

Buddhists View on Muslim Socio-culture in Post-War Context of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is a multi religious multi ethnic and multi linguistic country and Buddhists are the predominant religious group, constituting 70.19% of total population and the Muslims are the second largest minority next to the Tamils in this country. There are sufficient records available in the history to prove well of the cordial relationship prevailing for longer than 12 centuries, between the Buddhists and the Muslims. However, in recent past years, particularly, soon after the governmental victory of civil war in 2009 an unrest trend has come to prevail among Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka could be observable. This is because of campaigns recently undertaken by a few Buddhist nationalist groups (BNGs), which have caused the rage of disfavor among them. So the groups have been carrying on protests against a number of aspects on Muslims' socio-cultural practices such as issuing Halal certification, slaughtering of cattle, worship places and prayer services, woman's Hijab and Niqab, Muslim trade and commercial stores and questioning the origin of Muslims to mother country. Also, they have disseminated among the general public that the number of Muslim socio-religious practices are threats to the Buddhists and their religion-Buddhism within Sri Lanka a predominant Buddhist country. Based on the above backdrop, this paper attempts to explore the Buddhists' view on the number of Muslim socio-cultural aspects, which were recently disseminated by the BNGs as threats. And also it tries to find out to what extent the above aspects have been observed by the Buddhists as obstacles to maintain a better interaction with Muslims in the current context of Sri Lanka. According to the result, the Buddhists did not concern about the aspects of socio-cultural role of Muslims as the threats to them or to their religion and they did not see those as interruptive of maintaining a better interactions and obstacles to their daily activities. However, almost all of the Buddhists have stressed out here that the slaughtering of cattle is a mere problematic socio-cultural factor due to the prohibition according to Buddhism and its philosophy.

Keywords: Socio-culture, Muslims, Buddhists, Sri Lanka

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka is located in South Asian region in Indian Ocean and is a home to many religions, ethnicities and languages. The Sinhalese are the main ethnic group in the country, constituting three quarters of the total population. Among them, the Sinhala-Buddhists are 70.19% (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012), and speak Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language. The Tamils make up as the second major ethnic group, constituting 15.37% of the population. This group consists of Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils, 12.61% of whom are Hindus (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). Tamils live predominantly in the North-Eastern part of the island. The Muslims in Sri Lanka constitute 9.4% of the country's population (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012), and live in various parts of the country. In some regions, Muslims are more in number compared to Buddhists, and belong to three different ethno-social backgrounds: Sri Lankan Moors, Indian Moors and Malays. Others include the Memons and the Bohras (Ameen, 2000). The Muslims are a multilingual ethnic and religious group, and speak Tamil, a Dravidian language.

There exists a historical record of ethnic harmony in Sri Lanka. The relationship between Buddhists and Muslims has been tightly linked both socially and culturally since the early period of the arrival of Muslims to the country. Arab-Muslim traders and local Muslims have immensely contributed to protect and expand their reigns during the regime of Buddhist leaders (Dewaraja, 1994). During the 19th and 20th centuries, Muslim leaders and scholars have toiled hard for Sri Lanka's independence from colonial rule. They protected the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country, irrespective of ethnic, religious and lingual differences and interests. Post-independence, the relationship between Buddhists and Muslims was strong, and they shared great mutual respects and understandings (Lebbe, 2010). The Muslim group has been identified as a peaceful one that has maintained societal and ethnic harmonious relations with its neighbours. Further, Muslims have also maintained a very good relationship and understanding with Buddhist rulers. This cordial relationship with Buddhists and their rulers made the Muslim community in the country among the privileged. In fact, it is worthy to note that, compared to other minorities who are living with majorities in other parts of the world; the Muslims in Sri Lanka have enjoyed a variety of fundamental rights, as well as socio-cultural and economic privileges.

However, recently, in the context of Sri Lanka, especially during the aftermath of the civil war (1983-2009), a series of tense situations have been observed in terms of the relationship between the Buddhist and the Muslim communities. This has started during which the BNGs such as Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), Sinhala Rawaya and Rawana Balaya posed questions about socio-cultural features of Muslim community. Muslims' rights pertaining to religious obligations have been immensely questioned through provocations by respective groups. During their rallies, the most prominent hard-

liner groups have used coarse, derogatory language to undermine and question Muslim socio-culture, and propagate misunderstanding and misperception about Muslims among the majority Buddhist community in Sri Lanka. There have been several incidents recorded about attacking the Muslim's religious places of worship, which have consequently imposed challenges on practicing religio-cultural identity, customs and fundamentals. In this regard, in the recent past, the Muslims have faced a number of challenges in terms of anti-Halal (permitted to eat according to Shariah) and anti-Hijab (head and face covers) agitations, as well as refusing to call for prayers using loudspeakers, disturbing prayer services, anti-slaughtering movements, anti-Shariah agitations and so on. Furthermore, these groups have propagated and advised Buddhists to reduce or avoid social, cultural and economic interactions, as well as relations with the Muslim community.

These incidents have created a situation that is causing suspicions on Muslim socio-culture and tense, as well as a feeling of marginalization among the Muslims, especially those live in majority in Buddhist-populated areas throughout the country. Moreover, these incidents have contributed to the clashes in opinions and misunderstandings, thus further damaging the once prevailed healthy relationship between the Buddhists and the Muslims in Sri Lanka. Although Muslims are seen as having remained largely loyal to the State during the time of 30-year ethnic conflict and civil war, they are currently expressing the fear of religious marginalization, which has increased uncertainty of their co-existence and long-term cordial relationship with other major ethno-religious groups, especially Buddhists. Based on the above backdrop, this study attempts to explore the Buddhists' view on some aspects of Muslim socio-culture, which were recently disseminated by the BNGs as threats to Buddhists and their religion. Also, this paper tries to hypothetically analyse that the above aspects to what extent have been seen as barriers by Buddhists to maintain a better interaction with the Muslim community in Sri Lanka. In order to achieve the objective of this research, a total of 8 items were applied using a questionnaire. The items, which attempt to explore the views of Buddhists on Muslim socio-culture, are social and cultural interruption, slaughtering of cattle, Hijabs and Niqabs of Muslims woman, prayer services and mosques, Halal labels on consumer goods, Muslims owned enterprises or trade stores, settlements on sacred lands and origin of Muslims in Sri Lanka.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A questionnaire Survey was conducted to explore the Buddhists' view on a few aspects of Muslim socio-culture which instigate the recent anti-Muslim campaigns in post-war context of Sri Lanka. The survey includes the Buddhist population, which resides in 14 major districts in the country, namely: Colombo, Gampaha, Kandy, Matale, Kalutara, Matara, Anuradapura, Polonnaruwa, Ratnapura, Kegalle, Puttalam, Kurunegala, Badulla, and Moneragala. These districts are selected because there are a few districts that comprise a Buddhist majority and a Muslim minority, both groups live together

side by side. The respondents of the survey are the general public, and a probability, random based sampling technique was used in respective districts. The participants were selected based on the percentage of the population in each district of the total population of Sri Lanka. In order to explore the views of Buddhists on Muslim socio-culture, about 835 self-administered, closed-ended questionnaires were distributed among the participants in the 14 mentioned districts. The above sample has been selected for the population of 13 million people according to the table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) (The table for determining sample size for a given population). The questions were organized into two main parts. Part One includes 8 questions, while Part Two includes 8 which are related to demographic details of the respondents. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. To measure the aforementioned findings, simple frequencies, percentages and the mean were all calculated from the received 672 (80.4%) questionnaires out of 835 (100%). The discussion and interpretation start with the 8 questions of measurement of the questionnaire as it is a descriptive research.

Analysis of Respondent's Demography: The questionnaire provides information regarding the respondents social and demographic variables such as age level, gender, marital status, ethnicity, religion, educational background, occupation, and finally, residential district. For the purpose of the study, Age was divided into six categories; 20 years old and below (5%); from 21 to 30 (14%); from 31 to 40 (18%); from 41 to 50 (30%); from 51-64 (28%); and from 65 years old and above (5%). Around 70% of the respondents were from the age category between 31 and 64, mainly because they had more recognition and maturity among the society in expressing opinions regarding social issues. As per the expectation of the researcher, about 76% of the respondents are from the age group 31 to 64. Also, the researcher has attempted to acquire an equal number of male participants as females. But 36.9% of the responses were from males, while 45.9% out of fifty percent of responses were from females. The males who have responded were about 9 percent fewer than the females. Meanwhile, in terms of marital status; married respondents made up 41.9%, while single (including single parent and widow) made up 40%. It is noteworthy mentioning here that demographic items 4 and 5 are religion and ethnicity respectively and there were not found any of the participants as non-Buddhist and non-Sinhala Buddhist among the whole respondents.

In the questionnaire, Educational Background was divided into five categories, namely; none (41%), primary (11%), secondary (14%), vocational (15%) and university level (19%), with the purpose of providing finer grained details, in order to expose more detailed results of this study. Almost half of the respondents in this research are non-educated. This is an advantage, since any misinterpretation about a particular argument or negative stereotype of another society would be believable from non-educated people, mainly due to lack of knowledge about respective arguments. After that, the university-educated respondents have been allocated to 20% of the questionnaire, so

that their views are also considered. About 41% of the responses were non-educated, while only 19% were university-educated. Similarly, occupations included; unemployed (19%), self-employed (42%), student (24%), private sector (6%), and governmental sector (9%). Since most of the people are self-employed and, this has given a sizable consideration on self-employed people, while giving the second larger concentration on the unemployed people and dependent on societies, in order to have perceptions on Muslim socio-culture. Finally, based on the questionnaire survey, the respondents were asked about their residential districts for the purpose of having opinions from the various districts in which Buddhists and Muslims lived together. A total of 14 districts were selected, with thick boxes distributed within the boundary of particular districts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section involves in exploring the views of Buddhists on the number of aspects of Muslim socio-culture practised in post-war context of Sri Lanka with conducting a questionnaire survey by means of analysing 8 major items such as Social and cultural interruptions slaughtering of cattle, Hijabs and Niqabs of Muslim women, prayer services and worship places, Halal aspect, Muslim owned trade stores, Muslim settlements on Buddhists' sacred lands and the origin of Muslims in Sri Lanka. So, the items attempted to find the views on respective aspects which were spread out by the BNGs as threats to Buddhists and the survival of Buddhism in Sri Lanka among the Buddhists during the campaigns held recently in Sri Lanka. Also, the respondents were asked to verify as to whether the aforementioned items are seen as barriers in maintaining a better interaction with Muslims within the country.

Item: 1 – Social and cultural interruptions

The item requested the respondents to verify whether they think that a particular set of social and cultural practices of Muslims are barriers for advancing the cordial relationship with Muslims within Sri Lanka. More than fifty percent (55.3%) of the Buddhist respondents have noted that they did not think there might be social or cultural barriers in advancing the relationship with the Muslims. However, around forty percent (37.9%) of them expressed that there existed some social and cultural barriers in maintaining the relationship with the Muslims. In this variable, although the mean (3.4643) slightly tends to move towards the “disagreement”, the mode (2.0000) stays at the point of “agreement” of the respondents. Also a few respondents have used additional spaces which were provided in the questionnaire to express their different opinions. One particular respondent from Anuradapura district has mentioned that the Muslims do not participate and burn the oil lamp (religious observance) for inauguration of some meetings and events held with multi-religious people.

Also, another respondent from Kegalle district mentioned that the Muslims never allowed their children to kneel before their teachers at Sinhala schools, and they never showed their men's dead bodies to Buddhists ladies when kept at home. Therefore, it could be understandable that there are a few social or cultural barriers to maintain relationships between Buddhists and Muslims. As mentioned earlier, these barriers are enforced by Islam. So they did not allow themselves to engage in these types of activities, as this was beyond their religion and the daily practices. Therefore, the Buddhist society here should attempt to understand the Muslim's religious limitations related to maintaining a relationship with them, if they wish to maintain a peaceful environment within the country. The Muslims must also attempt to understand Buddhists' religious boundaries related to maintaining a relationship with them.

Item: 2 - Slaughtering of cattle

Regarding this item, the respondents were asked whether or not they feel that the slaughtering of cattle, especially bulls and cows, is a negative factor in maintaining a better relationship with the Muslims. Here, almost all 80.8% of the Buddhists respondents have stressed that slaughtering of animal is a critical issue that needs to be addressed in order to maintain a better interaction with Muslims. This result further confirmed with mean value (2.0580) that stays strongly at the point of "agreement" and with mode value (2.0000) which reflects the same as well. The Buddhist society too is bounded with their religion in Sri Lanka, especially in relation to animal abuse, which mentioned in Buddhism. According to Buddhist precepts, they all should refrain from destroying any living creatures. On the other hand, the BNGs claim that not to kill within the Buddhist land that is Sri Lanka. So the issue of anti slaughter campaigns is not the consumption of beef or even cattle slaughter itself, but the fact that Muslims are killing cattle in a Buddhist country, and hence insulting sensibilities of the majority. Sinhala Ravaya (SR) president Ven. Akmeemana Dayarathana Thero said that "We are not worried about whether Sinhalese-Buddhists are eating beef, that's not our concern. Not to kill is the only concept; do not kill in the country." (Quoted by Jones, 2016). Further, around ten percent (9.4%) of the Buddhists disagree with the statement that they did not feel that this is a barrier in maintaining a better interaction with Muslims in Sri Lanka. Eventually, according to the results the Muslims should find the solutions to the above issue in order to preserve the cordiality with Buddhists and avoid the aversion upon the Muslims which emerged on Buddhists' mind by slaughtering of cattle.

Item: 3 - Hijabs and Niqabs of Muslim woman

After the BNGs have eliminated the Halal label issue with a heavy struggle, the Hijabs (headscarves) and Niqabs (face cover) of Muslim women have also come into focus, with Sinhala newspapers running polls as to whether the Hijab and the Niqab should be banned, and with individual incidents

being reported of Muslim girls with scarves being harassed during the course of the campaigns (Farook, 2014), as a major component of their agenda. Thus, this item requested the respondents to verify whether they think that wearing Hijabs and Niqabs by Muslim woman is a barrier in maintaining a better interaction with the Muslims in the country. The result revealed that precisely 47.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed that this cannot be a barrier in undertaking relationship with the Muslims. Also another 18.3% of them have merely disagreed with the statement. Therefore, in total, 65.6% of the Buddhists have expressed that they did not think that this was a barrier, with admiring the society's religion and culture within a multi-religious and multi-cultural environment. However, about 1/3 (31.7%) of the Buddhists believe that this should be a barrier to a relationship with them. These Buddhists argue that this dress code imported from Arab countries to Sri Lankan Muslims and mostly the Muslim women started to wear this after 1970 as a modern and fashionable dress (Herath & Rambukwella, 2015). Also they point out that there are more possibility to occur illegal happenings such as unlawful crossing of national borders and smuggling drugs. Also McGilvary (2011) argues that this dress has drawn greater attention to the Muslims as a conspicuous social 'Other' in the public sphere. Also, Samaranyaka (2013) points out that Muslims must understand the implications of this dress on themselves because wearing of these articles invite undue attention towards them from troublemakers in a crowded situation. Anyhow, according to Shariah, a Muslim woman has an obligation to conceal her head with whatever fabric though there are differences of opinions in concealing her full of face. That's why the Muslims have considered on their Hijabs as their religious dress and fundamental rights wherever they live. Having understood this, more than 2/3 of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka obviously have given the recognition to the Muslims to wear Hijab including Niqab when they would be among the presence of Buddhists, with disrespecting the allegations of the BNGs against the attire of Muslim women.

Item: 4- Prayer services and mosques

During the course of campaigns, there could be seen a number of incidents of violence, intimidation and hate speeches against the Muslims. These include attacks on physical structures such as mosques, shrines and Islamic schools (Madrasas), which have been damaged and destroyed. Also, prayer services have been disrupted, protests have been held outside religious places, and people have been warned not to pray in some centres (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2013). Hate speeches have been disseminated through handbills, leaflets and websites (Farook, 2013). Thus, the 4th item aims to determine whether the respondents ever considered that the prayers of the Muslims and mosque activities are seen as disturbances for routines by Buddhists, as disseminated by the BNGs through rallies and the Media. The result shows that nearly 79% of the Buddhist respondents did not feel that the mosque functions and prayer services were disturbing their routines, as has been disseminated by the respective groups among public. Also this result further confirmed with both mean (4.2009) and

mode (5.0000) which reflect the disagreement of the respondents in this variable. However, around 17% of them believe that this had caused disturbances in their routines. Samaranayaka (2013) adds support to above decision that “the mosques are big issue in Sri Lanka, it is needed additional land to built mosques according to day by day growth of Muslim populace in Sri Lanka. At the same time the Muslims practice their religion the way they want despite the inconvenience caused by their religious practices to others living in the area.” Fortunately, this view not belongs to the Buddhists as a whole, but this is only from 17% of them. Therefore, according to the field survey, the majority of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka did not oppose the prayers of the Muslims, and they did not demand removing the mosques or stopping the prayer services in their surroundings.

Item: 5 - Halal labels on consumer goods

The anti-Muslim campaign has been manifested in a variety of ways, with a number of BNGs playing a largely public role. These groups openly called for a boycott of Halal consumer products, which are associated with the Muslims. BBS General Secretary Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thero was quoted as saying that “if Muslim people want Halal goods they can buy it from their mosques” (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2013), and have threatened an island wide campaign to force people to reject Halal products. This has a strong attention with Face book and other social Media groups and pages. Thus, the item asked the respondents whether or not they have ever been affected by the Halal labels on consumer goods, which issued according to Shariah code by All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama (ACJU), when they purchase them from the market. Based on the result, about 63.4% of the Buddhists respondents feel that they were not affected by Halal label, even though they were Buddhist followers. Among them precisely 50% of them have strongly disagreed with the statement. Here the mean value (3.8170) strongly tends to move to the agreement of the respondents and mode value strongly reflects the highest frequent score, is 5.0000. However, around 32% of the Buddhists thought of negative impact on them by the Halal label, as they are adherents of Buddhism. According to their point of view, they cannot obey the Shariah regulation owned by the Muslims, and they cannot allow a Shariah-domination in a Buddhist predominant country. Also BBS supporters expressed that according to their Buddhists monks the Halal foods are already dedicated to an unknown God-Allah and thus cannot be used for the Buddha Puja (Jones, 2015). So here the claimants should understand one thing first that the purpose of Halal is not meant dedicating those foods to the God-Allah, but, the foremost aim of the Halal is to maintain the purity of the consumed foods. Eventually, if the BNGs propagated whatever justifications to boycott the Halal certification, the majority of Buddhists did not care for and they did not feel inconveniences for their daily routine by the Halal within the country.

Item: 6 - Muslims owned enterprises and trade stores

In the course of campaign, the BNGs and online groups have called for the boycott of Muslim-owned companies and trade stations such as No-Limit and Fashion Bug. There were reports that after early 2013 there has been an impact on Muslim-owned businesses, and that this economic boycott is spreading, which may cause multiple repercussions both in terms of the Muslim community, as well as for Muslim-Buddhist relations (Farook, 2014). In June 2014, a small number of people set a fire on to No Limit, located in Panadura. Also, they disseminated rumours among the Buddhists that the Muslim-owned companies have caused harm in terms of sexual harassment, especially to women workers in the area (Jones, 2015). Thus, this item sought to verify the respondents whether or not they believe that the Muslim owned companies have caused trouble to the Buddhist employees who worked there. Here, the majority (64.3%) of the Buddhist respondents strongly believe that the above mentioned companies did not cause harm to the Buddhist workers with choosing “strong disagreement” answer. Also, another 19.2% of the respondents expressed mere “disagreement” with the above statement. This result further confirmed with mean value (4.3750) which tends to move slightly to the “disagreement” and with mode (5.0000) which reflects “strong disagreement” answer as the highest frequent score of the respondents. However, 10.3% of the respondents believed that those companies and its’ outlets have caused harm to the Buddhist workers. Also there are allegations against the Muslims that these Muslim owned enterprises have attempted to convert Buddhist girls into Islam and to involve them into sexual abuses (Jones, 2015). Specially, these allegations have declared out by the BNGs and lay people among the public through the styles of rallies, meetings and social Media with providing the evidences. So here the Muslim company owners, top management and the workers have been alleged by the respective groups (*Ibid*). There is a question to ask the BNGs and lay people that if these allegations are proved with the evidences, then, why they failed to take actions against those perpetrators and to take them to the rule of law, and on the contrary, instead of that, why they have attempted to attack the whole Muslims and made inconveniences towards them. So, whatever allegations presented towards the Muslims by the BNGs, the majority of Buddhists have proved here with this field survey that those allegations are all fictions against the Muslims carried out recently in Sri Lanka. The above result further confirmed with Samaranayaka’s (2013) statement that “Evidence that the Sinhalese are a tolerant community is that they allow Muslims in their neighbourhoods, contribute to their economic base and allow their religion to practice.”

Item: 7 - Settlements on sacred lands

In some areas, physical violence was accompanied by other means to push out the Muslims presence in particular areas. There are efforts to declare both Dambulla and Anuradapura as ‘sacred areas’ (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2013). The identification of these areas as sacred areas is also combined with Urban Development and Cultural Protection, hence, Muslim religious places and residents have faced both legal and extra-legal processes to evict them from these areas. For instance,

in Dambulla, following the attack on the Msjidul Kairiyah Mosque, people in the area were issued eviction notices from the Urban Development Authority (UDA) to vacate the area by the end of October, 2012, on the basis of the area being sacred (*Ibid*). Also, on 20th of April 2012 a tense situation arose as regular Friday prayer at the mosque was prevented by a gang led by Buddhist monks who claimed that it was an illegal construction built on sacred Buddhist ground (Dewasiri, 2012). Thus, the item 7 aims to examine whether or not the respondents felt unhappy with a few Muslim settlements on sacred lands which belong to Buddhist temples, or were identified as sacred areas by UDA. Based on the result, precisely 59.8% of the Buddhist respondents expressed that they have never felt unhappy with the aforementioned settlements, and with the fact that these Muslims do not want to be evicted from those areas. In addition, another 18.3% of them normally disagreed with this statement. Therefore, in total, 78.1% of the Buddhists have never experienced heart-burnings and ill-will with Muslim settlements. The same result further confirmed with mean value (4.2098) which slightly moves to the strong disagreement of the respondents and with mode value reflecting the highest frequent score is 5.0000. So, here it is required to resolve the issues arising at the level of societies to build up the community relationship among them, even though there are legal processes of identifying areas as sacred. Therefore, according to the result, the Buddhists have given recognition, and have tolerated with sufficient flexibility to build a better relationship with the Muslims in Sri Lanka, and thus moving beyond this recent effort of the BNGs.

Item: 8 - Origin of Muslims in Sri Lanka

In the course of the campaign, the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) political party has supported the agenda of the BNGs, and has openly advocated that Sri Lanka solely belongs to Sinhala Buddhists, and that Tamils should go to Tamil Nadu, and Muslims to Saudi Arabia (Farook, 2014), mentioning that Muslims are aliens who have arrived from Arab countries. Thus, the last item (14) requested the respondents to verify whether or not they have suspected the origin of the Muslims to this country-Sri Lanka. So this item yielded an affirmative response from 53.6% of the respondents not suspecting the origin of the Muslims to this country. Another 17.4% of them have given support to confirm further the above result with selecting 'disagreement'. Approximately 15% of the Buddhists have suspected the origin of the Muslims, and whether they are original citizens of the country. The result further confirmed with the mean value (4.0893) which stays at the point of disagreement and with the mode 5.0000 which reflects the highest frequent score in this variable. In addition, Rifai (2013) points out that historical origins and antiquities of Muslim people have been badly questioned today by the Buddhist extremist people. Some deliberate attempts have been made to create doubt and suspicion about historical origins of the Muslims. Also a strange mystery has come to dwell in the mind of the Buddhists that minority people do not belong to this island and this country belongs only to the majority people alone. Also, Fowsar (2014) points out that the Muslims are viewed as alien and

Shylockian, that's why the BNGs have declared a statement that the Muslims ancestors are Arabs, so they want to go to Middle East. However, according to the result of this field survey, the Buddhists have expressed here in different manner regarding the Muslims' existence in this country and the majority of them have perfectly understood the origin of the Muslims. They believe that their ancestors were Arabs who have espoused local Sinhalese women, and the current Muslims living in the country are their offsprings.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has examined two main areas: the Buddhists View on Muslim Socio-culture in Post-War Context of Sri Lanka, and consequent nature of community relationship between Buddhists and Muslims. A total of 8 items have been analysed to find the respective and corresponding results. According to it, Buddhists feel that there exist a number of issues in case of Muslim socio-culture impacting on interaction with Muslims, but they specially have pointed to the slaughtering of cattle, as a worse negative factor that questions their interaction, due to the prohibition of abusing animals in Buddhism, according to their point of view. However, here the Buddhists were not concerned as interruptions with Hijab and Niqab affairs, mosques and prayer services, Halal certification, Muslim owned enterprises, Muslim settlements on sacred lands, and the origin of the Muslims in Sri Lanka, as barriers of community relations with them. Moreover, the Buddhists did not perceive these as inconveniences or disturbances for their daily routines of habits. Also, according to the result, the Buddhists have still been maintaining a better intertwinement with the Muslims and they have no feelings of controversial attitudes towards Muslims. So here it can be understandable that the protests against the above aspects of Muslim socio-culture practices have started to get serious warm because of recent undertakings and disseminations of the BNGs as instigating Buddhists against those aspects with preaching among them as threats to Buddhism and Buddhists within a predominant Buddhists country. Even though the Buddhists have been instigated by them they have not given subsequent concentration on the above aspects of Muslims socio-culture. So it is obvious that the BNGs have strategically planned that however should be divided the community interaction between Buddhists and Muslims through the recent campaigns against Muslims in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the government and relevant authorities should be attentive towards such actions of the BNGs to preserve the co-existing nature and ambitions between the communities in the country.

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Appendix**Table 1: Social and cultural practices which interrupt community relationship**

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	21	3.1	3.4643	2.0000	1.32675
Agree	234	34.8			
Uncertain	39	5.8			
Disagree	168	25.0			
Strongly Disagree	210	31.3			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 2: Slaughtering of Cattle

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	261	38.8	2.0580	2.0000	1.23700
Agree	282	42.0			
Uncertain	21	3.1			
Disagree	45	6.7			
Strongly Disagree	63	9.4			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 3: Hijabs and Niqabs of Muslim woman

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	12	1.8	3.7946	5.0000	1.34821
Agree	201	29.9			
Uncertain	18	2.7			
Disagree	123	18.3			
Strongly Disagree	318	47.3			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 4: Prayer services and mosques

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	3	.4	4.2009	5.0000	1.13466
Agree	111	16.5			
Uncertain	27	4.0			
Disagree	138	20.5			

Strongly Disagree	393	58.5
Total	672	100.0

Table 5: Halal labels on consumer goods

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	3	.4	3.8170	5.0000	1.33980
Agree	207	30.8			
Uncertain	36	5.4			
Disagree	90	13.4			
Strongly Disagree	336	50.0			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 6: Muslims owned enterprises and trade stores

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Agree	69	10.3	4.3750	5.0000	1.33980
Uncertain	42	6.3			
Disagree	129	19.2			
Strongly Disagree	432	64.3			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 7: settlements on sacred lands

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Agree	114	17.0	4.2098	5.0000	1.13304
Uncertain	33	4.9			
Disagree	123	18.3			
Strongly Disagree	402	59.8			
Total	672	100.0			

Table 8: Origin of Muslims in Sri Lanka

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Mode	Standard Deviation
Strongly Agree	3	.4	4.0893	5.0000	1.13909
Agree	99	14.7			
Uncertain	93	13.8			
Disagree	117	17.4			
Strongly Disagree	360	53.6			
Total	672	100.0			