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## A Sociological Analysis of the Walawwa as a Symbol of Sri Lankan Culture

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This study explores the sociological significance of the Walawwa (ancestral manor) as a symbol of Sri Lankan culture, social hierarchy, and historical identity. In the Sri Lankan context, the Walawwa represents more than an architectural achievement; it serves as a physical manifestation of power, prestige, and the traditions of the landowning elite. Historically associated with the Radala families of the Kandyan Kingdom, these structures embody the intersection of caste, class, and colonial influence. Employing a qualitative research design, this study uses purposive sampling to gather primary data through semi-structured interviews with family members and local residents, supplemented by site visits and thematic analysis of secondary historical records. The research focuses on the Keppetipola Walawwa in the Matale District, currently home to the seventh generation of the Monaravila Keppetipola lineage a family synonymous with the 1818 Uva Rebellion and national heroism. The findings reveal that the Walawwa symbolizes Sri Lankan culture through three primary dimensions: social structure, architectural synthesis, and symbolic memory. Sociologically, the Walawwa preserves remnants of the Kandyan caste system, influencing contemporary social relations, marriage alliances, and community perceptions of nobility. Architecturally, the structure demonstrates a unique synthesis of ancient Kandyan design characterized by features such as kimbul-hiwan (crocodile-mouth) roofing and caste-based spatial arrangements and colonial influences, including arched verandas and iron-framed windows. Furthermore, family flags and ancestral artifacts serve as powerful symbols of national pride and collective memory. The study concludes that the Keppetipola Walawwa is a living monument of elite Kandyan society. While the state's role in conservation remains limited, the family's preservation of these traditions ensures the continuity of a distinct cultural heritage. Ultimately, the Walawwa functions as a vital sociological lens through which the evolution of Sri Lankan authority, identity, and social stratification can be understood.

**Keywords:** Keppetipola Walawwa, Kandyan Kingdom, Radala, Social Stratification, Cultural Heritage