



The Evolution of Sinhala Marriage Alliances: A Study of Panama; Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lankan marriage alliances have manifested a considerable interdependency with the socioeconomic system from the early stages through its history. While sociocultural change is an inherent phenomenon of the evolutionary history of mankind, the traditional Sinhalese marriage system has adapted to the changing socioeconomic forces over the centuries. This study intends to investigate the impact of the current socioeconomic system on modern marriage alliances in Sri Lanka. An analytical ethnographic study was used to execute the research in Panama, drawing upon the study of Nur Yalman, the extraneous anthropologist in 1967. Fifty households were randomly sampled, and a structured interview schedule was employed as the key method of data collection, using non-participant observation and genealogical methods as the subsidiary methods. Both primary and secondary sources were referred to through a mix method in data analysis where both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The findings of the study reveal that, with the passage of time, Sinhalese marriage has undergone a tremendous change in the size of household, age at marriage, process of mate selection, education which leads to labour force, land tenure, caste and the kinship network in Sri Lanka. The research concludes by disclosing that, though the sanctity of Sinhalese marriage is generally affected by socioeconomic change, the shadow of traditional form of marriage alliances can be found in rural Sri Lanka.

1. Introduction

Marriage is an institution that plays a central role in every society. It is correspondingly referred to as a sacred union. Marriage affects decisions, especially those regarding labour supply, consumption, reproduction, and protection. Marriage alliances help human beings to satisfy their emotional, cultural and economic needs which mark the beginning of the first human society; 'the family'. Therefore, marriage has been studied from different perspectives by not only anthropologists but sociologists and psychologists as well.

With the development of Anthropology in the 20th century, many scholars have focused on the peasant society. As a result, Sri Lankan peasant society has been researched by both Sri Lankan and international scholars, focusing on caste, kinship, marriage, land tenure, politics and religion. Some of the studies have been micro studies which have been centered on small communities, particularly villages and their social, structural patterns as well as social change in Sri Lanka (Ryan, 1953; Peiris, 1956; Leach, 1961; Yalman, 1967; Obeyesekere, 1967). Among these, Nur Yalman, in *Under the Bo Tree* (1967), focused on marriage alliances as well as the economic system in the Sri Lankan peasant community.

According to the written evidences, the institution of marriage in Sri Lanka has drastically changed with the advent of foreign powers namely the Portuguese, Dutch and British. During the Portuguese and Dutch periods, mostly the Maritime Provinces were exposed to the pressure of a commercial system based on trade. Hence, the social patterns of low country Sinhalese underwent change along with these developments. Afterwards, in 1815, with the colonization of the whole country by the British, every aspect of Sinhalese society and culture witnessed tremendous change. The influence of Christianity and changes in education and

law, had a significant impact on the society, and marriage traditions and norms also gradually began to change. At present, the process of socio cultural change by development and modernization has influenced both social and economic spheres of rural Sri Lanka. In this study, the researchers attempt to discuss the patterns of socio-economic change in the rural society of Sri Lanka by focusing on the evolution of Sinhalese marriage alliances in the village, Panama, in Sri Lanka.

1.1. The Concept of Marriage

The institution of marriage has been in a process of constant change. Pair-bonding began in the Stone Age as a way of organizing and controlling sexual conduct and providing a stable structure for reproduction and the task of daily life. Anthropologists have studied the institution of marriage cross culturally and marriage has been defined as a cultural phenomenon; a rite of passage. "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both partners" (Routine, 1951, p.111). S.J. Tambiah has agreed with the above definition (Tambiah, 1966, p.264), but suggests that marriage does not simply exist between the married partners, rather it is codified as a social institution in legal, economic, social and spiritual ways.

Evans-Pritchard says that sex is integrated with marriage and that the first sexual play occurs in imitation of one of the domestic routines of married life. It occurs in response to a cultural, and not to an instinctive urge (Evans-Pritchard, 1951, p.50). Radcliffe Brown and Daryll Forde defined marriage in 'African System of Kinship and Marriage' as a rearrangement of social structure. What is meant by social structure is any arrangement of person in institutionalized relationships. New social relations are created, not only between the husband and the wife, and between the husband and the wife's relatives

on the one side and between the wife and the husband's relatives on the other, but also between the relatives of the husband those of the wife, who, on the two sides, are interested in the marriage and in the children that are expected to result from it (Radcliffe-Brown, 1950, p.43).

The history of human society is nothing but the description of the evolution and diffusion of various institutions designed toward perpetuation, maintenance and survival of society. The institution of marriage is as old as the creation of the world. But in the contemporary period of time, the marriage alliances have been free from the many customs, ceremonies and additional expenditures of ancient time. According to Russell, there must be a feeling of complete equality on both sides; there must be no interference with mutual freedom; there must be the most complete physical and mental intimacy; and there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values (Russell, 1959, p.97).

1.2. The Concept of Marriage and Economy

The word "economics" derived from the Greek "oikonomia" refers to the "management of the household". Unfortunately, a few people seem to notice the relationship between household family structure and economic outcomes for states or society at-large. But anthropologist, Goody has stated that the relationships between property transmission and marriage practices are set out as unidirectional, causal ones (Argawal, 1976, p.138). Most marriages have some type of economic exchange associated with them. Only about 25% of marriages do not have an economic aspect (Ember and Ember, 2011, p.195). Accordingly, a few categories of marriage exchange can be identified as bride wealth, bride service, dowry, indirect dowry, woman exchange and gift exchange.

Among these, the Sinhala marriage system consists of a dowry system. Dowry generally

is practiced in patrilineal, pastoral or agricultural societies. This practice requires the transfer of goods from the bride's family to the groom to compensate for acceptance of the responsibility of her support. In Sri Lanka, the context of the dowry system lies on the role of match maker (Magul Kapuwa). The changing role of match maker has also affected the marriage economy in Sri Lanka.

1.3. Theory of Social and Cultural Change

Any anthropological account of the culture of any society is a type of snapshot view of one particular time. Should the ethnographer return several years after completing a cultural study, he or she would not find exactly the same situation, for there are no cultures that remain completely static year after year. Accordingly, this research ethnographically revisits the evolution of marriage alliances through socio-economic change in Sri Lanka based on the three major theories of social and cultural change; cultural diffusion, acculturation and modernization for analyzing the process of 'change' and 'continuity'.

Diffusion, also known as cultural diffusion, is a social process through which elements of culture spread from one society or social group to another. Things that are spread through diffusion include ideas, values, concepts, knowledge, practices, behaviors, materials, and symbols. There is also the rejection of certain cultural items, may be due to their incompatibility with firmly established customs, with the prevailing social structure, or with religious tenets and usages. Mere habit and addiction to the traditional way of doing things are no less powerful sources of resistance to innovations. Frequently, however, no particular reason can be detected that could explain why one foreign trait was accepted and another not. In many instances "traits spread erratically and unpredictably" (Dixon, 1928, p. 120). Franz Boas (1938) argued that although the independent invention of a culture trait can occur at the same time within

widely separated societies where there is limited control over individual members, allowing them freedom to create a unique style, a link such as genetic relationship is still suspected. He felt this was especially true in societies where there were similar combinations of traits (Boas, 1949, p.211).

Acculturation is the processes of change in artifacts, customs, and beliefs that result from the contact of two or more cultures. The term is also used to refer to the results of such changes. Two major types of acculturation, incorporation and directed change, may be distinguished on the basis of the conditions under which cultural contact and change take place. Simply put, acculturation is the process of systematic cultural change of a particular society carried out by an alien, dominant society. Individuals of a minority culture learn the language, habits, and values of a standard or dominant culture by the cultural process of acculturation. The process by which these individuals enter the social positions, as well as acquire the political, economic and educational standards of the dominant culture is called assimilation. These individuals, through the social process of assimilation, become integrated into the "standard" culture (King, Wright and Golstein, n.d.). In the Sri Lankan context, the peasant society has undergone numerous changes due to the transformation of the education system, law enforcement, commercial based economy and religion. In that era, the dominant culture was the British culture, and as a result, Sri Lankans changed their own system of marriage and economy through the acculturation process.

Modernization is the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Historically, the rise of modern society has been inextricably linked with the emergence of industrial society. All the features that are associated with modernity can be shown to be related to the set of changes that, no more than two centuries ago, brought into being the industrial type of society. This suggests

that the terms industrialism and industrial society imply far more than the economic and technological components that make up their core. Industrialism is a way of life that encompasses profound economic, social, political, and cultural changes (Kumar, 1999). It is by undergoing the comprehensive transformation of industrialization that societies become modern. As Harold D. Lasswell has forcefully reminded, this transformation in perceiving and achieving wealth-oriented behavior entails nothing less than the ultimate reshaping and re-sharing of all social values, such as power, respect, rectitude, affection, well-being, skill, and enlightenment (Lerner, 2008). This view of continuous and increasing interaction between economic and non-economic factors in development produced a second step forward, namely, systematic efforts to conceptualize modernization as the contemporary mode of social change that is both general in validity and global in scope. Accordingly, Sri Lankan peasant society has undergone a number of changes on the lines of modernization as a result of colonization. The remaining contemporary researches in the broad field of marriage and socio economic change in Sri Lanka have neither spoke about the evolution of Sinhala marriage nor socio economic change through an anthropological point of view. Accordingly, this research will focus on the evolution of marriage alliances through socio-economic change in Sri Lanka through an ethnographic revisiting of the knowledge of Nur Yalman.

2. Materials and Methods

An analytical ethnographic study was conducted in Panama, which was initially studied by Nur Yalman in 1967. Panama is a coastal village which is situated as PP05 Panama Central GN Division in Eastern Province, Ampara District of Sri Lanka, and located 126 Km South of Batticaloa. Panama was the capital of the colonial Panamapattuwa. The ancient village can be seen in the historical maps of Portuguese and

Dutch as Panao, Panova, and Paneme. Among the population, fifty households were randomly sampled, a structured interview schedule as the key method of data collection was employed while using non-participant observation and genealogical methods as the subsidiary methods. Both primary and secondary sources were referred to, and a mix method in data analysis was adopted using both quantitative and qualitative data.

3. Results and Discussion

The average number of persons per household in a population, or average household size is influenced by socio-economic factors at the living location. In the Sri Lankan context, Leach (1961) stated that

traditional families had many members, and the relationship with members depended on gender and age in Sri Lanka. Further Yalman and other scholars who studied Sri Lankan society noted that inter and intra familial relationships were the most preferable household pattern. But household size and the structure of the Sri Lankan family have been subjected to transformation from extended family to nuclear. Most importantly, the household size of the urban, rural and estate sectors have changed as portrayed in Table 1. Consequently, the average household size in Sri Lanka has declined to 3.8 by 2012 from 5.6 in 1963 according to the reports of Department of Census and Statistics in Sri Lanka.

Table 1. Average Household Size by Sector in Sri Lanka (1963 – 2012)

Sector	1963	1973	1981/82	1996/7	2003/4	2006/7	2009/10	2012
Urban	6.0	5.8	5.5	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.0
Rural	5.7	5.6	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.0	3.9	3.8
Estate	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.2	4.3	4.1
Total	5.6	5.6	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.8

(Department of Census and Statics, 2013, p. iv).

Table 2. Singulate Mean Age at Marriage by Sex in Sri Lanka (1901 – 1981)

Census Year	Male	Female	Difference
1901	24.6	18.5	6.1
1911	26.9	19.9	7.0
1921	27.5	20.6	6.9
1946	27.0	20.7	6.3
1953	27.2	20.9	6.3
1963	27.9	22.1	5.8
1971	28.0	23.5	4.5
1981	27.9	24.4	3.5

(Caldwell, 1992, p.55)

Sri Lanka has experienced a substantial decline in the percentage of households. But this study proves that there are hardly 16% of extended families found since the norm now is the nuclear family.

Consequently, the size of household has declined due to the increasing age at marriage of youth in Sri Lanka. The female age at

marriage (see Table 2) parallels the age of mothers at first childbirth, making it less likely to have a large number of children than in the previous generations where some women remain childless.

Perhaps one of the most dominant changes in marriage has been the steady flow of women stepping into the work force. The expansion

of job opportunities together with increasing educational levels have resulted in an unprecedented increase in the female labour force participation. 'Free Education' has played a major role in changing demographics and socioeconomic status in Sri Lanka. However, the increasing level of education of not only males but also females has had an impact on societal development. Although the role of women in the pre-independence was limited to child bearing and household work as found in Yalman's study, increased female education after 1940s has had a substantial impact on changing the role of the female in the family. However, family ideology influenced perception of gender roles, particularly that women's work as mothers made them responsible for child care, household tasks and elderly care irrespective of their economic assistance to the family economy. Diminishing family economies and increase in formal employment, especially the growth in female labour force participation, are major factors influencing marriage and the role family in Sri Lanka.

Leach and Yalman stated that in traditional societies, production tends to be family-based agriculture which was furnished by the Sinhalese caste system. Successive generations tend to follow the same occupation, typically farming. Parental authority over children is reinforced through experiences and expertise, and co-residence of parents and adult children makes both economic and social sense. Yet, with modernization, production shifts to more specialized processes, and modern market economies are dependent on an inherent division of labour (Silva, 2004, p.18).

According to Yalman, Sinhalese had sustainable livelihoods with vast variation in manufacture which could cope with, and recover from, stress and shocks. However, after the economic liberalization in Sri Lanka, employment practices in the manufacturing industry have changed gradually from traditional caste arranged occupations to other careers, as shown below, according to the Sri Lanka Labour Force Survey.

Table 3. Labour Force Participation in 2017

	Men	Woman
Economically active population	3,148,961	5,493,160
Percentage of employed population in agriculture (includes fisheries, aquaculture, and forestry)	29.7	25.5
Percentage of employed population in services	42.9	45.8
Craft and related trade workers	486,024	913,727
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	115,356	648,856

(Department of Census and Statics, 2017)

Table 4. Employed Population by Occupation in Sri Lanka (1992 – 2005)

Year	Total Employed Number	Major Industry Group (% to the Total)			Total Percentage
		Agriculture	Industries	Services	
1992	4,924,130	42.2	20.1	37.7	100.0
2000	6,310,247	36.0	23.6	4.30	100.0
2005	6,788,119	30.3	26.3	43.3	100.0

(Department of Census and Statistics, 2012)

According to the ethnological studies in Sri Lanka, the most preferable occupation of the people in Panama was agriculture. The attitudes to farming were negative at the data collection. According to Table 4, it is clearly evident that not only in these villages but also all over in Sri Lanka, agriculture is in decline over other categories.

In depth interviews expose that most young people find agriculture unprofitable due to lack of technology and innovation involved within the industry. Technology and youth must develop simultaneously for there to be maximum output within the industry. This gap in development is identified as a reason for the negative mind set of the youth in Sri Lanka towards not only agriculture but also the other traditional careers as well.

Historically, land has been the most important source of wealth. The research reveals that despite villagers having lived in Panama for several generations, urbanization and industrialization have severely affected the economy in Sri Lanka. Industrialism prescribes an economy not connected to land. In parallel, modernization positively improves life expectancy. As a result, the population size increases over time which impacts the land man ratio. Neolocal residence; newly formed couples form their own separate household units which critically affect the land man ration in the study area. The diffusion, acculturation and modernization lead the younger generation to be independent after the marriage by refusing the traditional form of land tenure.

Panama has a matrilineal descent of property transfer. In this situation, the eldest daughter has the authority to own the home land as well as the paddy lands. In general, responsible, confident and conscientious, they are more likely to mirror their parents' beliefs and attitudes, and often choose to spend more time with the parents. Moreover, they can be perfectionists and worriers, and may put pressure on themselves to succeed. As a result, Panama villagers think that the eldest daughters are often natural leaders. A

peasant (64 years old female) said that,

"There is a tradition of transferring the immovable property for the eldest daughter of a family in Panama. But in present, every female child in the family mostly gets equal portions of the property. Daughters are the one who look after parents when we become old. Therefore, I think this was the most ideal pattern of property inheritance".

As a whole, the villagers seem to have changed their attitudes according to the modern industrial society. They strictly believe in equality of males and females. As a result, bilateral descent of the property can be found as the most preferable property transfer pattern. But this critically affects the agriculture and economy in Sri Lanka.

The most dramatic change in Sri Lankan marriage in recent years is the shift from arranged to love marriage. Love marriage is when the couple makes their own choice, whereas in an arranged marriage the parents play a critical role in the choice of the children. However, the difference between love marriage and arranged marriage in Sri Lanka must be kept in perspective; while Sri Lankans regard the difference as important, what is being discussed is not the difference between a completely atomized society where individuals make choices with complete autonomy from their families, and another where families make decisions without consideration for the interests of the young. What had changed was not that the young were taking advantage of a new found economic independence to marry as they wished, but that the whole social and economic system of which arranged marriage was part, had broken down. In the past, not to have an arranged marriage would have meant being cut off from the whole network of kinship links on which village society was based, and having to decline the advantages arising from arranged marriage. In the present era, such strong kinship links do not exist.

Concerning the kinship ties, Panama is a

unique area to its matrilineal property inheritance as mentioned above. Concerning the villagers performing Binna marriage, there should be a matrilineal descent of

surnames according to the given definition of Binna marriage. But the reality was different as was found through the data which was gathered during the research.

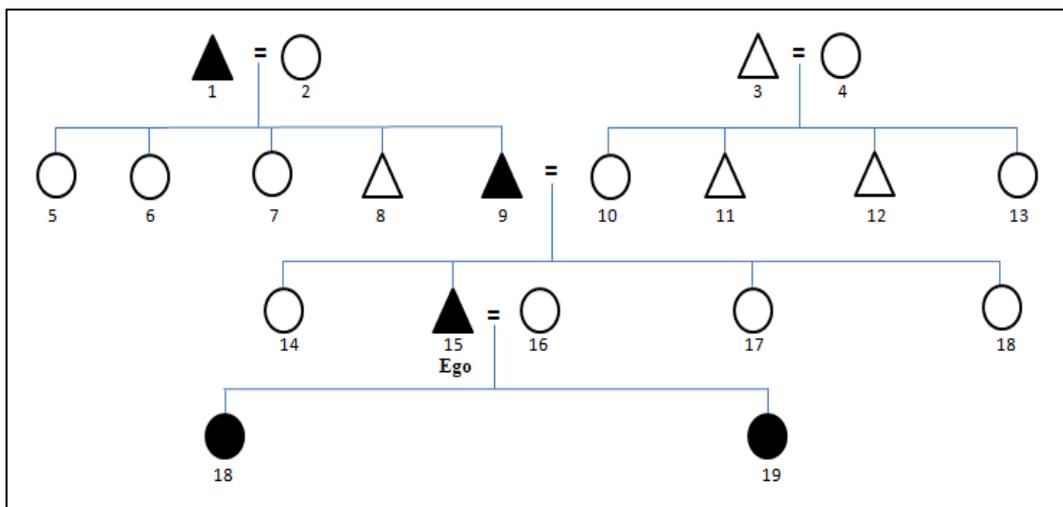


Figure 1. Inheritance of Surname in Panama

The Figure 1 is the kinship chart of who lives in Panama, The first generation male; Grandfather1 (Seeya), gave his surnames to his children in the second generation. Therefore, similarly Panama has a patrilineal descent of surnames. But, according to the Grama Niladari, occasionally there are some families who inherit their surname through matrilineage. While, there were only two sons (8 and 9) in the second generation, the Surname only existed through those male children in patrilineal descent. Second generation; Father10 (Thaththa), gave the surname to his offspring but, there is only one male child who has the right to give the surname to the children. The Ego15 changed his surname. According to his statement:

“While we are Sinhalese, why should we having a Tamil Surname? According to the grandfather’s word, the Tamil people who work at hospitals and registrar offices wrote their birth certificates applying Tamil names. That is the reason of changing my surname”.

In the modern status based society, there is a general pattern in changing surnames, the

reasons being modification of name, change of the caste identity of the surname, change of ethnicity or religion and for legal purposes. But the study reveals that the economic identity which is represented through the surname is still active at the ground level of ideology in Sri Lanka.

The social base of the Sinhalese society was the caste system. Even the economic activities assigned to the people were based on the caste hierarchy. According to the ethnographies which were written by both local and foreign scholars, there is evidence to prove that caste ruled the day to day activities, culture and the functioning of the society, not only in the economy but also in marriage, and that the bride and the groom should be from the same caste and creed (sama kula-gotra) was a rigid rule. In modern Sri Lanka, the intervention of class and ethnicity has made social stratification more complex, and with development and socio-economic changes, new ways of accumulation of wealth have led to the upward mobility of certain caste communities and individual caste members, especially of the lower castes.

There are no changes in relation to educational and employment opportunities available for lower caste communities. And yet, there is a clear indication of the continuity of the caste system, particularly in the domain of marriage.

Most respondents feel that in comparison to the present era caste consciousness was strong in the past. They refer to the past in relation to their grandparents or parents' generation rather than to their own experiences in the past. They believe that caste based discrimination existed in the past in relation to social interaction, access to employment and access to public services such as education and transport. According to a 64 years old, retired Postman:

"Earlier, in every aspect caste hierarchy rooted in this village while there were some Dobby families in this village. But this system was drastically changed because of the tsunami crisis and civil war. Every family affected without considering their caste or status. Now they live in peace and harmony without any classification. In another 10 to 20 years, the society itself experiences more and more changes in caste".

None of the respondents, irrespective of caste, felt that caste consciousness in society was strong at present. The majority felt that it exists only slightly in the present generation.

Kinship has provided the most important foundation for almost all kinds of inter-personal relationships, and hence, a network construction which supports the economy. It is around the modalities of kinship and marriage, whether articulated at the level of the household to the extended family or the wider descent group which was the basic unit of property-ownership and household organization. Further, relationships between kin were strongly hierarchical, particularly by gender and by age, and have largely been affected by diffusion, acculturation and modernization.

Kinship provides the most stable alliances to which the landed villagers who belong to the

high caste have access. Even for the landless villagers, employer-employee relationships, of which agricultural wage labour is the most important which were largely bound with kinship. Not only in agriculture but also in the other traditional occupations, many kin was a distinct advantage, especially in agriculture, since labourers were the kin in their kin group. Due to the cultural change in these three villages, the extended families were transformed into nuclear households. Migration and personal arguments are the major factors which affect the unity among kindred. A kindred-based society has been weakened by sociocultural change.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The varieties of possible bonds of marriages have already suggested that not one type of marriage was the norm in Sri Lanka. The different manners of settlement similarly imply that the Sinhalese society has different marriage traditions. The Sinhalese marriage pattern can thus be seen as more complicated, since several marriage traditions co-existed within the society. It seems that Sri Lankan families could more easily determine the size of their family and household, and the form of marriage as their morals and values allowed for different social forms to develop. While change is the law of culture, Sinhalese marriage has evolved and has withstood the ravage of time and the shock of centuries. Diffusion, acculturation and modernization have been determined fundamentally by economic necessity. This research was a modest effort to see the following general objective: to comparatively investigate the impact of modern marriage alliances on the present economic system.

The discussion of the study has revealed that, several economic reasons affect the change of the modern practice from its previous Sinhalese traditional form. First, the number of children of the family declines through family planning strategies while the number of living generations increase in the household in the modern era. The concept of 'Punchi Paula Raththaran' which became a

driving force to decrease the amount of children as an economic strategy to control the population growth in 1980s, transformed the extended Sinhalese family into a nuclear composition. The patrilocal and matrilocal extended families result in less independence at the economy based society and a larger amount of choice falling on the family rather than the individual. As a result, the status based society which promotes individualism stimulates the neolocality.

As the second factor, the advances in education, information technology, the influence of media and changing lifestyles, including parental ambitions for the best preferred education for their children in the competitive world can be identified. Marriage has been postponed in order for young adults to receive an education and save an amount of money. In Sri Lanka, a number of schools, including national and central colleges were set up after the free education moment. Marriage age, however, was lower in the study area than in urban areas in Sri Lanka. Yet, it cannot be argued that, education did not necessarily allow for young adults to marry later, while this study only focused on the rural areas. The tendency of leaving school after secondary education for occupations was a factor for the continuing of a certain marriage age. But, the migration of younger generations to the urban areas and foreign countries has led to the disintegration of the Sinhalese marriage alliance.

Third, the gradual disappearance of the dowry system in marriage alliance was a result of the economic independence of the modern society. Dowry has been regarded as one type of transaction, as compensation for the acquisition of the women who did not engage in economic activities in the past. While the women's participation took a considerable ratio on the labour force in Sri Lanka, the marriage exchange took less importance while giving priority to the status. Therefore, the youth perspective on the function of the dowry in traditional Sinhalese marriage has been neglected by feminist

ideology. Further, in the past, most of the marriages were arranged ones, while many love marriages can be found in this modern era. In the modern society, people are interested in finding their own partners according to their level of education, interests, economic status, regional differences and attitudes. The influence of love marriage which gains through the diffusion and acculturation by the western societies lead the Sinhalese to default the dowry system at modern marriage. Furthermore, the disappearance of the traditional dowry system where the gender equality becomes prominent through participation of labour force in Sri Lanka leads to the change of traditional land tenure system.

While the preferred marriage of youth being love marriages, caste does not seem to influence household formation and marriage pattern. The research reveals that when compared with men, women are more interested in marrying a person from the same caste or a higher caste. As the surname of the father automatically goes to the children, women make sure to marry a man which matches to her caste. Despite the caste systems of the South Asian countries, Sinhalese caste was particular as it emphasized the division of labour. Therefore, the caste held a significant role in Sinhalese marriage on the basis of the economy. In the modern era, caste system is not active as it functioned in 1960s in Sri Lanka, but it is still active in marriages while hierarchical caste marginalization which can be seen among the status based industrial society.

The above factors indicate the necessity of identifying the mechanisms of diffusion, acculturation and modernization, which fundamentally effect the interdependency of Sinhalese marriage and economy. Colonization in Sri Lanka was the major influence of socioeconomic change. Without making such a thorough study, colonizers including Portuguese, Dutch and British rather imposed what they thought was right

and civilized on the pre-modern society in Sri Lanka which had its own legal base inherent in the traditional socioeconomic structure. Specially the British took a particular section of the law and tried to civilize the marriage practices with total disregard for the purpose, rationale and interdependency of the existing traditional law and customs as a whole. Further, the colonial officers did not consider the fact that a change in the marriage law would involve greater change in the whole system of inheritance and the law governing the inheritance. The Sinhalese marriage law had certain interdependency with law of inheritance and law of property.

However, the scholars, especially economists argue that the commercialized economy and the British law paved way for a more dynamic socioeconomic structure with the modernization through westernization. It could have done thus, if the whole system was led to a way out of pre-modern conditions with specific targets and policies to achieve the colonizers. The colonists; including Portuguese, Dutch and British did not have such a plan for the colony. They changed what was obstructive to their consolidation of the power and they changed local institutions in order to gain more benefits from the colonial Sri Lanka. It can be assumed that the new legislation failed because the colonial authorities failed to understand the Kandyan system as a whole and to identify the rationale behind the traditional law, especially regarding marriage. Consequently, the colonial officers made changes without a clear cut policy. The above reasons result in the confusion and the complexities in the loss of interdependency in marriage alliances and socio-economy system in Sri Lanka.

Several recommendations that are important for the policy makers and planners can be derived from the study.

- As a developing country, still Sri Lankan social and marriage networks accomplish an important role in occupations. The policies should consider the many benefits of social contacts while taking into

account the various dimensions and interactions of family and kinship networks. If not, their effect on labor market dynamics and outcomes may be misunderstood, in particular if network size alone is considered.

- Policymakers should try to identify and replicate efficient (informal) support networks in order to help the peasants who engage in their traditional occupations, such as women and youth, who lack access to local family and kinship networks.
- Appropriate training and development activities should be implemented among youth for them to use modern facilities and technologies within the traditional industries. Required skills and competencies should be developed to provide for a sustainable future in this sector. Development of skills can be facilitated by government and by private vocational training development institutions.

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