

A Study of social hierarchy in Ancient Sri Lanka.

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ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ කලක්‍රමයේ ආරම්භය හා විකාශනය සිදුවූ ආකාරය පිළිබඳව විශ්වසනීය තොරතුරු බොහෝ ප්‍රමාණයක් ලිඛිත සාධක ඔස්සේ අධ්‍යයනය කළ හැකිය. මහාවංශයේ පෙළගැසී ඇති එම සාධක මගින් හා ශිලාලේඛන මත සටහන්ව ඇති විවිධ ප්‍රකාශය තුළින් පුරාණ ලක්දිව කුමන ආකාරයේ සමාජ විභජනයක් පැවතියේද යන්න වටහා ගැනීම පහසුවී ඇත. පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක හා ලිඛිත මූලාශ්‍රයන් පරිශීලනය කරන්නට ශ්‍රී ලංකාව ආර්ය ජනාවාසයක් වූ ආකාරය පිළිබඳව යම් නිගමනයකට එලඹිය හැකිය. බටහිර ආසියාව හරහා ඉන්දියාවට සංක්‍රමණය වූ ආර්යන් පසුකාලීන ව ශ්‍රී ලංකාවට ද ඇතුළු වී තිබේ. මෙම ආර්ය ගමනයේ ප්‍රතිඵලයක් වශයෙන් ඉන්දීය සමාජය තුළ වෛදික සාහිත්‍ය බිහිවූ අතර එමගින් සමාජය පාලනය කිරීම සඳහා ප්‍රධාන ප්‍රවාහනයක් ලෙස කල ක්‍රමය හඳුන්වාදුන්හ. ඒ අනුව භාරතීය සමාජය ප්‍රධාන කල හෙවත් වර්ණ හතරකට බෙදා දැක්වූහ. එනම් බ්‍රාහ්මණ, ක්‍ෂත්‍රීය, වෛශ්‍ය සහ ක්‍ෂුද්‍ර වශයෙනි. මෙම සම්ප්‍රදාය ක්‍රිස්තු පූර්ව 3 වෙනි ශත වර්ෂයේ දී ශ්‍රී ලංකාව තුළද ක්‍රියාත්මක වූ බව මහින්දාගමනය පිළිබඳව එන මහාවංශ විස්තරයෙන් පැහැදිලි වේ. ක්‍ෂුද්‍ර කුලයක් පිළිබඳව එකඟව ප්‍රකාශ නොවූවද පණ්ඩුවාසුදේව රජු සැඟවුණ සඳහා වෙන්වූ කොටසක් නගරයෙන් බාහිරව වෙන්කිරීම මත එම කුලය ඉන්දීය ක්‍ෂුද්‍ර කුලය හා සම වියහැකි බව පිළිගත හැකිය. මීට අමතරව බ්‍රාහ්මණ කුලය හා ක්‍ෂත්‍රීය කුලය පිළිබඳව තොරතුරු පැහැදිලිව ම සටහන් වී ඇත. දක්ෂිණ ලංකාවේ සිටි දස බැ රජවරු එම ක්‍ෂත්‍රීය කුලයට සම්බන්ධ බවත්, අනුරාධපුර නගරයෙහි වෛෂ්‍ය කුලයට අයත් සිටුවරුන් භික්‍ෂුන්ට ලෙන් පුජා කර ඇති අයුරුත් පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක සාදක ඔස්සේ ද අනාවරණය කරගත හැකිය. පසුකාලීනව, විවිධ වෙළඳ ශ්‍රේණි වශයෙන් හඳුන්වා ඇත්තේ ද මොවුන් විය හැකිය. මෙම කරුණු තව දුරටත් පැහැදිලි කිරීමත් සහ අනුරාධපුර යුගයෙහි ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පැවති කල ක්‍රමයේ විශේෂතා අධ්‍යයනය කිරීමත් මෙම ලිපිය මගින් සිදුකර තිබේ.

Introduction

Sri Lanka was colonized by the Aryan came through the Indian subcontinent in ancient period. The prince Vijaya was the first systematic ruler in Sri Lanka who also came from India. Then the tribe's leadership was collapsed after prince Vijaya becoming the king. The king was the owner of the all sector of the country. The people of the island had to be polite to the order of the king and his controllers. From the very beginning the north Indian political pressure was effected to our country. Also cultural coercions could be seen from the ancient time. The apartheid which was covered all over the Indian society indirectly influenced to the Sri Lankan society too. The several kind of consistent could be seen here. There four types of casts in India such as Brahmin, *Kastriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sudra*. As the colonization of the Aryan those four types of social dimension partly settled in Sri Lankan soil. After the Buddhism was introduced to the country that type of radical cocksure were declined gradually. But not completely.

Discussion

The social dimension origin with effect from Indian political activities and that was the main reasons to origin and developed the economic field in Sri Lanka. The agriculture was the main source of the national economical field. The lands took under controlled by king as he was the ruler of the country. Therefore the name '*Bhupathi*' converted to the king means owner of the land.

The tacks should be paid by the all kind of farmers to the government. The land leaders or owners became the powerful people in the society. The term '*parumaka*' has been written in the brahmi inscriptions meant the leader. This was the main point to originate the higher class in the society called '*Radala*'

Apart from the '*parumakas*' there were other several type of class which have divided according so their employment.

Such as :

- ★ weavers
- ★ Black - smiths
- ★ Fishermen
- ★ Cleaners. These kind of castes have been divided based on their avocations.

Sri Lankan cast systems started in ancient time with the beginning of the settlement of the Aryan. The north and south Indian influence directly affected not only for economical field also in social structure. According to the chronicle and statements an inscriptional evidences, the main cast of the society could be identified as ksashtriyain the local level. The Brahmin caste also been pointed out as the instructors of the royal matters. The rulers used to attention them and ruled their vicinities as the particular orders. The Brahmin was played an important role as the instructors in Sri Lanka from ancient time to the middle periods.

There were several kings who took the advices from the Brahmin such as Pandukabaya, Dewanampiyathissa and Vijaya while controlling the country. A Brahmin named 'Chandra' was appointed as the instructor by the king Pandukabaya. (M.V. chp.10 St. 79) The other Brahmins were offered with values and put on the post of emissary by the king of Dewanampiyathissa. (M.V. Chp.11 St. 21)

Even after the Buddhism came to Sri Lanka the Brahmins were the powerful factors. These Brahmins were offered with money and other facilities and honored by the rules such as queen Anula, king Kassapa 11 and king Sena11. A Brahmin named Naliya was appointed as the royal priest of the kingdom by queen Anula. (liyanagamage, Gunawardana, 1965 : 304). It also could be considered the power of Brahmin caste as the Brahmin names were used for the ancient villagers in that particular periods. However, every branch, of the society could not took under control by the Brahmin as in Indian culture they have done. According to rev. walpolaRahula this Brahmin could be identified as the visitors who couldn't inserted thesinhales on their theoretical order. (Rahula, 1999:240) There is another aspect of this matter. Some of the Brahmin could be accepted the Sinhala routines and strategically they entered to this society. They entered to the economic sectors in Sri Lankan society and played an important role. In later period, the Brahmin entered to the uncial status of (Paramuka) and become the land owners. The cast system which converted as Brahmin in India was changed reasonably according to the economical purposes in Sri Lanka. Later the power and authority were spread all over the branches of the society.

The Kastriya Clan

There are several classes which have been mentioned in the chronicles and literacy sources about ksashtriya clan in Sri Lanka. According to Guiger

the little of 'khatthiya' have been used not for warriors. and it used for the higher class persons in the society. (Liyanagamage, Gunawardana, 1965 : 304) The kingdom belong to this cast are established named Kacharangana or Katharagama in southern province in Sri Lanka. Apart from that another village called Chandanagama of the ksahtriyas also situated in southern province. The great chronicle mahavansa, has been mentioned that the ksahtriyas were participated for the function of Sri mahabodi foundation in Anuradhapuraya (M.V. chap 19 st. 54) The rulers who controlled the North east part of the country made relationship with the ksashitriya cast who was in southern province. The other important aspect of this clan is the marriage system. The marriage relationship has been made within the cast not with the out of cast by the ksatriya. According to chukavansa the sister of king Maggollana I gave to Silakalawhi was belonged lambakrna cast. (C.V. chp, 41 st. 77) The power of the ksahtriya were not bounded only to the southern region. As an example, king Vasabha who was controlled that particular region of the country, created the Buddhist monasteries even all other parts of the island. The other sub casts were originated on the basis of economic system of the country. Initially, people supplied he requirement for the people and the later that suppliers itself were their cast, and gradually it was developed as the major cast.

The Parumakas

The term parumaka has been mentioned in the brahmi inscription for identifying the elite or land owners. The parumakas controlled each and every parts of the economic sources. The paddy land, tanks, cannals and other natural resources have been taken under controlled by that particular cast in Sri Lanka. Some other casts were created under the parumakas power such as, Senevi, Badakarika, Gamika, Gampathi, Chithakara, Manikara (History of Sri Lanka Voll : 236).

The land paddy field and some taxes were offered to the Buddhist temples for the purposes of conservation, preservation and maintaining by the parumakas in the ancient time.

'badakarikaparumaka'

The meaning of that is the treasure or royal treasurer. (Amaravansa. 1969 : 77)

‘Senapatiparumaka’

The commander in army (Amarvansa, 1696 : 77)

The gahapati or gapati also was played an important role, most of the castes have been offered to the bhikkus by them. According to prof :Paranavitharana this ‘gapati’ caste derived from the Visya clan in ancient periods. (History of Ceylon, vol i. 237). This gahapati caste has been put under controlled by parumakas. Other farmers and merchants also directly connected with the caste of parumaka. The main economic sources were controlled and handled by these castes only.

Kammakara

The term of kammakara was used for identifying the black-smith. The kammakara caste was the main character of national agricultural economy. The iron industry was flourished in 4-5 centuries. A.D. not only in Sri Lanka also in Europe. The material evidences have been found from Alakolaveva, Samalaveva areas. The crucibles, iron slays, and furnace show the very rich iron industry in Sri Lanka. The term of ‘kabara’ have been mentioned in the inscriptions meant black smiths. (EZ vol.1 : 82).

It was the highly required of the black - smith for the agricultural purposes in the society. The responsibilities of the smiths were made weapons such as swords, bows, spares ect. Even they had a separated deity who believed that would be protect them and flourish their industries. (M.V.chp, 10, st. 62).

They have been paid with the groceries as their payment for the duties by others. (Amarasekara. 1996 : 72). The agricultural industry was being flourished and the tasks of the black - smith were very complex. The equipment which have been used for the domestic purposes and agricultural purposes were mostly required. The black - smiths were rushed with the responsibilities and flowers gradually become the generation. That generation has been separated as the last of black - smith by the society. Apart from that, there were other sub castes : named copper, mettles, and gold smith, who made supplements for the economic, religious, sectors in the ancient society. The term ‘tabakara’ has been mentioned in the inscription very often, (M.V. 1969, p:36) The sculptures, ornaments, and metals types of artistic equipment’s have been created on the metals and gold even with the copper by the craftsmen. The economic sectors was developed with the help of the all kind of metal makers. They have played very significant role in the field of economic, religious, social, education, agriculture, even in defense in the ancient society.

Waving cast

This industry was the oldest economic branch in Sri Lanka. Reportedly the prince Vijaya landed to the Thambapanni while a lady called kuweni was weaving the cotton. (M.V. chap.7.st.11-12). She was the first human met by the prince vijaya. This historical evidence proved that the flourished cloths industries has been carried by the local people. The cloth using society could be identified as the well civilized society. In later period, this sector was the well famous branch of the economic industry in Sri Lanka. The weaving community has been allocated as a cast by the society. Sri Lanka was the popular place for the well colorful and comfortable cotton cloths in the world. In the earliest period, Sri Lanka people used very simple and artless cloths, one cloth used for covering lower part of the body. According to a story in Rasawahini even the king Kawanthissa used very simple dress, monk was offered that dress who was living in thissamaharamaya monastery by the king Devanampiyathissa. (Rasavahinivo 11 p : 63). According to the Sigiri paintings, it could be understood the stylistic patterns of the ladies dress. The higher class women been with uncovered the upper parts of the body while lower cast covered all parts, hence the cloth industrial was the most famous in all section of the ancient. This material has been used as an export item and it was world famous at the period. The cloth producers supplied large scale economic benefits to the land. That the weavers has been separated as a separated cast called ‘pasakara’ in the ancient Sri Lankan society.

The Fishermen

The cast ‘kevl’ was the remarkable sect in the society, the valuable parts of the food were supplied by them. Fish wash most consumption item. This section become more developed with the help of the irrigational culture. The fresh water fish supplied enough protein to the people and it was testy and tendency food item. The fishermen village had been separated and granted with many and retained items, by the customers. This duty was not completely accepted by the Buddhist society they condemned the killing animals or fish hunting. Thus the fishermen have been considered as the lower cast by the society. The name ‘Biliwedda, Balavedi’ has been mentioned on the chronicle mahavansa for this cast. (M.V.chp:22 st:62). The village called Kevattagamaand the lane named Kevattaviti have been irruped by the rulers for this people as mentioned in Mahawansa (M.V.chp:27.st.40) The tax called ‘Matiramajibaka’ must be paid by the fishermen to the government. The equipment’s such as ‘karaka and kemina’ were utilized in primary level fishing.

The Candala cast

The cleaners were named as Candala. They played an important role in the society for keeping highly health condition. Some people become as Candala because of the wrong action or bad behavior. Others were by birth as Candala cast. According to Mahawansa there several types of Candalas, they have been separated as their duties.

500 Candalas have been utilized for cleaning the ctalized for cleaning the city.

200 Candalas have been utilized for cleaning the dicks.

150 Cakdalashave been utilized for dispersal dead bodies. (M.V.chp.37.st.140).

In accordance with these information the chandalas completely sacrificed their life for keeping clean the city. The chandala village were situated far from the main city. They were completely allocated casted from the other cast by the society at the same time of the cemetery of the chandala were named as 'Nicasusana' and it was placed in the remote area. 9M.V.chp,10st:69-95).

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