

A Critical Study of the Impact of Covid-19 on Religious Practices and Faith

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Religion has long played a major role in bringing solace to people, both young and old. Any kind of pandemic can disrupt the daily routine of the wider society as a whole and likewise, one specific social manifestation that is affected is the activities related to religious practises and the faith bestowed on religion. There are numerous limitations and restrictions imposed on religious activities locally and internationally to contain and prevent the transmission of the deadly virus. Religious observances that gather crowds are halted, and pilgrimages are cancelled. This research focuses on the changes that have taken place in religious practises Sri Lanka and how the faith of the devotees has been affected due to these unprecedented changes during the prevailing COVID-19 situation. In order to achieve the set objectives, a structured questionnaire was handed out to 25 members of devoted Buddhist families around the area of Colombo which aimed to gather quantitative data. The sampling technique used was convenience sampling. In discussing the changes, the research revealed new implementations carried out by Buddhist temples to perform the most necessary services to avoid social gathering. The research revealed that the number of devotees visiting temples had significantly declined due to the pandemic which had a negative impact on the faith of the devotees. Due to the increasing health issues and challenges being encountered most devotees were struggling to keep their faith alive. A number of recommendations to strengthen the faith of devotees, especially of the youth include carrying out Sunday religious classes via online platforms such as Zoom and conducting competitions with incentives that were related to Buddhist activities. Overall, religion had been significantly affected due to the pandemic and measures needed to be taken to protect and strengthen the faith of the community for the future.

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