
Causes and Consequences of Cultural Change: A Review on the Contemporary Culture of the Henanigala Indigenous People in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The island of Sri Lanka is populated by diverse ethnic groups. Among them are the Veddas: the indigenous people (IP) of the country considered specific due to their cultural and biological uniqueness. At present, these people have been limited to a few villages of the country with less than 10,000 population. They seemed to have adopted a new cultural system as a consequence of the cultural change taken place in the past few decades. This study was carried out to find out the causes and consequences of cultural change based on the IP living in Henanigala. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey in which 193 individuals participated, and through in-depth interviews conducted with purposively selected 10 individuals, representing both genders, ages ranged from 18 to 75 years. The main factors identified as the causes of the cultural change were resettlement and assimilation. These factors have consequences in increasing poverty, cultural loss, minor marriages, alcoholism, land loss, and unemployment, among others. Still, their traditional culture is preserved among the older generation, through which initial measures can be taken to preserve their culture for the future.

Keywords: *Cultural Change, Henanigala, Indigenous People, Resettlement, Vedda*

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