

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WATER CRISIS IN SRI LANKA: A CONTEXTUAL STUDY BASED ON THE TRADITIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ON THE CULTURE OF WATER IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract: Being a vital natural resource, water is both the source of life and an essential component within all ecosystems. Human progress and societal evolution are bound with the availability and management of water resources. Sri Lanka, too, has a rich heritage of self-sustained water management practices. The geological attributes of this island ensure its ability to maintain a water-rich environment. However, Sri Lanka is currently facing a substantial water crisis, marked by complex and persistent issues that have arisen over recent decades a crisis that manifests as water scarcity, water pollution, and water privatization. Hence, this research focuses on the contemporary water crisis in Sri Lanka, tracing its origins to preceding decades and its current prominence. A key factor in the present crisis is the lack of intergenerational transmission of traditional knowledge, values, and incongruities within development agendas. Therefore, the present study explores how to develop an educational paradigm that fosters sustainable water practices and nurtures a protective relationship with nature among the young generation. Methodologically, the study adopts Joseph Cardijn's (1887 -1967) "See – Judge – Act" theological research approach, which is finding solutions and proposals according to the contextual phenomena rooted in Christian scripture, and tradition effectively. This study focused on bridging the gap between the prevailing water practices and existing educational paradigms in Sri Lanka. This research proposes the introduction of an optional academic module that could bridge the gap between theory and practical implementation while fostering enduring water stewardship within Sri Lanka. Central to this analysis is the recognition that the core issues that stem from deficiencies in knowledge dissemination and educational system design. Consequently, cultivating sustainable water ethics requires a sustained effort to realign attitudes and values that are deep-rooted in Sri Lanka's water management heritage. The study concludes by making practical recommendations and proposing an optional educational framework to effectively manage and mitigate the ongoing water crisis. Implementing these measures aims to strengthen the nexus between theoretical principles and real-world applications by fostering a harmonious relationship between the populace and their aquatic surroundings.

Keywords: Joseph cardijn; See-judge-act; Water crisis in Sri Lanka; Water culture in Sri Lanka; Water pollution