

Physical Geographical and Socio-Economical Geographical Factors Contribute towards the Temporal and Spatial Diffusion of Christianity in Sri Lanka: A Case Study in Puttlam District

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Abstract: *This research examines the Christian community's spatial and temporal patterns in Sri Lanka with particular reference to Puttlam district since 1505s to the contemporary period. The research has a clear historical perspective, and the modern period examination was based primarily on a qualitative study of dry zone villages situated in Puttlam district. Findings revealed that the expansion of the Christian community in Sri Lanka has a precise spatial and temporal diffusion pattern. Among various foreign invaders' impacts, the wide diffusion of Christianity in this area identified under two sectors: physical geographical, and Socio-economic geographical factors. To ascertain the extent to which the physical geographical factors have contributed, the weather condition, landscape, accessibility, location of coastal areas, and Natural resources considered. To describe the socio-economic, geographical factors, way of life, various social, economic, and political activities aligned with Christianity caused such diffusion.*

Keywords: Christian community, Spatial, Temporal, Diffusion, Sri Lanka, Historical perspective, Foreign Invaders, Physical geographical, Socio- economical

1. Introduction

Religion has been considered a "phenomenon that has an unprecedented potentiality in transforming human thinking, history, and civilization (Fernando, 2011)." Further, can be identified as a *mentis facta* (Haggett, 1977) related to the human being within the culture, can be named a hidden agenda that implemented to attain the power of the World today. Although religion is introduced as one aspect of the culture or human thinking, it is defined as a complex process that spread through time and space in a geographical context. Studying these temporal and spatial processes is the core of Geographical Science today.

Further, the religion that has diffused in the World can be analyzed through these temporal and spatial perspectives. When faith is referred to in a geographical context, it can seem that Geographical Science has a particular capability in analyzing the patterns because the religion's diffusion process directly develops both on the physical and human basis.

Therefore, this research answered these questions: what are the spatial patterns of Christianity, though it has broadly confined to coastal areas? What is the diffusion process responsible for these spatial phenomena? What are the temporal events of these spatial phenomena? Can the diffusion of Christianity be simulated in similar social, economic, cultural, and geographical contexts? What are the Physical Geographical Factors and Socioeconomic Geographical Factors?

Most of the religious studies are research and publications carried out mostly in a spiritual and social scientific facet (Perniola, 1983; Perera, 1936; Somarathna, 1982; Baldeus, 1996; Arsarathnam, 1974). Therefore, geographical studies and approaches cannot found in this field of research. Hence, the generation of new techniques through the comparative evaluation of the conclusions reached through geographical viewpoints and such pre-studies is essential.

2. Methods and Methodology of the research

As the study has identified the equal importance of both primary and secondary data, it will attempt to appropriate methodologies for collecting such data. Puttlam is a district where the Christian community's highest resides today and in the past (Census report, 2011). The majority of the objectives of the research cannot be comprehended and explained using statistical methods. A qualitative data collection method, like Case study and life history methods, has restricted explanatory prospects in such a situation.

The sites selected for the study are 484 A Bolawatta, 575 Weralabada North -Chilaw and 626 B Thalawila west an area up to the extent of 04 Km from the coastal line (Figure No: 1), (Hensafter Bolawatta/BW, Weralabada North – Chilaw/WN and Thalawila west/TW and the cases also represent through the symbols) according to the Christian religion division, these three units consist of above three Grama Niladari¹ areas.

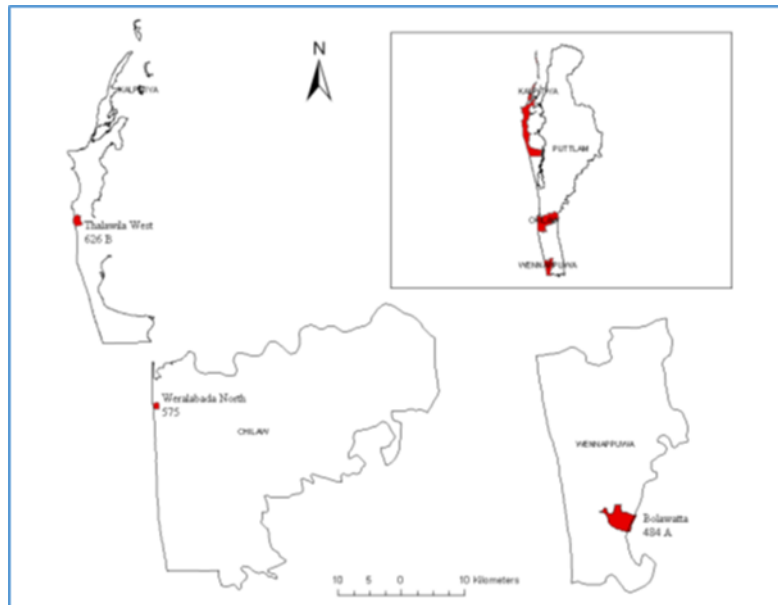


Figure 1: Location of the study area (Compiled by Author)

The case studies carried out covering 05 households in each GND. The persons who have broadly engaged with the Christian church used as cases through the comments of knowledgeable people of the area and the researcher's experience. Therefore, these 15 samples were selected as a Judgment sample for "deep interviews".

Qualitative analytical methods were used to analyze the primary data. Firstly, the analysis was done to identify the physical geographical, and socio-economical geographical factors by using the in-depth interviews focused on case studies. The research performed generally based on descriptive methodology and descriptive analysis.

3. Result

Characteristics of the sample

It mentioned the sample's accuracy based on the educational, social, and age levels of the persons who represented the samples in the study. Therefore, it is essential to the objective of the information collected similarly; the people who caused the case study classified according to sex and age-wise. Members between the age limits of 0-14 were not forced for motivation, and two age groups as 14-60 and over 60 years taken in for the case study. The sample, according to gender and age group, is as follow (Table No: 1):

Table 1: Gender and age Structure of the Respondent

Area	14-66	Gender		Over 60	Gender	
		M	F		M	F
BW	03	02	01	02	01	01
WN	02	01	01	03	01	02
TW	03	02	01	02	01	01
Total	08	05	03	07	03	04

Among the members represented the case study, 53% employed in the government and private sector, and 20 % were engaged in the fishing industry. All the people who provided information at the case study helped very openly with their opinions.

Accordingly, it is vital to ascertain a basic knowledge of the social background of the incidents related to the study. According to Table No: 3, the educational level of the people of the cases could be ascertained.

When considering the data on the educational level of the personas interviewed for the case study, it is clear that 75% of them are with a considerable level of education (Table: 2). 60% of the persons who came under the case study are householders, and 50% have passed GCE Ordinary Level (O/L).

Table 2: Education level of the Respondent

Level of Education	15 Cases	Percentage %
Illiterate	2	13.3%
Primary Education (up to grade 05)	1	6.6%
From Grade 06-10	4	26.6%
Passed Ordinary Level (GCE)	3	20%
Passed Advance Level (GCE)	4	26.6%
With Higher Education	1	6.6%
Total	15	100

About 20% of the cases have studied only up to Grade 05 or without any education. They were chosen for the case study because they are from the fisherfolk, and they possess a comprehensive knowledge to explain the expansion of the Catholic religion of their area.

The following table illustrates the School attended about cases. When taking into account, remarkably, 95% of the people engaged with the case study were educated in Catholic schools.

Accordingly, it could be easy to understand the people's social background caused for the case study. It is essential to analyze the pattern of diffusion of the Christian community under such a social environment in the Puttlam District.

Results

Physical Geographical factors led to the diffusion of Christianity in the Puttlam District.

Attention paid to physical geographical factors that led to the expansion of Christianity in the study area. This region

was identified as an area where plenty of natural resources were available and pearl reefs available in abundance in the past. The fishery industry was successfully carried out in this coastal area.

When Christianity was introduced to Sri Lanka, in the 16th century, it is not a secret that the community of this country had to expose to its direct impacts. Sri Lankans have a formal religion and are well established at that period. When inquiring from the geographical point of view, Christianity originated from the land, such as Palestine expanded, focusing on the coastal areas of the World. When it started in Sri Lanka, it manifests parallel diffusion patterns. Significantly, the possibility of access, climate condition, landscape, the situation in the coastal area, and abundance of resources led to the diffusion of Christianity in Sri Lanka as physical geographical factors.

A: Accessibility

When investigating the diffusion of Christianity in the World, accessibility played a significant role. With time discoverers who migrated worldwide contributed to the expansion of Christianity through roads, sea travel, and railways with the powers of the emperors. When comparing Figures No: 2 And 3., it could be observed as to what extent the roads have contributed to the diffusion of Christianity in Sri Lanka. During the Portuguese era, the streets were conducive for the dominant foreigners to travel towards the country's interior for their commercial activities and spread their religion in those locations.



Figure 2: Road Map of Sri Lanka (Source: Adopted from Arjun's Atlas of Sri Lanka, 1997)



Figure 3: Religious expedition of father Joseph Vaz (Source: Adopted from T. Kolamunna, 1985)

In above two maps, it could be observed that catholic priest Joseph Vaz and Gonsalvez, who were in Sri Lanka before 1690, used these roads (Wikramasingha, 2000) to spread the religion, and observed some equality in the use of road network. In Figure No:2., except for the branch roads and subways, the main roads spread faith equally.

Facing the Puttlam coastal limit towards the western coast of Sri Lanka is another factor contributing to the diffusion of Christianity in this area. Relative to southern and Eastern coastal belts of Sri Lanka, Jaffna, Mannar, Puttalam, Chilaw, Negombo, and Colombo on the Northern and Western coastal belts, wide diffusion of Christianity could be observed. The foreign invaders directly targeted the western coast of Sri Lanka because it was facing the sea routes of the World those days.

However, Portuguese, Dutch, and British developed the highways and waterways in the Puttlam district. It was considered as it helped geographically for the expansion of Christianity in those areas. Significantly, the Dutch canal, which excavated from Colombo to Puttalam named *Hamilton Canal* during the Dutch era (Somaratna, 1982), is historically evident that it helped spread Christianity.

Bolawatta's study area consists of a historical village named "*Kammala*." It is a village where Catholics lived in the past, and there are catholic churches with attractive characteristics. During the British era, Christianity spread in this area, and presently there is a percentage of around 90% of the population being Christians. This village is named, which would have accessibility, which has directly led to the expansion of Christianity in this area. Further, this area had a Blacksmith and sailboat repairing near to the beach, which Portuguese and Dutch came to this area, and eventually, the priest arrived in this area.

To paid attention to the accessibility, village-to-village migration was cause to spread Christianity on a micro-scale. It could observe the genealogy of BW C02's Family that the grandfather residence of the Kandy area, and he embraced Christianity when he migrated to Chilaw. According to the root patterns of some cases, people who embraced Christianity being residents of some area migrated to other places.

B: Climate condition and landscape

The physical setting of the Puttlam district one of the areas of dissected relief with the marked variation of Temperature and primarily caused by less rainfall. Based on the extreme climate conditions, Puttlam district is physically isolated. The Physical isolation of the area made a significant flat form to the diffusion of Christianity.

Further, the area has not enough physical condition to do paddy cultivation and from this district engaged with livestock farming leads to the torture of animals; they may have developed a tendency towards the religion to get rid of the mental stress.

It shows through cases that the unfavourable climatic Conditions were causes to the spreading of the religions. As a whole, this area is prone to droughts during most of the

period in the year, and it shows that it had helped the diffusion of the Catholic religion—the concepts of the Godly practice.

C: Location by the beach

As Sri Lanka is an island facing the World's sea routes, it got targeted by various nations for invasions. Especially the Puttlam District, which is Western Cost of Sri Lanka, has been a target from Western countries. From the time of Vijaya's arrival at the beach of Tammenna (Maha Wanshaya, 1912), this Island had been open for Portuguese, Dutch, and British invasions.

When after 1600 AD, Puttlam was under the Kandyan kingdom, the only harbour of it was the Puttlam. The Puttlam District controlled all the sea fare activities. Kandyan Kings such as *Wimaladharmasuriya II* and *Sri Verra Parakrama Narendrasinghe* had used (Maddumarala, 2006); this port for commercial purposes.

Subsequently, the priests who were engaged in spreading the religion used the Puttlam harbour and the environs. Fr. Joseps Vaz had arrived in Puttlam to emerge a Christian reformation in 1990. In the meantime, Oratorian priests, have visited this location and made their efforts to convert people into their belief.

With the case study carried out at the sample areas, it factually emphasized that the physical geographical features of these three locations have been a step up for the arrival of Christianity to the said areas. BW C02, WN C08, TW C11 stated that their being close to the coast is a “God-Given Privilege” for them.

When considered geographically, Kalpitiya Peninsula (a location close to Thalawila) faces the ocean breeze from India. Therefore, historical evidence shows that most Portuguese ships have wrecked at the Kalpitiya coastal belt. Apart from the goods recovered from these ships, the fishermen have rescued Christian statues preserved as miraculous gifts of the religion.

“St. Francis Xavier came to India and spread Christianity in many parts there. As the people had the belief, they have made many statues with clay and have let them floated in the ocean. As Sri Lanka is very close to India and with the wind's force, these floating statues have arrived in Sri Lanka.”

Source: Case study TW C15

D: Natural resources and the development of the trade

The most important natural resources of Puttlam District were pearl reefs and fishing. Foreign monopolizing dominants arrived here for their advantages, and at the same time, religion also was spread as a follow-up result. They also had their view on the fisheries industry of the area.

As people of this area say that before the arrival of the Portuguese, pearl diving was done by low caste people called "Paravara" and "Karava,"ⁱⁱⁱ but after the arrival of the Portuguese, it was done on a commercial basis. It concluded that although the Portuguese came with the intention of

commercial gain, they must have had the inner objective of spreading their religion. Further, their business activities had led the way to introduce their faith to the countries where they deal.

The “Paravara” and “Karava” caste people have attended to their living close to the pearl reefs. It believed that the Portuguese have been living in these proximities under the pretext of supervision. The foreigners who arrived here for the pearl trade have gradually migrated to the West of Sri Lanka. Those foreigners and the priests were quickly able to capture these people's minds in the area as they were similar and features of the ‘paravara’ caste.

Analysis of socio-economical geographical factors which lead to the diffusion of Christianity in the Puttlam district.

Concerning social group, an investigation was carried out regarding historical factors, social structures, way of life, and literacy of the inhabitants from a wide-angle of research.

1) Historical Factors

Special attention had to be paid towards the historical factors under socio-economic, geographical factors to ascertain which factors led the then society to embrace Christianity and analyze such factors. There are three main can be investigated, such as;

a) Invasion

The people's social status in this country before the invasion of empires would have been a positive impact for the Portuguese, Dutch, and British to get the people of the society to embrace their respective religions. However, it was difficult to analyze a genealogy that represented the invasion process in the research.

b) Conversion

It could be identified that there is a post, and the current convention process is forecasting. The genealogy of BW C05, who was a Buddhist before 1900, can be identified today totally as a genealogy that represents Christianity. The religious renaissance that took place in the above relevant areas due to the arrival of Rev. Joseph Vaz was the leading cause of this situation. Presently, they are all observed as genealogy that is highly devoted to the church. One old villager BW C02 of Chilaw, who had shifted from Chilaw to Bolawatta in 1943, concerned, the people did not like the Portuguese's effort to convert people to their religion forcefully, when these two priests delivered their sermons peacefully, the people had agreed to convert So they converted to Christianity. There was a different experience regarding conversion. It could be observed through BW C02s. According to them, people did not marry Christians to embrace religion during the period between 1990 and 2011.

c) Transforming

According to the, BW C01 provides an excellent example of the factor of transforming. A family of BW C01 who is 85 years old, had been transformed into Christianity for six generations since 1875. According to her, in those times, there had been a large number of children in the families. This invariable let does the increased in the Christian population. This transformation remained intact, mainly

because of the capture of the Kandyan kingdom by the British, who also Christians.

Transforming can analyze through the analysis of TW C07. He is the first child in a family with three children, both his brothers were married to Christians. He mentioned that his younger brother got married late because he looked for a Christian lady to marry. Because they never marry other religious believers.

2) Social Structure

Especially in the study area during the past decades, it was seen that the entire population had depended on the fishing industry. Under Buddhist culture, this occupation was not regarded. Simultaneously, the fisherman had a cause to give rise to their purpose as the founder of Christianity had been a representative of fisherfolk. People who depended on fishing were known as "Karawa" or "Kareiyar" in terms of the caste (Maha Wanshaya, 1912). Similarly, the pearl divers were known as "Paravara". Within the study area, 90% of the people represent this cast even at present. However, it examined that such discrimination of caste system currently could not be seen due to the mixing up of people in society from all walks of life.

Sri Lankan history during the Sinhalese kings is evident that only "Radhala" and "Govikula" or "Govigama" castes (Maha Wanshaya, 1912) were highly regarded and all other castes considered as low castes. However, the study revealed that the empire that administered the country for 440 years had changed this caste discrimination. It could be well observed, as liberties that they have gained by the present society do not regard them as low caste categories.

According to the people of this area, they were not allowed to get themselves educated or build up modest residential houses by the "Radhala" castes since they were considered low caste people (Hettiarachchi, 1996). However, with the embracement of Christianity, the people of this area enjoyed many privileges. Ascertain people of this area were able to go in for higher education, they were able to contribute their efforts towards the empires' commercial activities. Apart from the above, some of them got qualified enough to hold government sector employment. The problem on the entire Island could be seen in the sample area too. It means at that period; there was a feeling that to enjoy a fair status of the society, people should embrace Christianity.

According to TW C 12, her forebears had been part of the aristocracy govigama 200 years ago. The great grandfather of her grandfather had converted to Christianity around one hundred and fifty years ago. Her grandmother, who was a Christian of the govigama caste, was given in marriage into the afro mentionaristocratic Christian family. TW C12s husband and her father represent the karawa castes. According to her, when her mother got married in 1897, no objection to the karawa castes on the govigama aristocracy. At present, TW C12s children are married to people from various castes, including the karawa and govigama.

Rev. Fr. Joseph Vaz arrived in Jaffna through the manner in 1687, and in 1690 he has come to Puttlam and started

spreading the religion. Sinhala and Tamil people are living in the Study area as a mixture of population. All though there is no evidence that Buddhists were engaged in the fishing industry, there is evidence that Buddhists have lived here. But even at present, the fishermen living in the Southern Coast of Sri Lanka are Buddhists. The main reason for the Puttlam area was mainly because large crudes of people have migrated to this area for pearl diving and Christian priests to have arrived and settled down here. There is also evidence that Kandy and Jaffna were forcefully converted to Christianity while some have converted willfully.

3) Ways of Life

Ways of life of the people in any area depend on their environment, development, educational level, and complex factors. Furthermore, these factors will straighten up the attitudes and behaviours patterns of the people. It was well observed with gratitude that all three areas under the case study were amicable and open-hearted. They also could be identified as a society, which is more desirable for enjoyment and sociability.

In the past, people in this environment would be disclosed to the outer society because they were living facing the ocean with waves ending corner and engaged in the most challenging tasks of earning a living and being innocent people with ignorant attitudes of education. Further, the caste system would also have been a hindrance to their progress.

There is evidence that the area under the case study would have caused to such miracle beliefs before 1505. At the time of Vijaya's arrival, Kuwani engaged in knitting (Maha Wanshaya, 1912) situated close to the study area. Historical sources reveal that there had been habitats in Sinhala areas with people of Indian origin migrated were with numerous ways of miracle beliefs having spread.

Under such a background, the diffusion of Christianity in these areas has become very helpful to the inhabitants. Further, it believed that Christianity would have helped in many ways to people with miracle beliefs.

The story behind the inauguration of the famous church of St. Anne at Thalawila manifests as to what extend the people of this area had faith in God.

"It is known that St. Anne statue was floated to the beach from a wrecked ship. A bright light has bloomed from the tree at night. When people gathered, they had seen the statue of St. Anne in a tree cave. People have worshipped the statue keeping it there without moving and later removed it to a small hut and started worshipping it". Source: Case study TW C11

A Sinhalese tradition of worshipping trees is familiar, but it acknowledged that the Christian culture had followed similar traditional attitudes. At the start, the empire forcefully converted people into their religions, but later they realized the worshipping methods with belief and embraced Christianity. Significantly, the miracles which took place with Christian beliefs inspired the people to

embrace Christianity. People of the area believe that cure from illnesses, fulfilling aspirations. Also, people who go against Christian beliefs have failed in their expectations were the main reason for the people to believe Christians.

"Historical evidence proves that in 1692 when father Joshep Vaz came to Kandy, it was a severe drought and the people requested him to pray for rain. Within a few minutes of his prayer, heavy rain fell, but the father's place was safe."

Source: Case study BW C03

Such socio-economical geographical but many psychological factors have had a profound impact on the expansion and stability of Christianity.

4) Culture

As Christianity very clearly caused the change in the study area's human culture, similarly, human civilization has driven the expansion of Christianity in these areas. When analyzed the Socio, Arti, and Menti Facts (Zelinsky, 2001) that represent the culture, it could realize that marriages, cultural acts like music, drama and art have contributed Largely towards the diffusion of Christianity in this area.

Especially in these areas, marriages have had a direct effect on the spatial diffusion of the Roman Catholic religion. Further, catholic music and passion play significantly affected to embrace the people to Christianity.

Similarly, in this area, the plays live Nadagama and puppet shows (Peiris, 2003; Porutota, 1998); were very famous. *The three wise men* and *Belasantha*, Which become very renowned in the whole Island originated from Puttlam District.

5) Literacy

Literacy identified as an influential factor that contributes towards the diffusion of Christianity in the whole of Sri Lanka and especially in the study. The original residents in the study area who embraced Christianity were the fisherfolk, and their attitudes towards education were narrow and meant spirited. It is noteworthy to mention that this background could be highlighted by representing the fisherfolk given rise to the study area's sample. It could also be why they believed in the negative impact on education; incredibly, there was no useful purpose for their fishing industry.

However, with the arrival of foreign invaders as mentioned earlier, because of the trade improved due to the lavishness of these areas' natural resources, it becomes more fully critical towards literacy. The empires' objective was to provide literacy to people to get their trade documents accomplished at a low rate of payment. Accordingly, schools here inaugurated are associated with churches to offer primary education.

The provision of education paved the way for uplifting the social status of the people to a certain extent while it was quite different from the pattern of Piriven education. Because it open to a pathway for Christian schools those days, children were forced to pursue education and that there had been a punishment system of imposing penalties for

non-followers. Certain people have gone even to England in this are after gaining knowledge in such a manner.

Apart from the above, the empires were able to directly grasp the people of the area's winds by paying their considerable attention towards the public welfare, inaugurating orphanages, homes for the elders, and children. This situation could be seen even nowadays. There several such institutions controlled by the Christian church in the Puttlam district. It identified as distinguished establishments that provide educational and noneducational technological training for the children and the area's youth. It could have been a task and vital factors to lead the people of the site for education who were not sound those days financially.

Expansion of schools controlled by Christian nuns and classes for student priests held by the clergymen different religions sectors would have caused a great deal for the free education widely in this area. Although the Christian educational powers subsequently declined from the Christian church until the present day, Puttlam could reckon as a district where the Christian education relatively remains in a proper position.

Although, presently education and literacy don't play a direct role is the diffusion of Christianity, it is the unanimous opinion of all the people interviewed for the case study that in the past, education and literacy had a substantial impact on the spatial diffusion of Christianity.

4. Discussion

Geography and religion are, at a glance, can be defined as subject areas that do not go in parallel with each. It could argue that a logical point of view, which has kept faith in evolution, cannot deal with Christianity. Wilber Zelinsky (2001) points out that the religion, a Menti Fact, is an essential or compulsory factor, which leads to the creation of a culture. Similarly, every religion's diffusion is based on a particular geographical unit or space and a specific time. Therefore, geographical science has the highest capacity to study the temporal and spatial diffusion pattern of Christianity as the only subject area that analyses the physical and human environments through temporal and spatial perspectives.

Hence, summarizes the conclusions taken and the suggestions proposed through the data analysis on temporal and spatial diffusion of Christianity in Sri Lanka within a geographical perspective.

It broadly analyzed that the diffusion of Christianity in the World is a complex process examined through World Expansionism. Although Christianity introduced to the countries such as Sri Lanka as a direct result of several methods, such as various invasions, explorations, imperial processes, power conflicts, and trade, this study can identify the specific factors that constrained to the confinement of Christianity to some regions of Sri Lanka.

When analyzing the spatial diffusion pattern of Christianity in the entire country, comparative to the country's total

population, contraction, or contraction diffusion of the devotees of Christianity is presently apparent.

Similarly, when examined the nature of the diffusion, it is found that the temporal and spatial pattern of the Christianity currently prominent in Sri Lanka is determined by the influence of both the physical geographical and socio-economical geographical factors.

Incredibly, several physical geographical and socio-economic, geographical factors influenced the diffusion of Christianity within the Puttlam district or in the coastal areas of the Chilaw Parish selected for the micro-scale study.

In the spreading of Christianity in the Puttlam district, which is a religion with a multi sect, geographical factor such as accessibility, resources, and location and factors such as socio-economic and political factors as socio-economic, geographical factors influenced or, in other words, creating an impact. Christianity introduced to these areas by the Portuguese who arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505 does still

create spatial diffusion patterns through various processes that evolved in the country throughout 500 years.

The diffusion of Christianity in these areas is confined in a way, but it evident that persons related to religion are still living with their own beliefs on religion.

Whether it is possible a re-diffusion of a new religion with such intensity within such geographical unit or whether a potentiality is available for dispersing of the new faith in the future within a physical, social, and economic environment as such that prevails in Puttlam district is a problem that arises through this study.

The flow of Physical Geographical and Socio-economical Geographical factors for the diffusion of Christian Community

The research's final result carried out taking the situation that prevailed in the whole country and selecting Puttlam district as a sample for the study can be summarized through a framework as follows. (Figure 4)

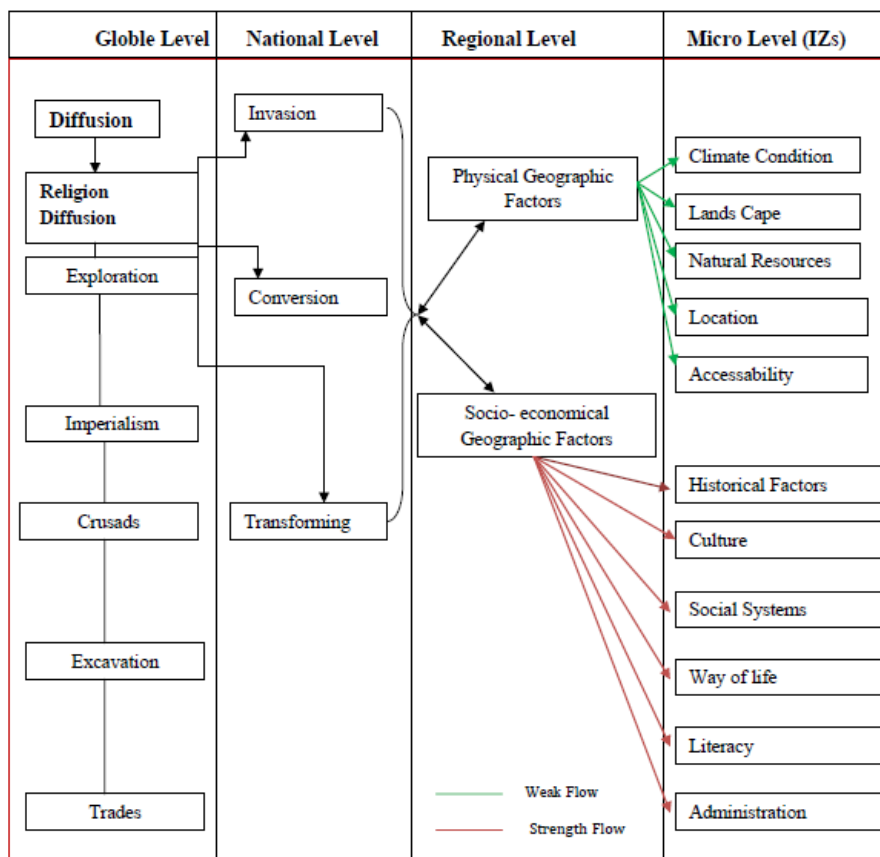


Figure 4: Flow of Physical Geographical and Socio-economical Geographical factors for the diffusion of Christian Community (Compiled by Author)

5. Conclusions

The conclusion that can be reached is that although the diffusion of Christianity commenced in the past period since 1505 when the entire country considered, the intensity of distribution or spreading of Christianity in Sri Lanka is not so considerable.

Further, presently, making persons change their religion by force into Christianity is becoming less important. It can be

determined that the persons who work closely with the belief from generation to generation have become permanent devotees of the religion.

Convenience in access is a geographical factor that directly influenced the diffusion of Christianity, especially in coastal areas. This is a factor unique to the whole World concerning the distribution of Christianity, and we can determine that it has influenced Sri Lanka similarly or equitably.

The spatial diffusion of Christianity is limited presently. Especially in the Puttlam district, which was the case study area, initially converting people into Christians by force was intense. Later, many individuals embraced or became the followers of Christianity because of devout priests; today, the intensity of such influences was decreased. The areas that exist as Christian villages do exist permanently as they were.

Although the emperors carried out their trade activities in those areas initially due to the abundance of resources in the said areas, there is no evidence to prove that these places existed as specific centres of trade in the economy of Sri Lanka later. Therefore, presently the temporal and spatial diffusion patterns of the Christian community are not determined on business.

Puttlam being the only port that belonged to the Kingdom of UpCountry, maybe the primary reason for the significant influences made on Puttlam areas by the emperors initially. That could be determined by the data received from the field inspection carried out. Art was used as a specific medium for the diffusion of Christianity in these areas. It can be determined that the people who lived in these areas would be talented and enriched with the dancing, music, and many other different aesthetic features and skills related to the Kingdom of UpCountry. Therefore can assume that the communities lived in these areas had a more incredible talent to absorb the western aesthetic traditions and the aesthetic components such as Stage Drama (Nadagama and Nurti).

It can determine that the fact of literacy has directly influenced the diffusion of Christianity in those areas. As a community that has not attained high levels in education and the fisheries community that created the majority of these areas were not interested in or did not consider the education commanding, these groups lived as desolated from the society. Therefore, it was essential for them to embrace Christianity, and similarly, it was easy for the emperors to make them follow or become the devotees of Christianity. However, development in the emperors' education system, the people in these areas too were directed to the school education. Therefore, presently it cannot determine or decide that all the devotees of Christianity are in low literacy status. Further, among the individuals who have accessed the higher education majority could be identified among Christian devotees.

Initially, cast, social status, and occupation were the factors that rigidly influenced the people embracing Christianity, i.e., that people have embraced Christianity, expecting social stability, economic benefits, and spiritual freedom. The casts such as Paravara and Karava fisheries communities received great benefits through Christianity at the initial stage, but presently that situation has been changed. Not only the fisheries community but also people in different socio-economic strata represent Christianity.

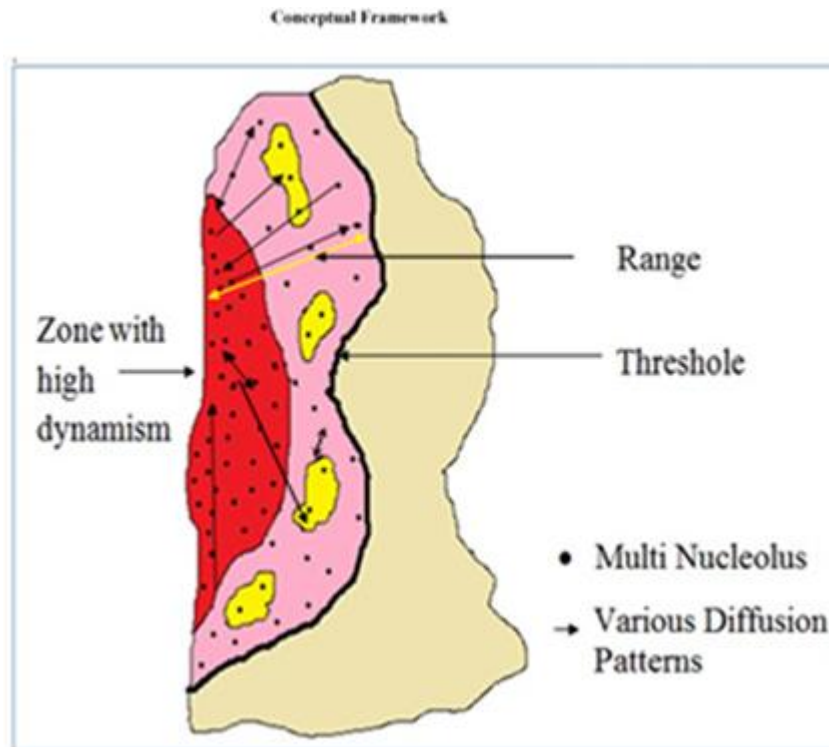
Marriages can be identified as one of the fundamental factors for the new tendency towards Christianity. Mainly it was revealed through the study that the individuals do not like to change their religion, and only in instances where they have to marry a person of Christianity, they change their faith. However, the quantity of this kind of religious conversions is considerably less in numbers.

Anyhow, although initially there were deviations as Buddhists and Christians in these areas, presently a cooperative and cosy environment and relationship among all kinds of religious devotees. The conclusion we can come into is that religion is no further a matter or topic that leads to social disturbances.

6. The Outcome of the Research

The availability of a precise temporal and spatial diffusion concerning the spread or distribution of Christians in the country is the main conclusion that can arrive at the end of this research. When a religion spreads within a particular geographical unit, geographical factors strongly influence. However, devotees' attraction towards a specific religion and determination of the temporal and spatial pattern of diffusion of the faith more and strongly influenced by socio-economic, geographical factors than the physical geographical factors. Similarly, with the elapse of time influence of physical geographical factors becomes zero, and socio-economic, geographical factors contribute to attracting people towards religion and its spatial diffusion. Primarily, the attraction of devotees towards a particular religion does not act as an independent variable but the nature of these patterns of diffusions determined by the variables or the factors such as education, employment, living condition, and the administrative structure of a country.

All these facts can be summarized in a spatial framework. In establishing a particular religion within a geographical unit, at the initial stage, features of expansion diffusion (Kroeber, 1940); are shown. After that, a threshold created, and no religion develops beyond that. Within this range, multi nucleolus development can be seen with contagious, hierarchical, and relocation diffusion patterns (Cliff et al. 1981) classified. Similarly, in certain areas, scattered diffusion patterns, too, can be identified. However, with the elapse of time, a contraction diffusion pattern or a trend of becoming contracted again to the initial areas can be identified. The power of the physical geographical factors that are influenced at the very beginning to become zero and influence socio-economic, geographical factors can be seen further.



7. Suggestions

Several suggestions made through the study done on the temporal and spatial diffusion of Christianity in Sri Lanka. These proposals would be useful in carrying out such tasks further and broadly in a country like Sri Lanka and make contributions towards the sustainable development of the country.

As Christianity is a complex religion with multi sects, it fundamental to carry out such geographical studies representing each sect. Enormously, surveying the diffusion of different fundamentalist Churches and the physical geographical and socio-economic, geographical factors that influenced the said situation will contribute to increasing the realistic nature of the framework developed based on research.

Significantly, the action shall be taken to change the attitudes of the community and convince the community that this process as a gradual action taken place in the world history as well as the diffusion concept and the factors that influence the diffusion pattern to remove the misconceptions on religion currently available in the country.

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ⁱ Smallest governing body which, would be roughly analogous to National, State, Region, Local Government Area.

ⁱⁱ For more details; Pieris, R. (1956); Sinhalese social Organization: The Kandayan Period: Colombo.