

The Sri Lankan Perspective of Legends Pertaining to King Ravana and the Origin of Sinhala Nation

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This research provides a critical analysis of the popularity of King Ravana's folklore. It has focused on the origin of the Sinhala nation and its interrelation with legends of King Ravana. Although historical or archaeological evidences not available, plenty of folklores; legends and myths prevailing around the King Ravana in Sri Lanka. This research was carried out by adopting a qualitative approach. Primary data were collected through interview method. Accordingly, some qualitative data were accumulated from secondary sources to have clear knowledge about these folk stories. Apart from such methods, researchers conducted in depth interviews with key informants like scholars, university lecturers who are interested in this theme. A vast geographical regions including rural, urban and semi urban have been used for the collection of qualitative data. Five (5) regions of Central Province, Three (3) regions of Northwestern Province, Two (2) regions from Uva, One (1) from Western, One (1) from Southern, One (1) from Northern, One (1) from Eastern, One (1) from Sabaragamuwa Provinces were selected. Researchers basically paid their attention to the places where related to Ramayanaya and where identified as important places in folk legends of Ravana. Totally, hundred and fifty (150) respondents had interviewed in this research. Accordingly, this research was carried out in selected fifteen areas. Ten (10) key informants were selected from each area based on purposive sampling method. Presently, Sinhalese are motivated by studying their culture through Ravana's legends. In fact, elements of culture are very important to separate human from the animal world. As human beings, all we should have proper knowledge about our culture. As a major element of culture folklore plays an important role. Cultures of every country can be safeguarded through legends. Therefore, it is considered as a major subfield in Anthropology. As a unique element of the culture, folklore is being kept active by the people from generation to generation. Accordingly, it is very important to study about legends as one of the major parts of folklore.

Keywords: folklore, culture, legends, Sinhala nation