

Human Resource Functions of the Tank Culture in Sri Lanka

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Abstract- The human resource which evolved with the functionalities of the ancient tank culture of Sri Lanka is the research focus of this paper. According to Mahawamsa, paddy cultivation was the lifeline of the Sri Lankan economy from the ancient past. The hydroculture of the island is a legacy that is attributed to the Aryans who migrated to the country from north India in the 6th Century B.C. The initial Aryan settlements took place in the dry zone in Sri Lanka which has low rainfall and therefore, the farmers needed considerable storage of water to support agriculture. Since the Aryans possessed the expertise of hydraulic engineering and tank building, they took steps to address the demand for water by erecting the tanks in almost every part of the dry zone. These tanks were not isolated projects. They were well placed in a holistic socio-economic system that resulted in the prosperity peace and security of the Island for many centuries. In this backdrop still tank culture is an integral component of the lives of Sri Lankan farmers. The functionalities affiliated to the tank culture was one of the top employment providers for the Sri Lankan rural peasant as well. The authors argue that some of the core practices in this context could even be useful in strengthening the modern-day human resource practices of other fields. The context is analyzed by employing concepts belonged to the theories of oriental despotism and human resource management. It is empirical research conducted by using primary and secondary data. The researchers have found how ancient human resource practices tally with modern-day practices.

Keywords: *Holistic Socio-economic system, Human Resource, Tank Culture*

Introduction

From ancient days main occupation of Sri Lankans was paddy cultivation. According to Mahawamsa paddy cultivation of the country was given more prominence as the life line of the economy after the arrival of Aryans who migrated to Sri Lanka from India in the 6th B.C. Aryans settled in the dry zone in Sri Lanka which has a low rainfall therefore the land needed a considerable storage of water for paddy cultivation. Since the Aryans possessed the expertise of hydraulic engineering, they took steps to address the demand for water by erecting the tanks in almost every part of the dry zone. In this backdrop reservoirs or tanks become the base of the agricultural development of Sri Lanka. In the passage of time Sri Lanka's water civilization gradually evolved with the development of the tanks and its associated cultural traits (Basnayake, 1997). A significant component of the tank culture was the human activities of the village (Senevirathne, 2002). This paper discusses the importance of human resource of the tank culture in providing human security of the island.

The very 1st evidence that could be found about tanks is in mahawamsa which was written in 4th century B.C. According to that first tank which was in recorded history is primitive tank built by Anuradha in Anuradha gama in 6th B.C (Mahanama, 1912). King Pandukabhaya era was a very important era in Sri Lankan history. In tank culture point of view, he is the very 1st king who built the tanks. According to the mahawamsa, he built 3 tanks such as, Jaya wapi, Abhaya wapi²² and Gamini wapi. Among those Abhaya wapi is the oldest tank that was certified up to today. It is in Anuradhapura as Basawakkulama tank.

²² *Vapi* ; Meaning reservoir

After that tank culture spread over centuries in Sri Lanka. In the first two eras in Sri Lankan history (Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa) we can observe that there were lots of tanks built with the patronage of kings. Chronicles such as Mahawamsa, Rajawaliya and stone inscriptions like Padawiya (Brohier, 2001) provide strong evidences to support this fact.

There is a strong bond in between lives of people and tanks in dry zone. This fact can be proven by observing some villages names such as, Konwewa, Galenbiduna wewa, Walas wewa and etc. Names of the large tanks used to name large areas also. The area covered by Nuwara wewa, Kala wewa and Padawiya wewa known as the Nuwara Kalawiya by combining the names of above-mentioned names of the great tanks (Swarnasinghe, 2005).

There is a social system developed around the tanks. When developing that social system around the tanks, managing manpower was a significant factor. This social system provides evidences for how our ancestors managed their human resources successfully.

In ancient era manpower was the main resource used for constructions. This function should have been a complex one. Contemporary Human Resource Management is a prominent aspect of a country economy. Sri Lanka is also practising Human Resource Management which was inherited from the west. The author argues that most of the ancient cultural practices, functions and habits draw parallels with the modern-day Human Resource practices. Specifically, old tank culture that existed from Anuradhapura era was an important area to study due to prevalence of said similar characteristics. There was not enough exploratory research carried out to look at the similarities and comparisons of both ancient and modern human resource practices. Therefore, the author intends to study the said parallels between Human Resource concepts and ancient HR concepts and practices followed by the tank culture.

Rationale

The author selected this topic specifically on tank culture for a few reasons. One of those can elaborate as this. Private sector in Sri Lanka is implementing modern Human Resource

Management practices in their organizations. Though there is Human Resource Management in practice, rate of filing of annual court cases about the industrial disputes are increasing. Table 1.1: Annual rate of labour disputes in Sri Lanka

Year	Annual Disputes
2009	126,532
2010	111,433
2011	80,474
2012	153,628
2013	212,684

Source: 2009-2013: Dispute and Settlement, Ministry of Justice (Justice, 2013)

The researcher is of the view that studying the ancient human resource practices and provide data to understand the inherent mindset of the working community of the country.

The course of the Sri Lankan village culture could be easily summarised to a culture that was grown around the tanks by using the water provided by the tanks. Tank water in other words was the live wire of the ancient self-sufficient economy which lasted for nearly fourteen centuries in Anuradhapura period. The author also has a personal interest on the subject and there is a lacuna of research studies on the subject matter.

Problem Statement

Human Resource of a country is significant since it is the only out of other resources resource which possesses the creative element. Humans have used the potential of creativity to smooth run the production process throughout the past. Despite the growth of the discipline, there were many good HR practices continued by the communities even prior to twentieth century. Sri Lanka had one of the world's best irrigation cultures and poses a rich human resource management tradition entwined with it. However, those good human resource management practices, production strategies and traditions related to past have not been subjected to specific research. The problem remains that

these cultural elements may be forgotten by the future generations. Losing such indigenous knowledge in future may adversely affect the paddy industry in future. On the other hand, the academic community may find valuable resources to support and develop the existing paddy and inland fishing culture in future.

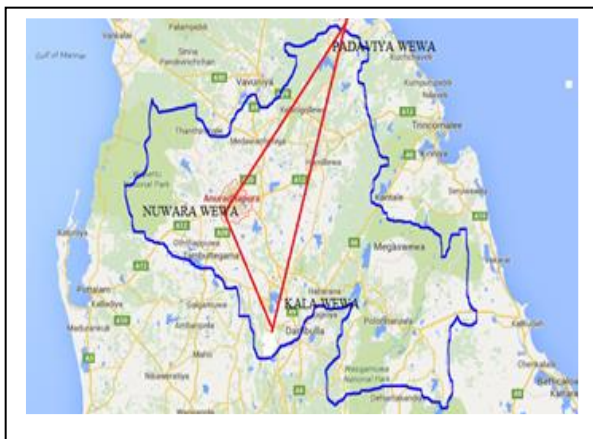
The Objective

The General objective is to find the human resource functions that can be found in the in old tank culture in Sri Lanka.

The Method

Anurdhapura was selected as the geographical area to collect the sample for below reasons

1. Anuradhapura was selected as the geographical area since it is the centre of Rajarata Civilisation
2. Still one can observe there remnants of ancient cultural practices
3. The author has easy access to the communities since author has close links with the same geographic area.



Map – North Central Province

Above map shows the part of Sri Lanka. In that map the area highlighted in blue colour shows the north central province. In that blue border, can observe red coloured triangle. It is ancient Nuwarakalaweya. Author collected data from the villages that were in nuwara kalaweya. Some of those villages are Kallanchiya, Eliyadiwulwewa, Thalgaswewa, Athawetunawewa and etc.

Human Resource Management guidelines could be found in various functions and activities that were carried out by the villagers who live around the areas called “Tank Villages”.



Figure– Tank village (Source – Water in culture,1992)

The under-mentioned activities could be categorised as main functions of village life that were settle-downed around tanks. ,

1. *Mulumas ellima*(traditional way of fishing in dry season)
2. *Bethma* method (traditional way of dividing land for paddy cultivation in dry season)
3. *Wariga Sabhawa* (a social group designed to solve conflicts in the village)
4. *Katti kepima* (maintenance in tanks)
5. Aththam method (manpower distribution)
6. *Functions* (tree types of functions like festivals that is inherent in tank culture)

The author tries to draw a nexus between the collected data and the activities that has chosen as human resources enablers

Mulumas Ellima

Ancient villagers, who used to live in tank villages, considered month of August as one of the driest months in the year. According to Sinhala month system this month is called *Nikini*. Normally in month August average temperature in tank villages’ is around 200 C- 360C (Paul Wisely, n.d.) Due to this dry weather water volume of some of the small tanks starts to reduce

rapidly. Sometimes there is a possible risk of droughts affecting to large scale tanks as well.

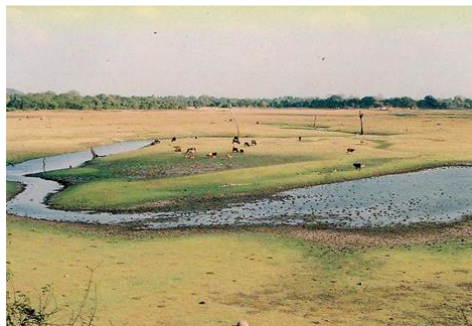


Figure – Tank Thisa in dry seson
Source: K.M.I.Sawarnasinghe, 2004

During the dry seasons tank water will remain only in the deepest areas of the tanks. In such condition fish in tanks are gathered in deep waterlogs. Fish such as, *thiththaya*, *dandiya*, *kawaiya*, *pethiya*, *theppiliya*, *hirikanaya*, *lula*, *ada*, *theliya* and etc could be caught in abundance. However, in Sri Lankan ancient tank culture even though all of the fish in the tanks gathered in a small area, it is prohibited fish as fishermen wish. There are two main reasons to have such a self implied regulation.

1. If few of the villagers do fishing as they wish, majority of the village will miss opportunity to consume that resource equally.
2. If people do fishing as they wish in unplanned manner it will badly affect for the fish breeding in the tank.

To avoid both of these reasons, people who are living in tank villages do an activity called 'Mulumas Ellima'.

During dry seasons, *gama raala* or *wel widane*, (person who are having authority of decision making about things related to tanks) symbolically convey the message about the ban for the fishing to villagers. It is call as *ana bola bendima*. *Ana bola* is a symbolic massage of a ban for some of the regular activities. In this case, an object named *ana bolaya* is locating in the deep area which is water is remaining in the tank. *Ana bolaya* is prepared as below.



Figure - Ana bola
Source: K.M.I.Sawarnasinghe, 2004

1. Selecting a pole of *Divi kaduru* (*Pagiantha-dichotoma*) (Rathnayake, 2013) which has 4 to 6 feet of height.
2. On the top of that pole have to attach *bolpana* (*Glycosmis angustifolia*) (Barberian ayurveda resorts and University of Ruhuna, 2013) branches which has 3 parts.
3. Attach those branches with a white piece of cloth. (Bandara, 1983).

After *ana bola bedima* the villagers will refrain form fishing in the tanks. Then, *wel vidane* decide a date for fishing in the tank after discussing with all the people in the village.

Villagers who are participating for the event should bring *karak gediya* or *athanguwa* (fishing equipments). They are not using nets, fishing rods or other equipments that they used for fishing in other days of the year. By using *karak gediya* they can only catch big fish where small fish will be served for sustainability of the resource. Due to that the village community will not face a shortage of fish in future.



Figure - Karak gediya

Source: K.M.I.Sawarnasinghe, 2014

Another speciality of this event is, that the non-participation of females.

On the very morning of that pre-defined date, one of the male adults of all families in the village will be gathered to the tank bund for the Mulumas Ellima. Wel widane in the village starts the event after praying at sanhida (a place where villagers perform their religious activities generally located near big tree). After that act they start fishing. Participants do fish in a systematic way by performing a line. They cover large area of the tank till evening. But any of those people are not supposed to take fish home. They gather those in one place for distribution.

The significant part of the event is distribution of fish. At this stage they distribute fish to the entire community of the village. The total process during the initial stages could be summarized as below,

1. One portion is offered to temple in the village
2. Second portion is to widows, mothers with infants and pregnant women in the village who can't participate for the event
3. Third portion is for Wel widane.
4. Next portion is for village doctor.
5. Then they separate other portions for the visitors in the village if there any
6. Finally, they distribute fish equally among the participants (Siriweera, 2009)

The Mulumas Ellima is conducted within a day or two. At the end of the event the wel widane lift anabola thahanchiya (restriction for fishing). This type of event was last happened in 1981 at

Nochchiyagama (Swarnasinghe, 2015). According to the data collected in interview mulumas ellima hapened in Katukeliyawa in 1980's (Banda, 2015).

When looking at this event in Human Resource Management (HRM) point of view, we can observe ancient people who lived in tank villages had unknowingly applied elements of modern HRM theories in their main events of day to day lives. The main theory that can observe in this event is EQUITY THEORY. It describes that people should be treated fairly and equitably and employer should not be bias (Chapman, 1995). As in that theory all the villagers that contributed for that event get equitable portions. It makes villagers were happy and more loyal to the work that they done as groups.

Also, we can observe that the way of communication in this function. Wel widane was an aristocratic leader. However, when deciding and fixing the dates for the activity any one can argue and discuss and give an alternative date which could be considered as a democratic element. This person is in the village, so any one can go there discuss further matters. It is like modern-day OPEN-DOOR policy that is functioning in most of the private sector offices and organizations. An open-door policy literary means, that every manager's door is open to every employee. The purpose of an open-door policy is to encourage open communication, feedback, and discussion about any matter of importance to an employee (Healthfield, 2015).

After the mulu mas ellima method the catch is distributed among the families who are not able to participate for the event such as widows etc. It helps to increase the mutual bond and understanding among the villagers. Modern day HRM specialists are highlighting the importance of enhancing the mutual bond and understanding among the employees.

According Fredric Herzbergs Two Factor Theory there are some job factors that result in satisfaction. By giving reasonable portions to whole village there were less conflicts and less de-motivation factors in the village.

Bethma method

There are paddy fields devided among tankssince those fields are cultivated from the

water provided by those tanks. Those paddy fields can divide into two parts such as:

1. Purana wela/Maha wela (Purana wela means paddy fields that are located near tank bund. Those are traditional cultivation lands. Normally every family in the village has ownership of these fields)
2. Akkara wela (Akkara wela are the land areas that started cultivation in recent past.)

In some seasons it is difficult to cultivate all those lands in the village due to lack of water. In such situations, villagers held meetings with *wel widane* to decide the cultivating areas in that period. They are coming to decisions about cultivating areas with the aid of *Diya keta pahana*. *Diya keta pahana* is an instrument like a pillar that used to measure the water level of the tank.



Figure - *Diya keta pahana* in sluice of *kala wewa* Source: K.M.I. Sawarnasinghe, 2001

After coming to a decision about water capacity, they are deciding the land area that suitable to cultivate (each, 1961). Normally villagers are selecting fields that is close to the tank. Prof. Siriweera states in interview that the land area is divide equally among the farmers and do cultivation under this Bethma method (Siriweera, 2015). In his book H.W. Kodrinton shows, farmers collecting their harvest regardless the ownership of the land (Kodrinton, 1980).

Bethma can divide in to 3 main categories. Those are,

1. Sama bethma
2. Irawili bethma
3. Peralum bethma

Normally under this Bethma method new land area is distributing among the farmers according to the ratio of their own lands. But

under Sama bethma method, farmers cultivate the land area and divide whole harvest equally among them. Irawili bethma means cultivating selected lines of the field. However, this is not a very popular method. Under Peralum bethma method, there is a rotating system to cultivate. For example, in this time if a farmer is given a nearest field to the tank, next time, he will have to cultivate the land that is located distant from the tank. Cultivating land areas are rotating among the farmers time to time. When analysing these facts, we can observe there is also many modern HRM practices such as, motivation, equity, two-way communication and simple structure as well.

Under Bethma clear communication process takes place. Farmers start their work with clear understanding about the work. According to modern HRM teachings, clear understanding always leads to higher productivity. It enhances the efficiency and productivity of the employees. In tank villages farmers had also done their work effectively and achieved their goals when collecting the harvest due to this clear understanding.

Wariga Sabha the Hereditary Forum

This is a social system that used to minimize the conflicts in the village. In tank villages this practice can be observed. Though Wariga sabhawa does not show any connection to tanks, this is existing practice in tank villages. Wariga sabhawa is a part of tank culture. E.R. Leach once done a research in tank village called Pul Eliya. This village is still existing in Anuradhapura district. In that village he had experienced this Wariga sabhawa. Old, well experienced wise people in the village hold the headship of Wariga sabhawa.

People who have done minor offenses will not be considered under Wariga Sabhawa. They were advised and guided by an elder person. Most common case, that can observe in these places are low cast marriages. People, who done marriages regardless the cast have to serve the wariga sabha. After substantial discussions and arguments wariga sabhawa generally fine the accused and then accept that person to the society again (Leach, 1961). When a culprit proved in wariga sabhawa accused should face to punishment according to the fault. This punishment will start with a practice called

Bulath Nambuwa (giving beetles to villagers. In dry zone beetle is a rare and luxury thing) and sometimes ends by silver coins. But accused can appeal. Authority on that appeal is with Hene mama (village washman). Due to these reasons' villagers are always careful to not to do faults. It is an indirect method to keep villagers away from doing wrong things.

In these wariga sabha also reflects some HRM theories and practices. Constructive advising method is the 1st step of solving the minor conflicts and faults in modern human resource management. That method is called as sandwich model. It is used in tank villages also. Using sandwich method, now a day's employers are giving encouraging feedbacks to their employees. It is a technique that use as praise 1st, then show the fault and finally praise again It reduce the negative impact on the employees and motivate to do the work right (Belludi, 2008).

Heads of the wariga sabhawa are most respectable people in the village. They are getting great respect due to this post as well. Maslow (1943) describes needs of people and how it is changing step by step. He also describes that after earning enough money and fulfilling most of the needs, people seek for social recognition. They will be motivated only by social recognition in this stage (as cited by McLeod, 2007). In wariga sabhawa can observe this same characteristic. That is giving social recognition to right person at right time. In other words, it can call as fulfilling psychological needs of people in the society.

Wariga sabhawa practised decentralised authority. There a team of people are taking decisions instead of a single person. According to Louis A. Allen, "Centralization is the system and consistent reservation of authority at central points within the organization." Same person explains decentralization as, "Decentralization refers to the systematic effort to delegate to the lower level all authority except that which can be exercised at central points. Decentralization is concerned with the placement of authority with responsibility." According to Joseph L. Massie, "Decentralization as an organization concept refers to the pushing decision making to the lower level of the organization." (as cited by Puri, 2011). Due to this characteristic can get most fair diction about the matter by the wariga sabhawa.

Katti Kepima

Katti kepima means doing relevant routine maintenances in the tank. Earlier it is known as weve rajakariya. One member of each family that are owners of paddy fields should participate for this work and it is compulsory. If someone does not participate, they will not get water for next cultivation season from tank. The tank is considered to be a public property. That attitude helped to protect tanks up to date.

In the dry season wel widane holds a meeting with villagers to discuss about Katti kepima. They decide exact dates for the event. People should do Katti kepima in separate dates that wel widane allocates for them. Kattiya means the area which is having 10 feet of width in each side and 01 feet of depth. This katti kepima is done in inside of the tank. But villagers can't do this as they wish. Wel widane shows the area that they should do katti kepima. Without his supervision people never do any cut in the tank. The soil that gather after katti kepima have to be keep in a place that is shown by the wel widane. Normally they use that soil to make the tank bund stronger.



*Figure Repaired tank bunds of Ihalakagama wewa
Source – K.M.I. Swarnasinghe,2004*

With the annual monsoon rain fall mud will collected in the tank. By doing katti kepima, the mud layer gathered throughout the monsoon will be reduced. But if the remove more than soil that they needed it will badly affect for the water volume of the tank. If they remove more, water absorption speed will be increase. As a result of that villagers will suffer from lack of water in dry season (Vithana, 2008).

There is a process of planning before the activity take place. In modern HRM practices also can see the process of planning such as:

1. Develop objectives
 2. Develop tasks to meet those objectives
 3. Determine resources needed to implement tasks
 4. Create a timeline
 5. Determine tracking and assessment method
 6. Finalize plan
 7. Distribute to all involved in the process
- (Woods, 2003)

The main objective of katti kepima is cleaning the the tank and remove the layer of mud. It is the very first step of planning in the cult ication process. Then Wel widane will attend the activity as the 2nd step. Third well widane will determine human resources and other equipments for the task. They create timeline and plan of work also. It comes under 4th and 5th steps. According to that there are no overlapping works and all have to work equally. At the meeting they finalize the plan. It is coming under 6th step in modern planning process. When villagers are working Wel widane always maintains a close supervision on that. All have to work under his supervision and guidance. Finally, all come to work with clear idea about individuals work as the 7th step as mentioned above.

Another human resource practice that can observe in this activity is forecasting future needs. People do katti kepima to fulfil future need. That is protecting full volume of water capacity in tanks. In modern HRM also people do future challenge forecasts to face coming up challenges successfully. By forecasting the future, organization can get an idea about the future of the business that they have to face. By understanding it, owners can adjust the organizational structure and they can prepare to face those. Katti kapima is like that because if villagers do not remove mud in tank, the water volume of the tank will be less in next monsoon. It will affect badly to cultivation and all other day to day activities of the villagers.

Aththam method



Figure - Villagers do ploughing according to Aththam method

Source – *Water in culture*, 1992

When villegers need to cultivate or collect harvest in their fields, they do it as groups. Owner of the land invites villagers to work by giving beetles. On the morning of a predefined day villagers gathered near the field. Breakfast, Lunch and tea should be provided by the field owner. Though these activities were hard and needed effort, villagers seem to enjoy the work. There are folk songs tossing in these occasions. In some villages, wajjankarayo (people who are for play instruments like Bummediya, Udakkiya and etc) had played when others are singing. As the skills people divide their works as do cutting, do collecting and etc. When somes are working some will take small breaks to chew beetles. Some people exchanged their work with others. All the people are working without charging wages. As explained above, all the fields in the tank village cultivated by using this method (Menike, 2015).

This method is also an example for division of labour in modern Human Resource Management. Division of labour came to place in the time of Industrial Revolution happens. According to division of labour by dividing tasks according to the skills of people can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the people (Pettinger, 2013). In aththam method there is a division of labour. People who are skillfull in each work such as palying music instruments and harvesting etc. are allocated to do the same.

Flexi working hours are modern trend of Human Resource Management. Flexi working hours means doing work as employee wish. But finally, they have to complete the task within given time frame (LSE, 2014). Similar to that people who are participating to aththam method

do their work leisurely but complete it on time in right manner.

Job rotation is also can observe in this method. Business dictionary states that job rotation means,

“A job design technique in which employees are moved between two or more jobs in a planned manner. The objective is to expose the employees to different experiences and wider variety of skills to enhance job satisfaction and to cross-train them.”

But observing the characteristics of division of labour, anyone can question how it can tally with job rotation. In division of labour people are working according to their skills. If some person having skills for cutting, collecting and keeping the harvest can job rotation implement in that place. He or she can exchange their work with others. It will help to reduce monotony of work. Like that job rotation will reduce.

Mutual bond is also another speciality in this method. Improving mutual bond among the employees is become a challenge in present day organizations due to the competition. But in tank villages people improved their mutual bonds along with their day to day activities also by using methods like aththam. Motivation will be also there due to the various types of folk songs and instrument playing. Like that in aththam method which was in tank villages can observe many modern-day Human Resource Management methods.

Functions

There are number of functions and rituals that woven around the tank culture. From those there are 3 most common functions such as,

1. Mutti newum mangalya (Function do with fresh clay pots expecting prosperity)
2. Pooja wedilla (Rare function do with a gunshot to protect over filled tank)
3. Kiri ithirawiima (boiling milk expecting prosperity)

God Aiyanayaka is the main god that is connected to all of these functions. Villagers' concern god Aiyanayaka is the protector of tanks and tank villagers. According to the interview with administrative grama niladari Chandrasekara in Anuradhapura, author found that god Aiyanayaka is the god of wew bedi rajjaya (Anuradhapura and some parts of the

Polonnaruwa area) and Nuwara kalawiya (the area situated within Nuwara tank, Kala tank and Padawiya tank) (Chandrasekara, 2015).

There are various types of opinions about god Aiyanayaka in Sri Lanka. There are two main opinions about the origin of this god. Those are,

1. God aiyanayaka was created by god Vishnu. He has created 7 princes. Among them eldest one was god Aiyanayaka. (Darmadasa, and Thundeniya, 1994)

2. According the popular narrative there was villager called Aiyanayaka in Malwara²³ country. As god Vishnu ordered he and other 7 came to Sri Lanka to develop cultivations in wew bedi rajjaya. They entered to Sri Lanka from Jaffna and established in area located between Jaffna and river Deduru and cultivated the area. (Mapote Chandrajothi, 1954). Some people say that he is a north Indian engineer called Aiyar. (Levers, 1889)

Though there are various opinions, villagers have given superior state to god Aiyanayaka in their day-to-day lives. People in tank villages' have known this god as Aththappa or Muththappa also. According to Parker another name for god Aiyanayake is Wanniya Bandara (Paker, 1984).

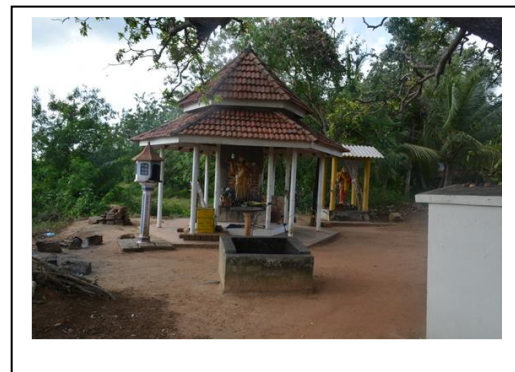


Figure- Aiyanayaka Dewalaya in Garayakgama
Source - K.M.I. Swarnasinghe - 2015

A. Mutti newum mangalya

This function is common for every tank in Sri Lanka. R.W. Ievers this is the most significant ritual in a tank (Ievers, 1889). People in the tank villages are preparing for this event from months before up to date. They are not going out from the village, not eating whatever they like, not going to the places of interest like before and etc. They call this as Pe wima or special preparation, (Rathanasiri, 2015).

Villagers know this function as Hathkattuwe rajakariya and Game rajakariya also. Normally this function held once in seven years in large scale tanks and once in 5 years in small scale tanks (Maneewa, 2004). After monsoons when tank is filled with water people decide to hold this. Wel widane and other villagers participate for this meeting. They select Kemmura date for the event. Kemmura means special days that separated for the god. Next villagers invite "Badahela naide" village potter to make fresh clay pots. If there is no potter in the village Wel Vidane invites potter from nearby village. This invitation is done in a sacred and respectable way. From the date they give the invitation to make clay pots people spent their lives very religiously (Hettiarachchi, 1979). Then Wel Widane and respectable villages that are having upper cast, invite Hene maama (person who cleans the dirty clothes in the village) and Wajjan karayo (People who play musical instruments) for the event. This function starts a day before to the auspicious day. From that day, villagers are doing lots of rituals in entire two days. Finally, they do Kiri Ithirima (boiling the milk) and hang those fresh pots upside down on the tree nearby tank. All the people who are living in the village participate to this event (Nandasiri, 2015). According to the interviews author got to know that, villagers concern this event as one of the most important events in their lives (Ilangasinghe, 2015).



Figure. - Mutti newum mangalya
Source: K.M.I. Sawarnasinghe, 2001

Pooja wedilla

This is not an annual function. This is doing when tank is over filled with water and tank bund is in danger of break. This function is also known as, pooja wedilla as same as the hunnanakada mangalya and aiyanamune wedilla. In heavy monsoon seasons Wel vidane and other matured

villagers are in on alert about the tank in whole 24 hours. If there is any risk Wel widane decide to do pooja wedilla. After that they create small stand to keep beetle. It is called as bulath yahana. On that except beetle they keep clean pole after washing by turmeric water. Then they pray to god Aiyamayaka and attach cleaned copper coin in that pole. After that wel widane keep that pole in inside of the tank. Specially they make sure to keep a small coin under the water. Finally, wel widane shoots the gun shots to the middle of the tank. Simultaneously one villager hoots for 3 times. In some areas villagers who are on the tank bund clapped at the end (K.B. Maneewa, 2015).



Figure- Damaged tank bund in Kidawaramkulama tan
Source: Athula Bandara, 2004

Kiri Ithirum Mangalya

This function could also be observed in most of the villagers in dry zone. After collecting the harvest villagers are doing this function. It may be in August or in April. All the villagers in the village participate and contribute for this event. Villagers are contributing for this event by providing rice, coconuts and etc materials that needed to perform the event.

In kemmura day (a day that concerns as a day of god. Normally Wednesdays and Saturdays are concerned as kemmura days) villagers decide to hold the function. In large scale tanks on the tank bund there are god's kovils. In Minneriya and Kala tanks can observe those. But in small scale tanks there are not any kovils in the tank bund. But there are places called Sanhinda in that location. It is in under a huge tree like banyan. Sometimes under that tree people draw image of a god aiyamayaka with piece of lime. But in some places, there is just a oil lamp in front of the tree and small branches of trees are hang in the large tree. In front of that tree Kiri Ithirum mangalya is

performed. Most of the times, this function is held in evening of the kemmura day by males.



Figure - Sanhida situated on the bund of Nillagamma tank
Source: K.M.I. Sawarnasinghe, 2012

A day before the event, people handover their contribution for the function to the wel widane. On the auspicious day all are gathering near the sanhida with all the materials that needed for Kiri Ithurum mangalyaya. Then god's jewellerys/regalia are taken near to that place in a very sacred manner. In Nuwara kala wiya, it is known as, Raja Kada (Disanayake, n.d.). After that they prepare to boil milk in a fresh clay pot. It is named as Raja heliya. But in some areas, they are using more than one pot to boil milk. Another speciality is the milk that uses to boil is coconut milk. Also, all activates are done by males in the village. Females are not participating for this event.



Figure 4.6. 2 - Preparing milk rice
Source- Water in culture, 1992

As the collected information in interviews, according to the way of the milk boil villagers believe that they can tell predictions about the next harvest and the village. After boiling milk people make milk rice out of that. This is also done by male in a sacred manner. Finally, they pray and distribute milk rice among the villagers. All the villagers including females eat this milk rice (Hemarathana, 2015).

There are slight differences in the rituals of kiri ithurum mangalya from village to village. (Swarnasinghe, 2005).

Three of above explained main functions in tank villages are directly enhance the unity and mutual relationship in-between the villagers. In modern HRM practices there are number of motivation theories and practices such as outbound camps, trips and etc to develop this mutual bond and understanding among the employees. By these functions monotonous of the villagers is reduced. It helps them to work more freshly and motivated manner.

As same as that, when analysing functions in old tank villages can observe modern job specialization in there. According to business dictionary, job specialization means,

“The process of focusing one's occupational concentration on a specific area of expertise. An increase in job specialization among employees can make them less flexible since it tends to reduce their ability to perform other types of work within the business that fall outside their particular specialty”(Business dictionary).

There are plotters who are making clay pots, there are specific person to clean the clothes, to play instruments there is another personality and etc. Like that by being specialized people for special works, they completed their works more accurately in that society.

Also, can identify most of these functions are male oriented functions. Females are not participating for these events. But in modern human resource management female male domination is unaccepted.

By the functions like pooja wedilla can observe the attitude that villagers are having towards the tank. Though tank is a lifeless object it is the live wire of villagers. The respect towards the tank and the aim to protect it is very much higher among the villagers. Modern HRM practices guiding employees to protect the workplace and reduce the waste. 5S method is example for that. 5S method means,

“The 5S concept is one of several lean manufacturing (“Lean”) tools designed to improve workplace efficiency through facility-wide organization and cleanliness. Each of the 5S guidelines help managers and workers achieve greater organization, standardization, and efficiency—all while reducing costs and boosting productivity. Some core principles of the 5S concept involve creating and maintaining visual

order, organization, cleanliness, and standardization. With these goals in place, the hope is that workplaces can become more efficient, organized, and equipped to carry out daily tasks in a safe manner. (Editorial, 2015)”

Pooja wedilla function is done to protect the tank in the village. All of the teachings in 5S concept are done to protect the organization and increase the productivity. But in this function cannot identify 5 steps but the final objective of 5S and pooja wedilla function is same. That is protecting the organization and tank. According to the main six of above analysis, can observe there were modern human resource management practices in the old tank culture. All of above analysed 6 main activates are having more than one modern human resource management practice. It shows that Sri Lankan culture has its own identity of managing people before western world invented those theories and practices.

Conclusion and Findings

Author has done this research, to find Human Resource Practices that was in the old tank culture. In the study can observe 5 main practices in the tank culture. Those are,

1. Mulumas ellima
2. Bethma method
3. Wariga Sabhawa
4. Katti kepima
5. Aththam method
6. Functions

There are 3 main functions such as,

1. Kiri Ithurum mangalya
2. Pooja wedilla
3. Mutti newum mangalya

By analysing the found data can observe there were strong human recourse management in that culture. Most of the work was done by human force in past due to lack of developed technological equipments. Active participate of man is much higher in that society. But there will be very few conflicts, according to the found data most of the activities were done smoothly.

In the analysing author has highlighted the facts that related to the HUMAN RESOURS MANAGEMENT. Most important thing is, in old tank culture there were modern HUMAN RESOURS MANAGEMENT practices that we are learning today. Modern practices were originated

in western world and now came to Sri Lanka as new teachings. But, our ancestors had used those before centuries ago. It is the most significant factor in this study.

Identified modern Human Resource Management theories and procedures in old tank culture can be summarised as below.

Table 5.1: Summery of findings

Ancient Parctice	Modern HR Practice
Mulumas ellima	Equity theory. Developed by John Stacey Adams, in 1963. Two way communication Open door policy Increasing mutual bond Two Factor Theory by Fredric Herzberg in 1964
Bethma method	Democratic leadership Simple society Clear flow of communication
Wariga Sabhawa	Sandwich model Hierarchy of needs by Abraham Maslow in 1943 Decentralized authority
Katti kepima	Planning process Forecasting future needs
Aththam method	Division of labour Job rotation Motivation Mutual bond Flexi working
Functions	Motivation Job specialization by Charles Babbage in 19th century 5S concept by Japanese people

Source; Researcher’s own creation based on s tudy data

Above mentioned are common and important human resource management practices that can observe in present organizations. But those were in practice from centuries ago in our tank villages. This is the importance of our culture. With the knowledge and wisdom that gain with experience and the discipline that comes with religion, had sharpen the thinking power of our ancestors.

They found and implemented those successfully before the birth of the fathers of modern Human Resource Management.

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