

## **Causes and Consequences of Resettlement towards the Traditional Religious Belief System of Henanigala Indigenous Group, Sri Lanka**

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Henanigala is one of the current villages occupied by the descendants of indigenous people (IP) of the country: the Veddas. In 1982, IP lived in Dambana, Kotabakiniya and Kandeganwila were resettled in the Henanigala C Zone affected by the Mahaweli development project. Traditional religious belief systems (RBS) of these people have been developed over centuries as an adaptation to the natural environment they lived. Chena cultivation, fishing, hunting and gathering, honey collecting etc. had been their traditional subsisting patterns (TSP). Instead of those through the resettlement paddy cultivation was introduced to them. Being forest people since the pre-historical time, their RBS was extensively connected with TSP. Present study was aimed to find out causes and consequences of resettlement towards these unique people's RBS. Basic characteristics of their RBS were gathered through in-depth interviews conducted with purposively selected 10 individuals, representing both genders, age ranged from 18 to 75 years. Participant observation was conducted to discover more empirical data. Paddy cultivation has replaced Buddhist practices instead of *Na Yak* offerings as they were no longer depending on their TSP. Responsible government officers of their village have done considerable impact on their RBS through introducing Buddhist practices as a method of obtaining consolation in their life crises. As consequences of resettlement; assimilation, diffusion and acculturation have accelerated and caused to a rapid change of their RBS. Observing *sil*, observance of alms giving and sermon after a funeral is frequent among IP instead of their traditional "*Na Yak*" offerings (diseased relatives). Adopting Buddhist practices have done as their traditional *Na Yakku* no longer can provide protection to their present life style. Destruction of the link between them and the forest effected directly towards the RBS and though it indirectly to the strength of the integrated cultural domains and finally to the loss of their whole cultural system. Resettlements have lead IP into a market economy, also it caused to the fragment of their cultural identity and to become a trans-community.

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