

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE OF THE EARLY IRON AGE BURIAL SITE: *IHALA KALAWELLA ULPATHA* AND ITS ENVIRONS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

D. Kumara Jayaratne¹, D.K. Jayaratne²

¹*Government Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka.*

²*Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*
dhanushkajdk@gmail.com

The Early Iron Age burial site of *Ihala Kalawella Ulpatha* is located within *Waya Ulpatha* Grama Niladhari division in the *Palugaswewa* Divisional Secretariat of the Anuradhapura District in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The objective in this research paper is to examine the pattern of the archaeological evidence scattered in the *Ihala Kalawella Ulpatha* and its environs. The methodology of this research is fourfold. First, a literature survey was carried out to understand the settlement history of the study area. Second, information on the physical and cultural landscape of the study area was obtained through a cartographic survey. Third, a field survey using exploration methods was used to retrieve data from the field. Pedestrian survey method is the primary exploration method used in the field survey. Eye observation is a vital data retrieval method to examine the archaeological data from the field. Fourth step of the methodology contains remote sensing approaches. The Global Positioning System (Magellan GPS receiver) and Geographic Information System (ArcGIS 10.3) software were used to obtain the absolute locations of the sites in the study area and analyse and interpret the spatial locational significances of the *Ihala Kalawella Ulpatha* and its vicinity. Approximately 1256 ha of physical area was examined in detail by the pedestrian survey for this purpose. Spatial analysis helped identify two main ancient settlement clusters in the location. Artefacts related to the cluster No. 01 showed more ancient evidences than the cluster No. 02. The settlement Cluster No. 01 is located in the vicinity of the *Ihala Kalawella Ulpatha* burial site which contains 28 cist burials. The results of the present study proved that the study area represents evidence from prehistory to late historical periods. Archaeological morphology of evidence attests that majority of them are related to the Early Iron Age Period. This region can be considered a continuous attractive region for the ancient inhabitants from prehistory to late historical periods.

Keywords: Early iron age, Burial, *Ihala Kalawella Ulpatha*, Archaeology in Sri Lanka