

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LOW-COUNTRY SINDU VANNAM

W. B. A. Vitharana

Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

Wijayassri@gmail.com

Vannam which are in connection with the Low-Country dance tradition called *Sindu Vannam* are prevalent in southern and western areas of Sri Lanka. *Kandyana* and *Sabaragamu Vannam* were written for entertainment and *Sindu Vannam* written in a ritualistic style or form of *Bhakti Geetha*. *Sindu Vannam* are considered as a lyrical composition like a chain. There are 32 compositions of *Sindu Vannam*. All are related to *Vishnu* who is the god from *Devinuwara* in Sri Lanka. *Sindu Vannam* speak well of god *Vishnu* or *Upulvan*. It has been written in a ritualistic and supplicate manner for the protection of the human of the world. Researchers have put forward their opinion about the history of *Sindu Vannam*. According to the feature of the metre of *Sindu Vannam*, there is a view that *Vannam* have been written in the *Dambadeni* era. Likewise, according to the styles of language, *Sindu Vannam* were created as a part of literature in the final half of the *Kotte* or *Kandy* era. However, opinion varies up to day. The aim of this study is to inquire into the historical background of *Sindu Vannam*. For this study it was difficult to find the sources related to the *Sindu Vannam*, although manuscripts and Metrical composition are important in this study as basic sources. In addition, interviews and library references are also used. In this study, it is clear that according to the features of metre, *Sindu Vannam* have not been written in the *Dambadeni* era. It can be concluded that *Sindu Vannam* have been written in the post *Kandyana* era or *Matara* era as a literary pattern.

Keywords: *hymn, low-country, metre, sindu, vannam*