, whether in heaven, among men, in hell, among animals or *pretas* (The Saundarananda of Asvaghosa, 1932: 11; 62). However, according to the arrangement, it is apparent that the painting depicts in its various compartments different facets of life: scenes from gardens, marketplaces, the workshop of a potter, royal apartments, wooden sheds of the poor, monkeys and elephants all intended to show the endless surroundings in which beings are placed as a result of their past actions (Deshpande, 1967: 38).

In addition, the decorative motifs are also one of the popular themes among the painters of Ajanta. This feature is more conspicuous among the larger-scale ceiling decorations of Ajanta. As especially evident in the paintings of Cave Nos. 1 and 2, most of the caves of Ajanta are remarkable for the survival of such beautiful ceiling paintings of the halls, antechambers, shrines, chapels and verandas with side porches. In most of these caves, the paintings on the ceilings take the form of compartments filled in with a variety of designs, including floral patterns, birds, fruits, flying figures, comic figures and geometric and ornamental motifs etc. Hence, in contrast to the murals on the walls, it is obvious that the paintings on the ceilings of Ajanta are decorative in character and innumerable small panels form a rich treasure house of floral, vegetal and animal motifs etc. It is also evident that in most cases, the artist has demonstrated his keen observation of animal life and painted scenes like the fight of two cocks or buffaloes as in the case of the remaining ceiling paintings of Cave No 17. In addition, among the other subjects of the ceiling paintings, the one showing foreigners in typical Iranian costumes enjoying drinks being attended by male and female associates on the canopy of Cave No 1 is particularly noteworthy (Mitra, 1996: 25).[8]

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[8] Some scholars have mistakenly interpreted this scene as the representation of Khusrau II of Persia and his beautiful wife Shīrīn. Debala Mitra, Ajanta, Archaeological survey of India, 1996, p.25.

However, except these decorative motifs, all the other themes of the paintings of Ajanta are intensely religious in tone and mostly centred around the Jatakas or the Buddha's previous lives, incidents from the life story of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Buddhist beliefs and teachings etc. In this context, it is obvious that each of the paintings tells its own story in subject matter, form and meaning. There is only one final goal of all the themes (Kramrisch, 1983: 302; Devendra, 1952: 45) and there prevails an atmosphere of spiritual fulfilment and deep religious emotion as the main aim of the paintings. Indeed, it is evident that for illustrating these fundamental Buddhist virtues with actual examples culled mainly from the previous lives of the Buddha the stories have provided material of a unique nature a mechanism unrivalled by any other type of story. In most cases, all the weaknesses and virtues of humanity have found expression in one form or another. Consequently, a host of good things of lasting benefit to parents, teachers, elders, husbands, wives, servants, neighbours, citizens and kings can be learnt by all even today. Thus, it is evident that meant as they are for the edification of all devotees irrespective of their intellectual and spiritual attainments, especially the Jatakas do not go beyond human dimensions and cover no more than the simplest ethical propositions. Consequently, the most one could see in them, beyond the limits of their immediate social significance, is the goodness of the Buddha himself who, in this case, is looked upon as prototypical of the ethical man, the ultimate symbol of all virtue (Gunasinghe, 1980: 486).

On the other hand, it is also obvious that sometimes without detracting from the sacred purpose of the paintings they integrated the larger and fuller life of the material world into the religious themes and thereby imparted an intensely humanistic character to their paintings. There are, therefore, intimate glimpses at monasteries of the throbbing and colourful everyday life of the period, which have been painted invariably with unflinching fidelity to truth. For instance, there are scenes from the life of the crowd with all its splendour along with the life of the devotee dedicated to devotion, piety and faith. Kings and queens surrounded by wealth, and power, ordinary men and women in the glory of youth and engaged in the realisation of the moral sources of life, attract spectators' attention (Swarup, 1968: 132). Accordingly, it is obvious that these themes

generally afforded the painter an unlimited scope for depicting the whole gamut of human life from birth to death-men, women and children of all stations of life, from the king to the slave, from the rich to the beggar, from the saint to the sinner- in the crowded drama of sublimity and coarseness, love and hatred, joy and sorrow, triumph and tribulation, compassion and ingratitude, pageantry and poverty, longing and death all pervaded by an intense religiosity (Mitra, 1996: 11). Consequently, if a person reading the Jataka stories of Mahajanaka, Vessantara, Chaddanta or any other in the Jataka book derives a certain pleasure, a person looking at the paintings depicting these Jataka stories derives the same kind of pleasure. The only conspicuous difference is literature in the old tradition is an auditory medium while the paintings are a visual medium. Hence, no doubt that particularly these Jatakas are a remarkable collection of beautiful stories that have a flavour for everyone whatsoever his race or religion may be (Wijesekara, 1983: 128-137; 1959: 102).

However, it is apparent that some mundane matters, which are available among the descriptions of some of the Jatakas, have also been included in these murals. For instance, the paintings in many of the caves of Ajanta represent interesting and spirited delineations of hunting scenes and battles etc (Alexander, 1830: 369). In addition, sometimes, the artists who did the paintings at the site have depicted female figures, full of sex appeal and beauty in such a way as to arouse sensual feelings in the viewers. Certainly, special attention has been paid to such aspects as the gracefulness of those figures and how beautiful the figures look when viewed from various angles. The women including the most famous 'toilet scene,' the occasion of 'consecration' and most of the other episodes painted at Ajanta are conspicuous in this respect.

Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that there is no erotic tendency at Ajanta such as we notice in the classical art of Europe or in the later Brahmanical sculpture of India. Certainly, to the artists of Ajanta a woman was a source of happiness and delight and her activities extended to all aspects of domestic, religious, moral and social life (Yazdani, 1941: 20). For instance, among the paintings of women at Ajanta the best is perhaps

of a black princess, which shows perfect modelling, exquisite decorative treatment, and marvellous expression indeed without manifestation of any sensual feelings (Yazdani, 1941: 21-22). Certainly, it is evident that all these figures are associated with some aspect of the Buddhist beliefs or rituals, which have been derived from the Jatakas or the canonical texts. Concerning all these aspects, it can be reasonably concluded that the general atmosphere of these paintings suggests an earthly paradise, containing sacred attitudes and people with semi-divine beings (Brown, 1927: 33,72).

Conclusion

But, in this context it has to be realized that these artists had knowledge of a larger and fuller life, other than that bounded by the temples. For instance, in most of the scenes of the murals, the king is seen surrounded by the pageantry of his court, with its entire attendant opulence and circumstance. Thus, although the murals as well as the scenes are fundamentally religious, they pulsate with vitality and action, showing again an interest towards the secularism, which is distinctly marked. Consequently, the viewers have been equally at home in ably representing the dazzling magnificence of the royal court, the simplicity of rural life and the hermit's tranquil life amidst sylvan surroundings etc. For instance, the scenes of Vessantara Jataka of Cave No 17 of Ajanta illustrates the prince as the very picture of the hermit and the poor Brahmin as an inexorable beggar. In the same story, the illustration of prince Vessantara, with his consort, driving on the main road, shows different merchants in pursuit of their trade, which is a beautiful illustration of economic life in ancient India (Sivaramamurti, 1970: 35). In addition, costumes, customs, manners domestic life etc, appropriate to an eastern culture, have also been faithfully recorded and provide a rich source of information.

Thus, it is evident that before starting their work at a temple the painters have studied life around them and natural scenes of beauty with intense sympathy and appreciation of plant and animal life. As a result, they have lovingly treated such themes of flora and fauna as they have chosen to depict not only on canopies where animal forms have been largely used,

but also on the walls. The elephants under the Banyan tree in the Chaddanta Jataka of Cave Nos. 10 and 17, the geese in the Hamsa Jataka and the deer in the Miga Jataka from Cave No 17 at Ajanta, may be cited as few examples of the tender approach of the painter to the themes of animals. It is noteworthy that sometimes even minute scenes have been borrowed from the environment and inserted into the paintings. The scene of a train of ants walking on a trunk of a tree depicted in the Chaddanta Jataka in Cave No 17 at Ajanta is one of the glaring examples (Behl, 1998: 181).

Certainly, the painters not only possessed consummate skill in delineating both human and animal figures in vivid style, but their decorative genius in adorning ceilings, pedestals of columns and door and window frames created patterns and motifs of kaleidoscopic variety, each exhibiting extraordinary powers of conception and a highly developed technique. The panel in the ceiling of Cave No 1 at Ajanta represents two freakish animals sporting with one another or the parrot in the ceiling of the same cave perched on a lotus stalk or the arhat shown flying in the ceiling of Cave No 2 or the panel of fabulous animals in the hall of the cave or the delightful pairs of merry-makers on the door frame of the latter caves at Ajanta, as well as hundreds of other subjects similar to these, all show the versatility of the artist's mind, his love of beauty and his joyous outlook upon life (History of the Deccan, 1952: 55). Accordingly, the paintings of Ajanta can easily be used as a primary source for the study of the history of India, particularly in the Deccan region in the period concerned.

Maps and Plates[9]
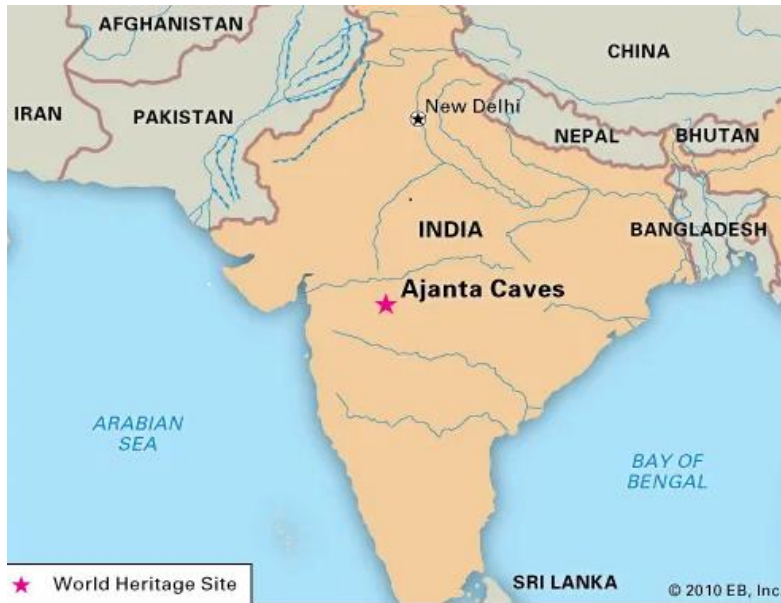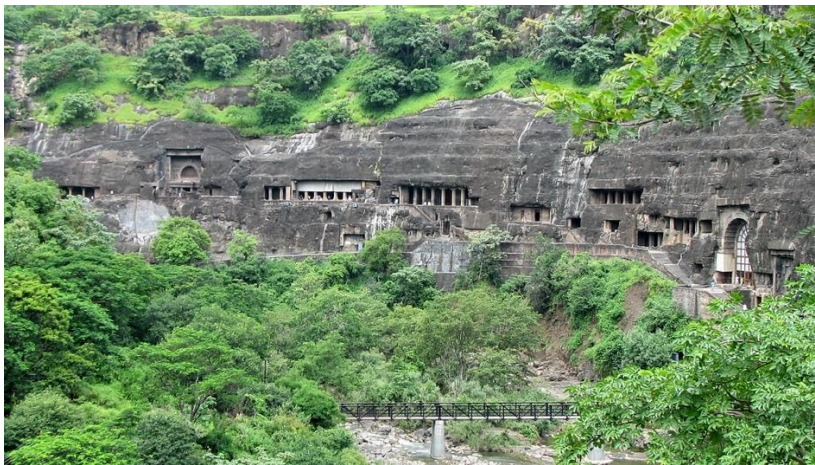
Figure 01: Location of Ajanta

Figure 02: The caves

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[9] The map of Ajanta caves (Figure 01) is obtained from the Encyclopedia Britannica and the ground plan of the site (Figure 03) is quoted from the Wikipedia. All the photographs were taken from the internet.
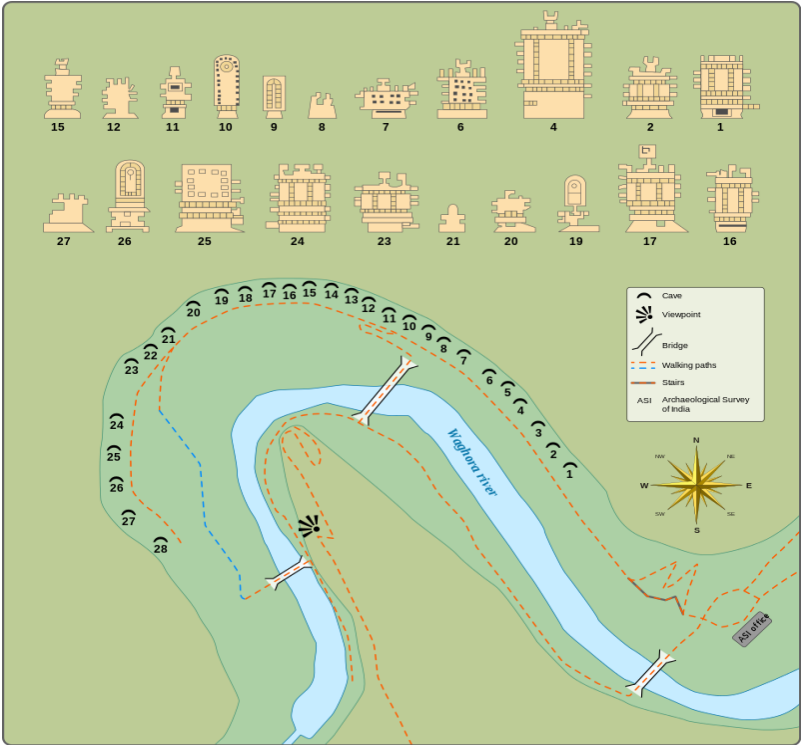
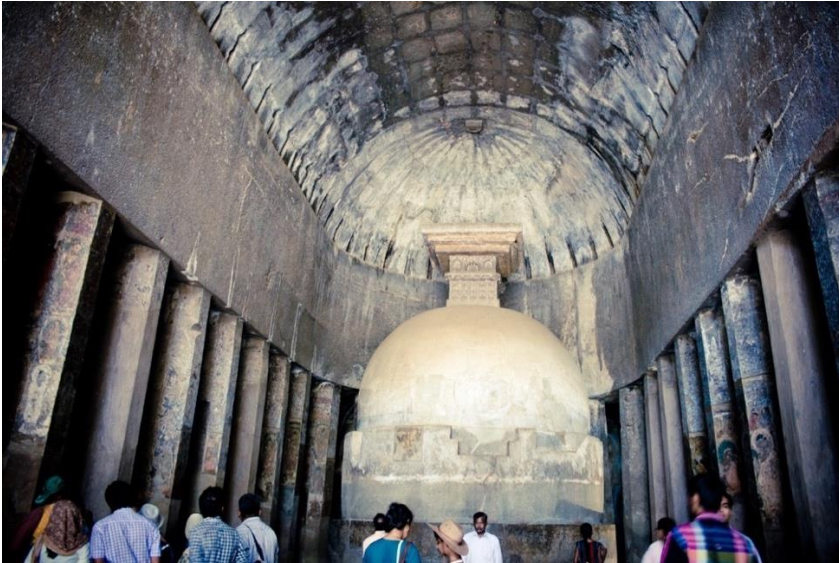**Figure 03:** Ground plan at Ajanta

Figure 04: Pathway to the caves

Figure 05 : Cave No 10

Figure 06 : Cave No 26

Figure 07: Entrance - Cave No 19

Figure 08: Unfinished cave
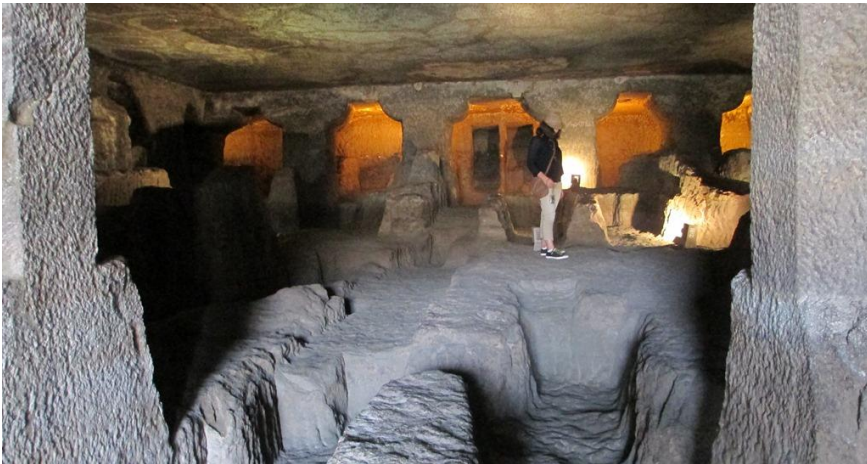
Figure 09: Painted walls - Cave No 17
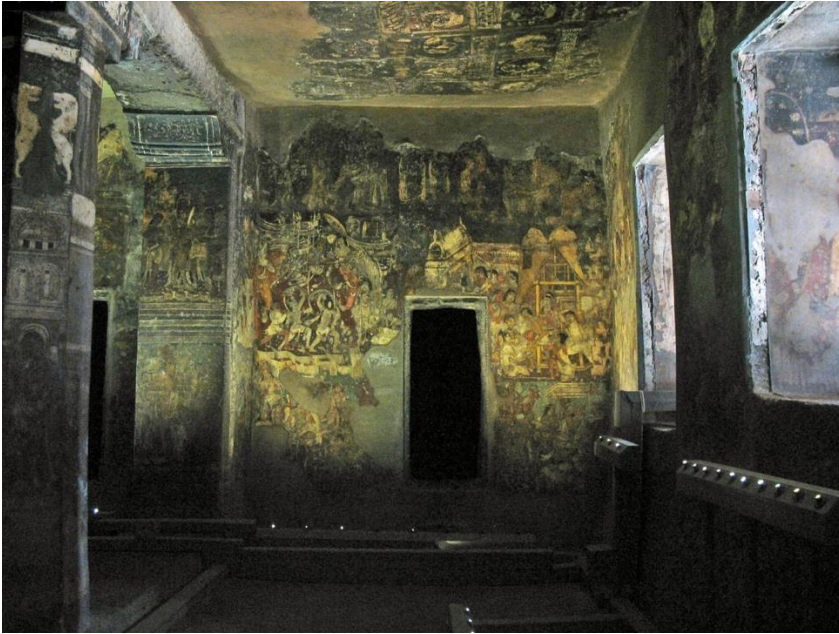
Figure 10: Carvings and paintings - Cave No 2

Figure 11: Detailed scene - Cave No 1

Figure 12: Painted canopy - Cave No 1

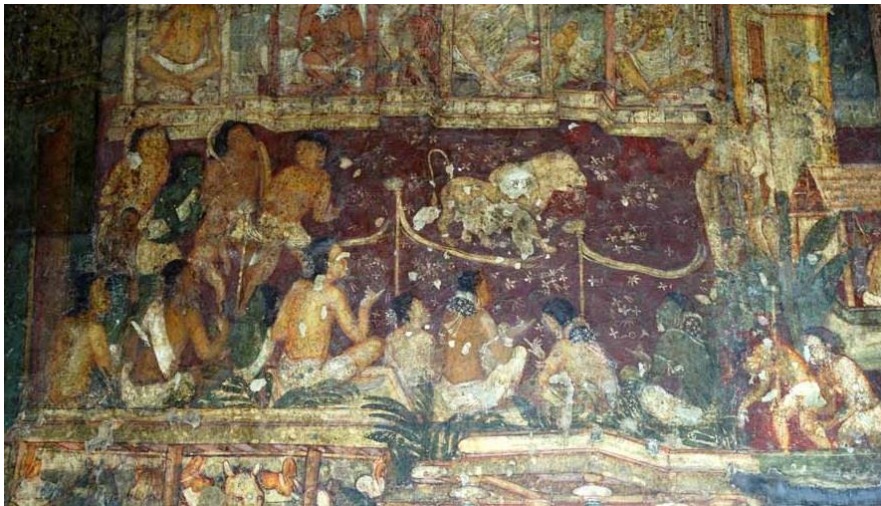**Figure 13:** Padmapani Bodhisattva - Cave No 1

Figure 14: A painted scene - Cave No 17

Figure 15: A detailed figure - Cave No 10

Figure 16 : Simhalavadana - Cave No 17

Figure 17: Painted pillars - Cave No 2

Figure 18: A painted wall and a ceiling

Figure 19: A detailed scene - Cave No 2

Figure 20: A ceiling - Cave No 1

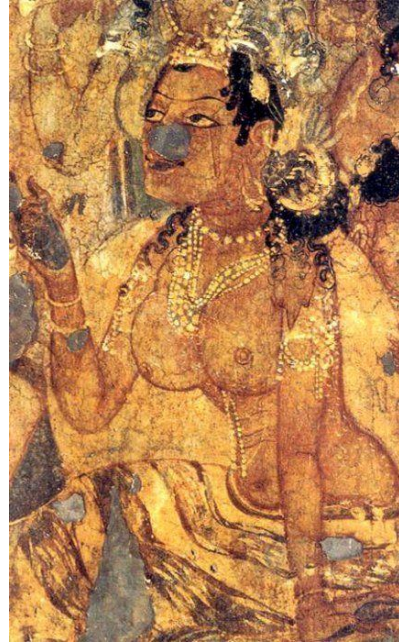**Figure 21:** Vidhurapandita Jataka   **Figure 22:** A detailed lady
        – Cave No 2
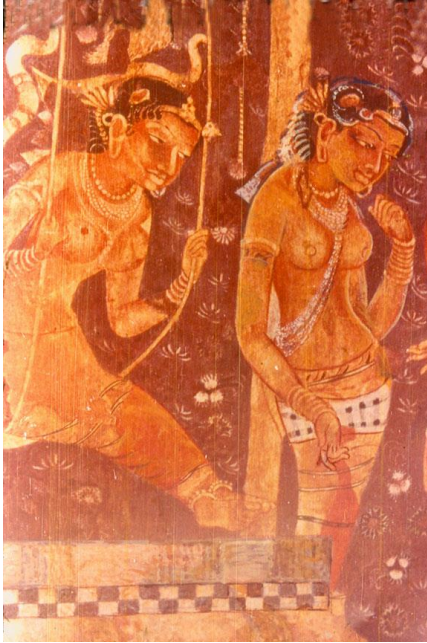
Figure 23: Mahajanaka Jataka – Cave No 1

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Relocation Failures in Sri Lanka: A Short History of Internal Displacement and Resettlement

By Robert Muggah
London & New York: Zed Books, 2008
ISBN 978 1 84813 0453
322 pages.

Review by Shantha Wanninayake

Introduction

Involuntary population resettlement and resettlement is a problem which is closely connected with development, conflict, and natural disasters. Robert Muggah's *Relocation Failures in Sri Lanka: A Short History of Internal Displacement and Resettlement* is principally concerned with understanding why the resettlement of internally displaced fails often. In early chapters of this book, an exploration of how states, international agencies, non-governmental organizations, and scholars conceptualize issues such as internal displacement and resettlement is provided. Then it explains the rationale and motivation in providing protection and durable solutions for different categories of populations internally displaced in the contexts of development, war, and natural disasters. The second part of the book focuses on Sri Lanka in an extensive case study of both sociological and historical perspectives.

The book consists of six chapters including an introduction and a conclusion. The chapters are namely: (1) A Unified Approach to Displacement and Resettlement, (2) Protection and Durable Solutions: Regimes for Internally Displaced and Resettled Populations, (3) A Short History of Settlement and Resettlement in Sri Lanka, (4) Resettlement for Development: Systems L and B, (5) Resettlement During War: Trincomalee and Batticaloa, and (6) Resettlement After the War: Reflection on the North and East.

Muggah identifies three structures broadly as forms of displacement and resettlement:

1. Development-Induced Internal Displacement and Resettlement (DIDR)
2. Conflict-Induced Internal Displacement and Resettlement (CIDR)
3. Natural disaster-Induced Internal Displacement and Resettlement (NIDR).

The book has a unitary approach to understand and recognize the concepts of internal displacement and resettlement. This perspective is comparative and examines otherwise exclusive categories of internal displacement and resettlement arising from development, armed conflict, and natural disasters. He prefers an interdisciplinary approach that includes international relations theory, political geography, history and development studies. His goal is to determine the norms, institutions and agents that shape the process and outcomes of internal displacement and resettlement. Furthermore, he is especially more concerned on applying a "grounded theory" approach to field studies and analysis, combining both qualitative and quantitative instruments. The methodological approach is crucial for the reader to understand and appreciate this book. The volume therefore tries to find and balance theoretical and empirical findings generated by anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, and human geographers.

According to Muggah, the main objective of the volume is, 'to generate a comparative assessment of international regimes designed to protect and promote durable solutions for internally displaced people, including their influence on shaping resettlement outcomes in a single country'. Sri Lankais an exceptional choice, since it has experienced all three forms of (DIDR, CIDR and NIDR) internal displacement and resettlement for last four decades. However, Sri Lanka is by no means unique, and Muggah grades ten other countries in Africa, South America and Asia that also have experienced mass population relocation as a result of development, conflicts and natural disasters (Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Congo, Haiti, Colombia, Nepal, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Indonesia). With the Sri Lankan case, Muggah provides his readers with an exceptional base for comparative analysis.

Content and analysis

In the first chapter in this volume, Muggah argues that the importance of a unified approach to displacement and resettlement. The chapter evaluates the theory and labels to explain internal displacement and resettlement processes. It encounters the argument among policymakers and planners to standardize and classify forced migrants. Furthermore, the chapter discusses some prevailing assumptions nurtured by forced migration scholars such as that displacement consists of involuntary, temporally, and geographically particular manners. Then the chapter introduces a definition of resettlement as a planned and involuntary process involving the permanent resettlement of an individual, family or household from one's place of origin to another place. In strengthening the work of Zetter (1991, 2007), Oliver-Smith (2004), Castles (2002, 2003), Hyndman (2000) and Malkki (1995) specifically, the chapter studies the linked difficulties of labelling populations on the move and the ways in which classified forms of knowledge production notify international norm-setting and policymaking. The chapter is concerned that the conceptual progress of the three separate categories of internal displacement and resettlement. These categories were obviously structured according to the recognized causes of displacement of development, conflicts, or natural disasters.

The second chapter discusses the local and international identifications and bureaucratic responses to internal displacement and resettlement through the field of international regimes. Sketching from rationalist and constructivist perspectives, the chapter describes how governmental and non-governmental actors created loose institutional arrangements to enhance predictability, reduce transaction costs and promote cooperation in different situations. The chapter examines the origin and shape of these international regimes and how they are activated at the national and sub-national level. It indicates how these regimes were themselves fostered by an international network of academics, practitioners, organizations, and state representatives.

In chapter three, Muggah examines the history of the settlement and resettlement patterns in Sri Lanka from the nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century. The chapter shows the number of external factors

influencing the three regimes. Further, this chapter provides the progress of settlement schemes from the late 1800s to independence in 1948. It discovers that the settlement and resettlement projects continued into the post-colonial era, and they were used by the local elites for a new political purpose. In this chapter, he argues that population resettlement was created to combine states of Sinhalese authority over non-state-controlled areas.

Next chapter (chapter 4) emphases on the relationships among the development-induced internal displacement and resettlement (DIDR) and irrigation and settlement schemes. It takes the one of the largest rural integrated development schemes in the world at the time as example; the Mahaweli Development and Irrigation Programme was subsequently accelerated in the late 1970s by the new government. Using the secondary data and the field visits experience, the chapter primarily considers the outcomes of two specific systems of the Mahaweli project including ethnically diverse areas of several northern and eastern districts during the 1980s and 1990s. It shows how the formation of these systems effected the internal displacement of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil and the settlement and resettlement of many Sinhalese people. As a result of building 'colony units' created a new spatial boundary that segmented minority communities and led to discriminating militarization in the north-east.

The international regime for Conflict-induced Internal Displacement and Resettlement (CIDR) focuses in chapter five (5) regarding the context of protracted armed conflict prevailing in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. Since the early 1980s, the country's civil war pitted the armed forces and their auxiliaries against an array of militarized groups, including the LTTE, the self-declared representatives of the Sri Lankan Tamil community. The conflict became a destructive and a violent force after the riots in July 1983. As the conflict went on, both the government and the LTTE with the involvement of the international community strived on several occasions to resolve it through peace negotiations. UNHCR basically oriented its activities towards repatriating Sri Lankan refugees and has introduced durable solutions for internally displaced people by the early 1990s. Further, this chapter shows the evolution of conceptual and bureaucratic

responses to CIDR since independence based on field research conducted in the northern and eastern part of the country. The chapter concerns livelihood experience of both Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils of selected several villages in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts. It shows that although the international regime seeks to find durable solutions, both the government and the LTTE try to improve the demographic and political military of the region.

Chapter six concerns that the emergence and influence of a regime for natural disaster-induced internal displacement and resettlement (NIDR) in the context of the Tsunami. It inspects the coastal populations in Sri Lanka. The north and east and some parts of the south was affected by a Tsunami wave that happened in late 2004. The chapter emphasize the role of the NIDR regime of durable solutions. There were many challenges identified and the limited access to appropriate land, as well as a host of strategic barriers introduced by the government, the armed forces and the LTTE. The chapter considers findings generated by field experiences with tsunami-affected areas in northern and eastern districts.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the book summarizes the relationships between DIDR, CIDR, and NIDR, which are processes often conceived by policymakers and practitioners as mutually exclusive. It emphasizes their multi-causality, bureaucratic logic, and impoverishment effects. Then it reviews prospects for regime convergence and examine the likely direction of international responses to internal displacement and resettlement in the twenty-first century. Although oriented towards promoting protection and durable solutions and drawing on familiar conceptual axioms in forced migration research, regime supporters have remained isolated from one another. Despite many promises, the three regimes are less influential in inducing changes in state behaviour or fomenting protection and durable outcomes than expected.

According to Professor Emeritus Norman Uphoff from the Department of Government at Cornell University.

> *This book of the several kinds of 'internal displacement' is a welcome addition to the literature. There are instructive similarities, but also important differences, among forced resettlement as a result of development projects, armed conflict, or natural disasters. Muggah brings insightful social science analysis to this subject, plus an incisive historical perspective. His choice of Sri Lanka as a case study is very apt, since this country offers relevant examples of all three kinds of internal displacement for us to learn from.*

Michael M. Cernea from George Washington University, pointed out that;

> *Can one author concomitantly wield the analytical lenses of several disciplines? This insightful study brilliantly conquers this daunting methodological challenge. Muggah's major book is the sharpest theoretical, political, and sociological analysis of the conundrum of displacements and resettlement processes caused by development, conflicts, and natural disasters, that are integral not only to Sri Lanka's social fabric but epitomize the status of our today's World at large.*

However, this major work brilliantly covers the several key sections of forced migration. Forced migration is a new research field and sometimes it is started to work during the 1990s and 2000s. Muggah has added almost all these relevant literature in the field. This book does not only bring ideal review of the literature but also have included loudest theoretical, political, and sociological analysis of the challenge of displacements and resettlement processes caused by development, conflicts, and natural disasters. The volume seeks, where possible, to balance theoretical and empirical findings generated by anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, and human geographers with insights from international relations and political science theory, law, and political economy. In the early chapters, author reviews the literature and the international

understanding of the notion of resettlement. In that sense the book is very important in the newly build field in sociology and social anthropology.

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Contents

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