

The Cultural Differences of the Muslims of Jaffna Mainland and Island Region - A Historical Perspective

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The history of the Sri Lankan Muslims is ancient one. Since they considered themselves as the descendants of the Arabs, the migrated Muslims from the different parts of the world also accumulated with them in later part of their history. The early history of the Muslims in Sri Lanka is not clear. Because, the early history has been read with the mythical evidences from cried de-toil. Since there were some contradictions related to the early settlements of the Muslims in Sri Lanka, there are strong evidences that prove the settlement of Muslims in Jaffna mainland formed in 13th century, and Island region during the period of Dutch. Jaffna mainland and the Island region are the two nearest locations in the district of Jaffna. However the Muslims are scattered in these two regions widely till now. There are considerable differences that we can observe among the activities related to their culture. Since they all observe the faith of Islam, we can identify the differences among their day-to-day activities and cultural aspects. Most of the practices of the Muslims in Jaffna mainland are most common and similar to the practices of the other regions of Sri Lanka. But, the practices of the Muslims in the Island region of Jaffna have more variations with the Muslims of Jaffna mainland and as well as the other regions of Sri Lanka. These cultural differences are rooted in the basis of the Social Economical and life styles of the people of the two regions of Jaffna. This research mainly concentrates on exploring the individual identity and the differences of the Muslims of Jaffna main land and Island region which is the scope of this present research. It incorporates the historical approach with the primary and secondary sources related to the main theme of the research. Interviews, questionnaires, participatory observation and discussions have been done for collecting primary data. The books, research articles, magazines and newspapers related to the history of the Muslims in Sri Lanka and Jaffna are utilized for collecting secondary data. This research may have significance. Because, it is the first attempt to find the differences in the cultural practices of the Muslims in Jaffna Mainland and Island region. This research will emphasis the diverse cultural groups who are living in different geographical region.

Key Words: Muslims of island, Jaffna Muslims, Cultural differences, identity

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