

HUMAN DIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

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Human diversity is a concept that popularly accepted as an assortment of human, individually or collectively, when compared to others. The dissimilarity may be related to skin colour, language, religion, accent of language used, behaviour, culture and many other factors. Diversity exists not only among human but also in many others such as weather, soil, lands, forest and almost in all physical matters, and diversity exists in non-physical matters such as weather. Aristotle viewed that **“people are different from size, shape, colour and many others, but people do share something universal, which is called humanness. This humanness exists regardless of any particular human and this is the reality.”** in many countries diversity regard as an asset, but the diversity in humanity has become disaster in many places without scientific reasons. Diversity in the humanity shouldn't be a criterion to treat a particular person or community that is superior or inferior than other. Humanness is equal and nobody can differentiate it.

Archaeological discoveries in Sri Lanka have proven that diverse human settlements had been in the country since prehistoric era and the country had a long history of living humans who were at the civilized level or not. Archaeologists attempted to give a clear picture of the beginning humans based on the traces and the historical evidence also give conflicting views on the ancient population of Sri Lanka as they had diverse cultural and religious practices. The conflicting opinion abide concerning with the ethnic identity of the country and it also appears that conflicting views on ethnic identity have involved in political beliefs of historical analysts.

Current Sri Lanka has misunderstandings of the population structure, its trend, diversity and the patterns of growth. Some controversial ideology in relation to ethnic identity has debated in academic forums and it is also believed that historical findings have confirmed the shape of the population of Sri Lanka despite many fabrications.

According to historical story written in the Mahavamsa, Sinhala ethnic group began with effect from the arrival of Vijaya and his associates, but opinion in the same book expressed that there were groups of humans called Devils in the country, when Vijaya embarked to the country. (Please read Chapter 1, the Visit of the Thathagatha in Mahavamsa). Further, the Mahavamsa describes that when Lord Buddha visited the country there were other groups of humans called Nagas and Devas. When read the book, a doubt creates in our minds whether so-called devils, nagas and devas were humans or animals or spirits of real devils. If so-called devils were demons, they were supposed to exist in all over the world not only in Sri Lanka according to religious mythology and the question is how did human (Vijaya and associates) dealt with spirits, which were not visible to naked eye.

The Mahavamsa further indicates that human arrived under the leadership of Vijaya interacted with devils. As a result of the interactions, a mixed-race people were originated in the country and it is a concrete evidence for the beginning of human diversity in Sri Lanka. It is also understood that so-called devils, nagas, and devas were also humans, but the identity of humans was based on religious association or the worship of devils, cobras, and goddess. There is no doubt that the diversity of population had existed in Sri Lanka since the beginning of human settlements, which were probably happened in the Mesolithic era. The first human did never originate in Sri Lanka but they migrated to the country from India, where the archaeological traces similar to discoveries in Sri Lanka.

After Mesolithic anthropoid, people of New stone age arrived to Sri Lanka from India, most probably they brought various type of beliefs such as Devils, Cobras and Goddess and they had the knowledge of Agriculture and Irrigation technology at certain level and the people of late iron age had the knowledge of agriculture based industrial technology such as making yarn from Cotton,

waving cloths, sawing garments, making ships and sometime so-called aircrafts. Vijaya and his associates had the knowledge of irrigation and more advanced food processing and weaponmaking, agricultural equipment and a variety of technology related to human life. The other vital discovery was the language of early humans. There is no evidence that the language used by Mesolithic Anthropoids and people of new stone age was same, but it can be assumed that the language was similar to the language of indigenous people. Sinhala was an Indo-European language (Origin from Sanskrit), but not a Dravidian language, which was widely used in South India related to Indo Valley civilization.

Another significant point we need to consider is that Sri Lanka was not an empty land (Terra Noliis) when Vijaya and his associates embarked to the country. Whatever the religious beliefs had among the people, they were human. The arrival of Vijaya and his associates subjected to alloying with existed people and to generate a new nation called SINHALA. There is an international wide story that a King called Ravana ruled the country with a large human population and the Devils, Nagas and Devas, who were described in the Mahavamsa might had related to them. However, Mahavamsa has not mention about Ravana or Sitha or Rama or Vibhishana or the God of Kataragama. We can assume that they were mythical assumptions or fabrications later invented in the country.

It is believed that the brother of the God of Kataragama, Vibishanahad an association with King Ravana. The rule and the stories of Ravana has a historical controversy, because people in India, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and other East Asian countries talk about this king. When we think in that line, current indigenous people of Sri Lanka were a community mixed with ancient humans and the group of Vijaya and they were not related to Dravidians. When you read the event of the Second Visit of Thathagatha in Mahavamsa as a mediator for a conflict resolution, it is quite clear that the names like Chulodada,

Mahodara were either Sinhala or Sanskrit but neither Tamil nor any other Dravidian language.

There is another issue relates with the beginning of Sinhala race. The historic book, the Mahavamsa attempted to interpret the ethnic group (Sinhala) began from a lady Suppa Devi who was forcefully eloped by Sinha (Lion), while she was going with cart traders. Suppa Devi was born to a couple, a Princes of Kalinga who married to a Wanga King. Two kids were born to Suppa Devi, they were named as Sinhabahu and Sinhasevali and when grownup, Sinhabahu killed his father Sinha and build a city called Sinhapura where was the origin of Vijaya and associates. Archaeological researchers found that there was a town called Sinhapura in the Orissa Province in India. However, there is a clear doubt whether Sinha was a lion (animal) or a human called Sinha, which means in Sinhala language, a Strongman. Sinha was not an animal but a human who was named as Sinha on the basis of his characteristics and the behaviour. There are many stories about beginning of human in other countries, which are related to animals. The best example is the story about the beginning of human in Rome and Romles. Recently I read a book titled “The People of The Lion”, which was published by Verite Research Organization in Colombo. The book is mainly focused on a debate in relation to the people of the lion, between Prof RALH Gunawardane and Prof KNO Dharmadasa. Many interesting points were discussed in the book, but points were not authentic facts because no archaeological evidence has found in relation to the arguments. The debate leads us to further thinking and investigation requirements on the basis of various assumptions on this matter.

When we read many historical books in Sri Lanka they help us to understand a vital fact on the population history of the country. Sri Lanka was a place of living human before Prince Vijay arrived at the country. Anthropologically, there were groups of humans, who

