

**MUSLIM SETTLEMENTS IN THE KANDYAN KINGDOM UNDER THE
CONCEPT OF VIHARAMA.**S.F Silmiya¹, T.F.M Thaseem²

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Abstract

The three major divisions of ancient Sri Lanka were Rajarata, Malayarata, and Ruhunurata. The Malayarata or Kandyan kingdom consisted of twenty-one grand divisions. Muslims of Sri Lanka had cordial ties with the Kandyan kingdom. The relationship between Muslims and the Kandyan kingdom has been tightly linked socially and culturally from the early period of Muslim arrival in Sri Lanka. Also, the Arab Muslim traders maintained wonderful trade connections with the kingdom. However, especially peaceful relationships continued after the 16th Century. The Muslims who were expelled from coastal areas were welcomed by Kandyan kings. Muslim settlements in the Kandyan kingdom developed with the support of Kandyan kings. There were three main services rendered to Buddhist temples by the people respectively, transport services, time to time services and continues services. Muslims gave their highest contributions on all three services and lands in the Kandyan kingdom given under the concept of monarchy or viharagama to Muslims who served the Buddhist temple. This study examines the beginning and historical origin of viharagama settlements in the kandyan kingdom. The main purpose of this research is to identify how the Muslim settlements developed gradually under the concepts of 'Maruwena pangu' (Changing share), 'Kavasam pangu' and 'paravani' (the right to own the land). This research is based on primary and secondary sources and evaluated according to historical approaches. Above all, Muslim settlements in Kandyan kingdom have emerged as a result of the adaptability of Muslims, the accommodating nature of Kandyan institutions and the tolerance of Buddhists. Muslims who differed from race and religion were combined into this mechanism for mutual benefits. In Conclusion, this research intends to be a bridge for ethnic reconciliation and hopes to highlight the historical significance of the way of living in co-existence which should be adapted in the contemporary Sri Lanka. Moreover, it shows how Muslims played an important role in the development of several fields of the Kandyan kingdom.

Keywords: Muslim settlements, Co-existence, Viharagama (Monarchy)

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