

4th International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage

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தொட்டுணரமுடியா பண்பாட்டு மரபுரிமைகள் தொடர்பான
4 ஆவது சர்வதேச கருத்தரங்கு

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ICICH 2023
Virtual Conference

21st and 22nd September 2023

Fostering Folklore Research
“Preserving and Safeguarding Cultural Heritage through Traditional Insights”

Jointly Organized by
Department of Anthropology
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of Sri Jayewardenepura
and
UNESCO Sri Lanka National Commission

The Market Cult of God Skandhakumara: Consequences of Faith Marketization in Kataragama Shrine

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Beliefs are the most potent influence on behavior of their adherents. Kataragama inhabitant's lifestyle is deeply rooted in the cult of God Skandhakumara. Numerous social problems were identified in Kataragama such as teenage pregnancies, drug abuse, child labour and prostitution. Anthropological investigations revealed that social problems are ingrained in their daily lives, as they justified as normal occurrences. Therefore, this study investigated why Kataragama residents justify their existential lifestyles, which foster deviant behaviors as part of their daily lives. Near Kataragama shrine, ethnomethodological research including 50 in-depth interviews were conducted in Gothameegama and Nagahaveediya villages. Data was analyzed thematically and narratively. Certain harmful behaviors are recognized as normal and a part of daily life. The belief in the god Skandhakumara has transformed into a commercial commodity. Kataragama dwellers tend to foster an irreligious market landscape, which contradicts accepted religious principles. Their primary source of income is a faith-based economic organization, their cognitive orientation coincides with the connection between religious faith and its market value. These belief systems, rituals and totems create a cult that obscures the economic process within, indirectly fostering social issues. Overall, faith commercialization and the commodification of religious values reshape the cognitive orientation of peasants; promote culturally justifiable but socially unhealthy behaviors. Thus, the Kataragama shrine is viewed as a place of worship, but a cult that influences the behavior of those who depend on the market value of the Kataragama faith.

Keywords: *Commodification, Faith, Behavior Justification, Kataragama, Marketization*