



An Anthropological Study on the 'Killa' (Defilement) Concept Related to Paddy Farming

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the relationship between the concept of Killa and paddy farming. The main purpose is to study the socio-cultural impact of the practices related to the killa concept among the taboos and practices of paddy cultivation. Specific objectives include identifying the concept of Killa as an important part of rites of passage and human life, studying the socio-cultural value of the concept of Killa, and its present practice and interpretations. The Applied Anthropological study selected fifty farmers from Uhana Divisional Secretariat in Ampara district as primary respondents, through judgmental sampling method. Respondents were of the opinion that apart from birth, puberty, monthly menstruation and death, food is also associated with killi. The most significant entity about Killa was that it was feminine and primarily affected. The farmers said it was a taboo for women to come to the threshing floor, and it was mentioned as an age-old custom. In addition to this, threshing is also prohibited for the male who have been exposed to killa. If a baby is born in the home of a farmer, he is prohibited from threshing for 30 days due to the vadum killa on his crops. The onset of puberty is known by the villagers as Kotahalu Killa and lasts for fourteen days. When a householder or close relative dies, it is forbidden to come to the threshing floor for three months. Therefore, it was realized from the comments of the villagers that the barriers among paddy cultivation are very strong and have remained secure from the past to the present. It may be concluded that farmers who were carrying on paddy farming with divinity believe the concept of killa. According to that, since the past till the present days, the same taboos were followed and the cultivation was carried out with great reverence.

1. Introduction

This anthropological study explores the multifaceted dimensions of the "Killa" concept as it relates to paddy farming, focusing on its cultural significance, social intricacies, economic implications, and environmental sustainability within a specific community or region. The concept of 'Killa' (defilement) can be defined as a concept related to rituals of rite of passage. It can be defined simply as defilement. (Guruge, 2014).

A book on the concept of 'Killa' was first written during the *Matara* and *Kandy* eras. *Nayakkar* and the South Indian influence may have drawn attention to such a theme at the time. It is widely accepted that the first work written by a Sinhalese writer in this regard was the work called 'Kili Dosaya'. A work called 'Kili Malaya' as well describes the concept of 'Killa' and was written during the Kandy era. It is an olas (Dissanayake, 2004). 'Killa' based on the fear and aversion to blood is more associated with the female party, so the male party is recognized as superior in terms of getting killed or being caught by the 'Killa'. The taboos about death are observed in different ways in different societies. By going to a funeral, one can get caught in the trap. It is a standard acceptance that a death in a house is a reason for that house to be in the 'killi' stage for three months. When someone's death occurs, the restrictions on it are often imposed on blood relatives. Here there are restrictions imposed on certain foods and drinks and places not to move. All over the world there are certain rituals that a person who has undergone 'Killa' or who has been caught by 'Killa' must follow to regain purity. According to popular belief in India and Sri Lanka, a person caught in the limelight can attain purity by taking a lime bath (Nandasena, 2015). But one who has suffered from 'Killa' cannot attain purity by bathing like those who are affected by it. This is because of the belief that purity can be achieved only by paying for certain 'Killa' for a limited number of days or months. As an example, the person who is affected by the

'Vadam Kili Dosha' (defilement in birth) can attain purity only three months after the it has occurred (Palliyaguru, 1962). It reflects the deep-seated cultural belief that religious or ritual impurity is not a state of the body but one requiring cleansing by ordained periods of avoidance and ritual obedience.

It should also be taken into consideration how the belief in 'Killa' affects the members and their economic life. Since all human behavior is based on social or economic life, worships and beliefs cannot be considered as not related to them. Since Sri Lanka is an agricultural country, most of the beliefs and practices seem to be related to agriculture. The customs related to paddy farming can also be illustrated here. It is considered a good deed not to go down to the threshing floor for a person suffering from 'Killa' (Palliyaguru, 1962).

The idea associated with 'Killa' (defilement) is popular in Eastern countries. *Killa* is what the Sri Lankans call the impure thing or condition. It is accepted by the people of many Eastern countries that killing demons gather and bring bad results. Villagers believe that to get rid of dangers like illness and disease and to get good luck, they should avoid *kill*, which is a mental occult force. However, it must be said that the concept of *Killa* is very strongly implemented among the Sinhalese villagers. It is mostly associated with women and directly related to women in all the four cases of Birth *Killa*, Puberty (*Kotahalu*) *Killa*, Menstruation *Killa* and Marriage *Killa*. But the death penalty is a common condition for both men and women (Dissanayake, 2004).

The word 'kill' is also used to mean 'pili kill' in village society. This means that it is permissible to use fish such as 'Maguran' (Cat-fish), *Moran*, *Kinduran* etc. for food. Others consider the meat of animals like monkeys and pigs and the meat of peacocks, which are considered to be part of the family, and certain vegetables that are eaten as *kili*. Apart from this, there is another type of *kili*

called 'Sura (Liquor) Killa' and 'Naga (Cobra) Killa' in the village society. *Naga Killa* is that occurs after a person kills a cobra. It is believed that the 'Naga (Cobra) Killa' caused by killing a naga lasts for about three months. *Sura Killa* seems to mean that the clinging to alcohol is considered as a 'killa'.

Likewise, entry into a temple or shrine is not permitted until three months have passed after reaching puberty. It is said that going to temples and shrines during that period is considered to be valid for three months. Otherwise, if newly puberty girl goes to those places, it is said that she will be poisoned. In an agrarian society, defilement in puberty (*Kotahalu killa*) is strictly taken into consideration. Rituals of first menstruation are found in most of Sri Lanka's ethnic groups. The rituals are similar and appear to be variants of a common south Asian ceremony. Much recent writing on south Asia has emphasized such common cultural features as keys to understanding local, particular cases (Winslow, 1980). A person who even goes near a girl who has been separated by a 'Kotahalu killa' or monthly menstruation is forbidden to go to the paddy field on that day (Wijesuriya et al, 1995).

Research titled, 'A Study of the Concept of "Killa" in Sinhalese Folklore and Literature'. was conducted by Guruge (2011). Guruge's study aims to examine the concept and practice of the 'killa' or taint, as it is a major aspect in the folk culture of Sri Lanka. For this purpose, this comparative research project concentrates on the beginning of the 'killa' taint, its chronological evolution, folktales and its practice in traditional and modern society. This research was conducted in the *Thumpane* and *Kundasale* divisional secretariat divisions to find out how the rituals connected with the concept of 'taint' are practiced at present. Data were collected on traditional and modern knowledge through interviews, case studies, and group discussions. From the information gathered, it was clear that there is still strong evidence that the concept of 'killi' is believed in

traditional Sinhala society. Women, in a taint or polluted state, are strictly banned from attending religious and agricultural events, healing rituals and other occult practices. Therefore, women are not allowed to participate in such events. However, it was clear from secondary sources that an environment more tolerant towards women has evolved through the belief system on super-human forces. Folk tales such as *Giri Devi* and *Dala Kumara* have provided Sinhala society with knowledge and experience for developing these kinds of attitudes. Further, as a result, in traditional societies, an individual self-control as well as an informal societal control has been developed.

In 2003, Dissanayake published a research book on '*Killa Saha Kotahaluwa*' (2003) (Defilement and Puberty). *Kotahalu Yagya* is a pacification ritual that is very rarely seen, especially in the up-country areas in Sri Lanka, which is performed in the subject puberty ceremony of the Sri Lankan young girls. Titled '*Killa saha Kotahaluwa*', this book deals with pre-emptive pacification, traditional 'killi' occasions, feelings of youth and associated rituals. Also, it is a very important book that extensively discusses Killa, female and male 'Killa' events, Defilements of birth (*Upath Killa*), Puberty (*Kotahulu Killa*) and Puberty literature.

Kumari Guruge studied 'Spiritual practices and customs of agriculture and perceptions on concept of 'Kilia' (defilement) in folk and contemporary Sinhalese society' in 2018. This study aims to examine the concept based on spiritual practice and custom of agriculture, as it is one of the major aspects in the folk culture of Sri Lanka. For this purpose, this comparative research concentrates on the beginning of the 'killa' taint, its chronological evolution, folk-tales and its practice in agriculture. The main events of taints such as birth, attainment (puberty), menstruation and death have been abandoned and thus, villagers have sustained their agricultural harvest. Therefore, beliefs on taints in agriculture customs were

environment friendly and preserved the environment. On the other hand, traditional farmers believed that with rejection of such customs by the present generation has adversely affected the environment. There is, nevertheless, a feeling among the traditional farmers that this kind of disregard to customs and traditions has been the cause of diseases and failure to obtain good harvest. Consequently, new generation refrains from taint, customarily believed by traditionalists, and use harmful chemicals such as weedicides and pesticides for diseases which adversely impact on environmental pollution and biodiversity in rural agricultural sector (Guruge, 2018).

K.P.G.C. Kumari Guruge conducted, 'Women and concept of *'kili'* (defilement) in Sinhalese society' in 2005. It stated that the views of contemporary society have rejected the ancient rituals and beliefs based on the idea of birth taint, etc., which has resulted in disputes within the social order. Similarly, belief in taints in agriculture too are being abandoned. There is, nevertheless, a feeling among the villagers that this kind of disregard for customs and traditions has been the cause of diseases and failure in crops. Further, as a result of this, in the traditional society, an individual self-control as well as an informal societal control has been developed. Due to development in education and advancement in technology, the concept of [*kili*] defilement is gradually disappearing in modern society (Guruge, 2018). An article on '*Killi*' in Ceylon Folklore was written by Nandasena Ratnapala in 1969. As mentioned in it, the concept of '*Killa*' can be called as a superstition existing in the Sinhalese folklore (Ratnapala, 1969).

In 2015, S. Dammary conducted a study titled "First Blood: A Cultural Study of Menarche." First Blood examines the ways in which women from various countries – India, Sri Lanka, England, the Philippines, Greece, Italy, Uganda, Indonesia, Fiji, Chile, Ukraine, Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong – recall this moment of menarche and what it meant to

them, their families, and their societies. What is the mystique of women's first blood? Blood is blood – or is it? What is the history of menstruation, and does this history belong to women? Who created the meanings associated with menarche, and why? Are there marked cultural differences? Have meanings changed over time? First Blood answers these questions and investigates beliefs and traditions surrounding menarche, including the concepts of uncleanness, ceremony, secrecy, and lore still existing in many parts of the world. The influence of the sanitary hygiene industry is also explored, as is the role of the pharmaceutical industry in making menstruation optional (Dammary, 2015).

Martine Van Woerkens' article, "Dialogues on First Menstrual Periods: Mother-Daughter Communication," published in the Economic and Political Weekly in 1990, delves into the complex and often sensitive topic of communication between mothers and daughters regarding the onset of their first menstrual periods. This article, available via JSTOR, sheds light on the dynamics of this crucial mother-daughter dialogue and offers insights into the ways in which societies address and navigate this fundamental aspect of female development. By examining the communication patterns and narratives surrounding menstruation, Van Woerkens provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the sociocultural aspects of female adolescence and the role of intergenerational communication in shaping perceptions and experiences related to menstruation (Martine, 1990).

The realm of scholarly inquiry into the phenomenon of '*Killa*', both within the Sri Lankan context and on a global scale, has witnessed a multitude of studies, yet a conspicuous void remains within the domain of anthropological research, particularly concerning its intricate relationship with agriculture. While extensive scholarship has indeed probed various facets of '*Killa*', the nexus between this concept and the agrarian

landscape of Sri Lanka has remained markedly uncharted.

The lacuna in anthropological investigations pertaining to the convergence of '*Killa*' with agricultural practices within the Sri Lankan milieu has constituted a critical research gap that this study endeavors to address. By embarking upon anthropological exploration that scrutinizes the interplay between *Killa* and agriculture, this research aspires to contribute substantively to the corpus of knowledge surrounding Sri Lanka's cultural heritage, while simultaneously forging a bridge to the broader global discourse on the significance and manifestations of '*Killa*', thus enhancing our understanding of this intricate and multifaceted phenomenon.

The core objective of this research was to delve into the intricate socio-cultural dimensions surrounding the '*Killa*' concept within the broader context of taboos and practices in paddy cultivation. In pursuit of this goal, the study set out specific objectives, the first being to comprehensively elucidate the role of '*Killa*' as an integral component of the rites of passage and human life in the community under scrutiny. Furthermore, the research aimed to delve deeply into the socio-cultural significance embedded within the '*Killa*' concept, shedding light on how it shapes the collective identity and traditions of the community. Additionally, the study sought to analyze and document the contemporary usage and application of '*Killa*,' taking into account its evolving role and relevance in the present-day agricultural practices of the community. In essence, this research embarked on a multidimensional exploration to unravel the multifaceted impact and enduring relevance of the '*Killa*' concept, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of its socio-cultural significance in the studied community.

2. Materials and Methods

An Applied Anthropological study was conducted in Sri Lanka, focusing on the local

agrarian community. Primary data for the research were collected from farmers. The data collected from this community in this study focused on the crops cultivated in Sri Lanka.

This study employed a qualitative ethnographic method derived from interpretive anthropology with the aim of understanding the cultural meaning and symbolic significance which members of the community attribute to the construct '*Killa*' within their agriculture practices. The study involved a detailed analysis of how farmers conceptualize and define these constructions within their culture. Methodologically, the study employed an ethnographic method in order to ask questions regarding how long established '*Killa*' traditions are embedded into farming society.

The sample was selected according to the Agriculture and Environmental Statistics Division, Department of Census and Statistics in Sri Lanka. To systematically address the research objectives, the researcher strategically selected the Ampara district, located in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. This was due to the district's high population of farmers, in keeping with the study's emphasis on farming practices and their cultural significance.

To ensure a representative sample, a dual sampling approach was employed. First, through a random sampling method, the Uhana divisional secretariat within Ampara district was selected due to its diversity in agricultural activities. Subsequently, a judgmental sampling method was used to select 50 farming households identified as key informants for the study. The research used a mix of data collection methods to generate in-depth information and achieve its objectives. The methods included systematic observation, structured interviewing, participatory observation with direct participation of the subject, and comprehensive case studies. Such a varied

approach allowed for complete understanding of the research subject.

However, it is important to note that certain aspects of the data, rooted in their qualitative nature, could not be fully analyzed using traditional statistical methods. In such cases, qualitative analysis techniques were employed, including the use of tools such as sketches, photographs, and models. These methods offered invaluable insights into the nuanced dimensions of the research, adding depth and context to the quantitative findings

and enabling a more holistic understanding of the complex phenomena under investigation.

The research employed a mixed-methods research approach, with qualitative and quantitative data being merged with the assistance of software such as Microsoft Office and IBM SPSS Statistics. The qualitative information was dissected using thematic analysis, identifying persistent themes in the nature of perceptions of purity, practices of defilement, beliefs, and cultural logic in agricultural activities.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample of the study

Province	District	Selected Divisional Secretariat	Selected <i>Grama Niladari</i> Division	Sample
Eastern Province	<i>Ampara</i>	<i>Uhana</i>	<i>Udayagiriya</i>	25
			<i>Galahitiyagoda</i>	25
Total Sample Size				50

3. Results and Discussion

In the pursuit of analyzing the anthropological significance of the '*Killa*' concept within the framework of agricultural rituals and customs, the research commenced by probing the perspectives of farmers concerning the elusive concept of '*Killa*.' When queried about their understanding of '*Killa*,' the farmers' responses were notably diverse and multifaceted. Their initial elucidations revealed a rich tapestry of interpretations, encompassing both the practical and symbolic dimensions of '*Killa*' within their agricultural milieu. This initial exploration laid the foundation for a comprehensive investigation into the nuanced role that '*Killa*' plays in the intricate web of agricultural practices, unveiling the multifarious ways in which it is perceived, valued, and integrated into their cultural and agrarian contexts.

Many thought that '*Killa*' meant 'defilement' or 'pollution'. Accordingly, the farmers are of

the opinion that '*Killa*' is an incident that has to be faced in normal life, so it is closely connected with agriculture. They further opined that it is forbidden for a person who has been '*killi*' in any way to be involved in agricultural activities. They were of the opinion that since the first harvest is offered to the Buddha and the Gods, they will perform these sacrifices with great respect and take the rest of the harvest for their own consumption. Thus, it appears that the farmers are very keen to do agriculture with respect and purity and they do not try to pollute it in any way. Secondly, the question was addressed to the respondents as to what are the challenges and opportunities they have to face in their normal life. They were also asked what occasions are considered important in relation to '*Killa*'. All the respondents were of the general opinion that birth, puberty, marriage and death during normal life are ritualistic occasions and women's monthly periods are also ritualistic occasions. The percentages of these comments are as follows.

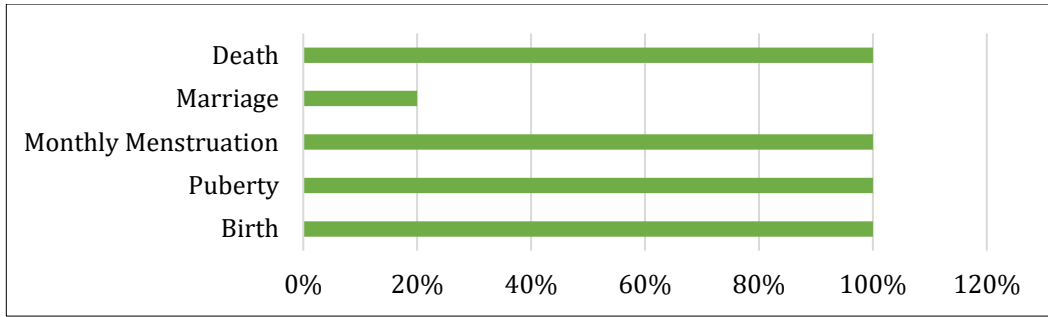


Figure 01. The 'Killa' associated specific life events

The findings of the study indicate a unanimous recognition among all respondents of the pivotal significance of specific life events, namely, birth, puberty, monthly menstruation, and death. These milestones are universally acknowledged as crucial moments in the community's socio-cultural fabric. Intriguingly, a noteworthy subset of respondents, comprising twenty percent of the sample, also identified marriage as a potentially risky occasion. This subgroup elaborated that the peril lies in the period immediately following marriage, wherein cohabitation between the newlyweds is deemed perilous. During this delicate post-wedding phase, a prevailing belief dictates that the newly married man should refrain from engaging in agricultural activities for several days. This unique insight highlights the complexity and nuance of local perceptions and practices related to marriage, underscoring the multifaceted ways in which cultural beliefs can influence daily life and livelihoods within the community.

Consonant with the research inquiry, the respondents underwent an examination concerning the efficacy of the 'killa' concept as it manifests within their community. Notably, insights derived from the elderly farming demographic illuminated a salient viewpoint: although 'killa' predominantly pertains to women in the preponderance of instances, it was emphatically contended that men are not immune to its influence. In alignment with the perspectives articulated

by respondents participating in the research, the intensity of 'killa' was methodically expounded upon and systematized into a specific hierarchy, thereby elucidating the stratification of its impact within the community. Furthermore, agricultural practitioners underscored the potency of 'killa' resulting from the consumption of various foodstuffs, accentuating the paramount significance of this dimension in configuring their agricultural methodologies and dietary preferences. This discernment contributes substantively to the contextual comprehension of the intricate dynamics of 'killa' and its overarching ramifications concerning both gender roles and gastronomic traditions within the subject community.

01. Defilement in puberty (*Kotahalu killa*)
02. Defilement in death
03. Defilement in birth (*Vadum killa*)
04. Defilement from various foods

According to the opinion of the respondents of the research sample, among these types of 'kili', the most severe one is the Defilement in puberty or '*Kotahalu killa*', which is caused by a woman's first menstruation. According to the respondents, this 'killa' will last for three months. It is the village belief that anyone who comes to this defiled woman will be defiled. But the farmers were of the opinion that the monthly menstruation that takes place after the '*Kotahalu killa*' will last only for seven days. At this time, when a girl in the

household reaches puberty, the men of the household are not involved in agricultural activities for three months, according to the ancient villagers. But nowadays it is known that there is a tendency for those men to join the agricultural activities after a few weeks. But it is forbidden for men to go down to the threshing floor until three months have passed. However, since the woman actively contributes to the activities of this field, in such a case, neither the girl nor the other women in her household go down to the field until more than three months. The elderly farmers also said that women are never connected to the threshing floor because of this '*killi*'. According to that, it appears that among the types of '*killi*', the villagers believe that the monthly menstruation, as well as the '*Kotahalu killa*', are very powerful taboo for agricultural activities and the restrictions associated with it are still active even today.

The next most important '*killa*' in terms of strength is the death. After the death of a person, this '*killa*' also lasts for three months on his blood relatives. Besides, everyone who comes to the funeral gets it. But the respondents are of the opinion that the blood relatives will be directly caught. The villagers said that people who are not blood relatives can easily escape from this and they can escape from this situation by washing their heads with lime and bathing and wearing new clothes. Here, in the case of the death of a blood relative, those people do not contribute to agricultural activities for three months. The villagers believe that the fort will remain here for three months.

'*Vedum killa*' is the next most serious case. When a new child is born in a house, the child's mother and father as well as other members of the house are undergoing the '*Vedum killa*'. Hence it is customary for the all members of that family not to go to the field or the threshing floor until three months have passed. Correspondingly, the respondents are of the opinion that a woman does not go to the field even when she is pregnant, and thus eating different types of foods also have '*killi*'.

Respondents further mentioned that pork, green bananas, some river fishes are considered as '*killi*' foods. At present, consuming these foods and going to the field and threshing floor is a taboo. However, many farmers do not care much about this. Nine elderly farmers said that they still do not participate in agricultural activities on the day of eating this food or the day after that, and it is a taboo.

In this way, the strength of the '*killa*' caused by rite of passage stages and other situations encountered in normal life and the taboos associated with agriculture can be described as above.

It is also important to present here the opinion held by the respondents regarding the escape of a person directly caught in the '*killa*' or by going to a place where the '*killa*' exists or by associating with such a person. They are of the opinion that if they come to the threshing floor from a house of a new born baby (*vadum geya*), a home where the girl's first menstruation (*kotahalu geya*) or a funeral, they should first wash their heads and come there. Accordingly, the farmers thought that a person who was caught in the lime bath would be able to get clean.

The ethnographic data demonstrate that while public opinion about '*killa*' is most frequently focused on women, male farmers are similarly subject to the same constraints of pollution, demolishing overly simplistic gendered accounts of ideas on pollution. Male cultivators who are undergoing '*vadum killa*' (30-day birth defilement), '*Kotahalu killa*' (14-day puberty ceremony defilement), or death pollution (avoidance of use of threshing floor for three months) also observe the same agricultural taboos as their female counterparts.

The finding substantiates Douglas's (1966) prediction that pollution concepts function as boundary-maintaining devices cutting across gender, serving as inclusive social regulative systems rather.

However, gendered application of such bans suggests deeper structural disparities in agricultural labor division. Women's exclusion from threshing floors during menstruation, pregnancy, or ritual impurity measures what Ortner (1974) called the universal patriarchal equation of women with nature and pollution. The identification of the threshing floor as sacred space "set aside for Buddha and God" transforms women's biological processes into religious threats to agricultural production, effectively justifying their systematic exclusion from economically productive agriculture. Such consecration of men's spheres demonstrates how concepts of pollution function as what Bourdieu (1977) referred to as "symbolic violence," rendering gendered hierarchies natural through religious discourse.

The generation gap in avoidances of '*Killa*' is a part of broader processes of cultural change in the context of modernization. Such farmers' assertions that ancient '*Killa*' avoidance-maintained crops on farms, while contemporary indifference yields disease and poor harvests, are what Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) called "invented tradition" – the retrospective sanctification of endangered practice. The association made between ritual disregard and expanded pesticide application indicates that '*Killa*' ideas might be indigenous versions of what political ecologists refer to as "traditional ecological knowledge" (Berkes, 2012), with taboos against pollution possibly being environmental management systems.

New farmers' pragmatic tactics – using lime purification rituals to circumvent lengthy spans of pollution on economic grounds – illustrate Giddens's (1984) "structuration," where agents transform cultural structures in the process of reproducing them. This adaptive flexibility challenges anthropological notions of the impenetrability of systems of pollution, suggesting that such ideals are highly resilient through deliberate reinterpretation rather than wholesale abandonment, in line

with broader patterns of cultural stability and transformation among postcolonial farming populations.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The anthropological study on the '*Killa*' (Defilement) concept related to paddy farming in the Uhana Divisional Secretariat of Ampara District, Sri Lanka, represents a deep dive into the rich tapestry of this rural community's life. Through fieldwork, interviews, and participant observation, the study has revealed significant insights into the intricate relationship between culture, agriculture, and social dynamics in this region. In conclusion, the research has uncovered a series of key findings and implications that enhance our understanding of this particular community. The '*Killa*' concept serves as a testament to the enduring strength of cultural traditions in the face of modernization and globalization. It reveals how deeply rooted beliefs and practices can persist over generations, acting as a cultural anchor that shapes the daily lives and decision-making processes of the community.

The '*Killa*' concept embodies a unique form of agricultural wisdom. Through rituals, restrictions, and customary practices, it demonstrates how local knowledge has evolved to address the challenges and uncertainties inherent in paddy farming. This knowledge is not only practical but also deeply spiritual, reflecting a holistic understanding of the environment. The rituals and ceremonies associated with the '*Killa*' concept play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion within the community. They provide occasions for communal gatherings, reinforcing bonds among villagers and creating a shared sense of identity. In this way, '*Killa*' rituals are not just about farming but also about the maintenance of social harmony. While the '*Killa*' concept has persisted for generations, it is not immune to change. The study has illuminated the tensions and challenges that arise when traditional beliefs confront modernization

and external influences. This tension underscores the need for a delicate balance between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to evolving circumstances.

The anthropological study on the '*Killa*' (Defilement) concept related to paddy farming in the Uhana Divisional Secretariat of Ampara District, Sri Lanka, has shed light on several significant aspects of the local culture, agriculture, and social dynamics. In conclusion, the research has revealed the following key findings and implications.

- Cultural Significance
- Agricultural Practices
- Social Cohesion
- Environmental Awareness
- Resilience
- Challenges and Change
- Policy Implications

The '*Killa*' concept is deeply rooted in local culture and plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs, rituals, and practices of farming communities in Uhana. These rituals and ceremonies are the heartbeat of the community's cultural calendar, marking significant agricultural milestones like planting and harvesting. They reinforce the bonds and shared identity of the community as custodians of their unique cultural heritage. '*Killa*' is not just a superstitious belief but also has practical implications for agricultural practices. Farmers follow specific rituals and restrictions to mitigate perceived defilement, safeguard their crops, and ensure a bountiful harvest.

These practices are rooted in centuries of experiential wisdom and reflect an intimate understanding of the local ecosystem, soil health, and the delicate balance required for successful harvests.

The '*Killa*' concept is a powerful tool for social cohesion and environmental awareness within the agrarian community. It involves communal rituals and practices that strengthen bonds among villagers, creating a

sense of unity and identity. These practices, such as planting ceremonies and harvest celebrations, not only nourish crops but also nurture the social fabric of the community, reinforcing the idea that they are not just individuals tending to their fields but an interconnected network working together for the common good.

The '*Killa*' concept also highlights the community's commitment to sustainable farming practices, with rituals often incorporating eco-conscious elements like tree planting. This reflects a deep-seated understanding of the delicate balance between human activity and the broader ecosystem, emphasizing the need for responsible stewardship of land and resources.

Understanding the '*Killa*' concept provides insights into the resilience of farming communities in Uhana, showcasing their ability to adapt and innovate within the constraints of their cultural and agricultural beliefs. By upholding their cherished traditions, they demonstrate an adaptive spirit and the ability to navigate the complex interplay between tradition and modernity while continuing to thrive in an ever-evolving world.

The '*Killa*' concept, deeply rooted in indigenous practices, is being challenged by globalization and modernization, raising questions about how these communities will adapt while preserving their cultural heritage.

The research has significant policy implications for sustainable agriculture and cultural preservation, emphasizing the need for local communities to be involved in agricultural and environmental policies. This holistic approach respects the cultural heritage of these communities while aligning with sustainable practices, ensuring a balance that safeguards their traditions and livelihoods while advancing broader environmental and agricultural objectives.

This anthropological study on the 'Killa' concept related to paddy farming in the Uthana divisional secretariat has provided valuable insights into the intricate relationship between culture, agriculture, and community in the region. It highlights the significance of understanding and respecting local traditions while addressing the challenges of modernization and environmental sustainability. Further research and collaboration with local communities are essential to navigate these complexities and foster holistic development in the area.

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