

Marriage Rituals and Caste Concept in the Kandyan Period

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The primary objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive examination of the relationship between marriage rituals and the caste concept prevalent during the Kandyan period. This examination prompts an investigation into the formalization and organization of the caste concept during the Kandyan period while bringing to light its impact on marriage rituals. Thus, this research holds significant importance in the realm of social history as it uncovers the complex interplay of social, political and cultural forces that shaped the lives of the Kandyan people. Accordingly, the research was conducted using historical methods and facts were gathered from both primary sources such as Rājāwaliya, Mahāwamsa, Travelogues by foreign travelers, legal documents and contracts and secondary sources to ascertain relevant facts pertinent to the research inquiry. The research was conducted using the thematic analysis method to study; the marriage rituals in contemporary social strata and the influence of the Sinhala caste concept. According to the thematic analysis method, findings were analyzed under the sub-themes: Social Corporation during the Kandyan period, Caste concept in the Kandyan period, Marriage law in the contemporary period, Caste honor and marriage, Marriage restrictions, Marriage system and ownership of property, Specific services for castes during wedding ceremonies. The research problem is centered on how the caste concept is emphasized in the marriage rituals within the social structure of the Kandyan period. Finally, this research substantiates that; the same caste marriages gained social acceptance during this period with each caste trying to safeguard against caste mixing through imposed restrictions which reflects a high sense of caste pride in matrimonial affairs, and that the property ownership arrangements within marriage rituals were intricately tied to caste affiliations while each caste fulfilled specific services in wedding ceremonies. These findings unequivocally demonstrate the significant impact of the caste concept on marriage rituals during the Kandyan period.

Keywords: Caste Concept, Marriage Rituals, Kandyan Period, Marriage Law, Social History