Vivekananda Journal of Research
An official Journal of **Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies-TC**, Delhi, India

RESEARCH ARTICLE
Published on 28th January, 2026
www.vjr-vips.com

Sacred Spaces, Silenced Voices: Buddhist Nationalism and Tamil Spatial Rights in Sri Lanka's Tea Plantations

H.A.S.U. Geethanjalee

Department of Political Science, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

When a gleaming modern Buddhist temple rose on the misty hills of '*Hanthana*' Tea Plantation in 2017, it promised spiritual renewal and economic prosperity through religious tourism. For the Tamil families who had lived and worked on these lands for generations, however, the temple's construction marked the beginning of unprecedented exclusion from their own spaces. The research analyses how Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism reshapes plantation space, undermining the spatial, cultural and economic rights of Tamil plantation workers. The study was conducted at Hanthana Uduwelawatta Tea Plantation, Kandy District in 2025. Drawing on a qualitative methods design, the study combines semi-structured interviews, participant observation, spatial mapping and document analysis conducted during fieldwork. The collected data were analyzed through thematic analysis, to uncover recurring themes related to informal economic practices, class transformation, and spatial mobility. Interpretation focused on linking everyday livelihood practices to broader structures of urban political economy, revealing how economic advancement occurs through informal but organized strategies. Results show that residents engage in quiet capitalist mechanisms through three interconnected processes: (1) spatial entrepreneurialism, leveraging location advantages near commercial nodes; (2) social and cultural capital mobilization, enhancing class positioning through education and networks; and (3) symbolic capital manipulation, using visible social markers to assert respectability and upward mobility within marginalized spaces. The conclusion argues that Bourdieu's capital theory by revealing how marginalized urban residents convert spatial, cultural, and social resources into sustained economic advancement. The findings emphasize that informal settlements such as 'Hanthana' are economically productive and socially transformative spaces deserving institutional recognition, infrastructural investment, and inclusive urban policy. The study contributes to political geography and postcolonial studies by theorizing 'spatial hegemony': the deployment of religious symbolism to legitimize exclusionary spatial practices.

ARTICLE INFO

DOI:
10.61081/vjr/15v2i105

Correspondence
H.A.S.U. Geethanjalee
sgeethanjalee@arts.pdn.ac.lk

Keywords
Buddhist Nationalism, Economic Exclusion, Hegemonic Control, Plantation Tamils, Spatial Right

How to cite:
Geethanjalee, HASU (2025). Sacred Spaces, Silenced Voices: Buddhist Nationalism and Tamil Spatial Rights in Sri Lanka's Tea Plantations. Vivekananda Journal of Research, 15(2), 121–136

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's tea plantation sector represents a unique spatial context where colonial-era hierarchies persist through contemporary forms of cultural and religious hegemony. The 453 plantations across the country house approximately one million Tamil workers descended from South Indian migrants brought by British colonizers in the 19th century (Bass, 2013; Jegathesan, 2019). Despite gaining citizenship rights in the 1980s, plantation Tamils remain among Sri Lanka's most marginalized populations, living in 'line houses' that embody contested terrains of spatial rights and dignity (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017).

This study focuses on 'Hanthana Uduwelawatta' Tea Plantation in Kandy District (Central Province), where the recent construction of 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' modern Buddhist temple has created unprecedented dynamics of spatial exclusion and economic marginalization. Constructed between 2017 and 2022 on former plantation land once home to 'Beheth Nelli' (Indian gooseberry) plants, the temple represents a contemporary manifestation of what scholars have identified as the territorial agenda of Sinhala nationalism in postwar Sri Lanka (Venugopal, 2018). The main objective is to critically analyze the impact of modern Buddhist religious symbols establishments on Tamil plantation workers' spatial rights, examining how religious hegemony operates as a mechanism of contemporary spatial colonialism.

The research addresses a critical gap in plantation studies by examining how religious institutions function as mechanisms of spatial control, moving beyond traditional focuses on housing conditions or labor relations to analyze the intersection of Buddhist nationalism and spatial rights. Drawing on Lefebvre's concept of 'right to the city', postcolonial geography (Jazeel and Venugopal) and Gramsci's hegemony theory, the study investigates how cultural symbolism legitimizes exclusionary spatial practices in rural spaces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The intersection of religious nationalism, spatial control, and ethnic marginalization in postcolonial societies represents a critical area of scholarly inquiry that demands renewed attention. This literature review examines three interconnected bodies of scholarship: studies on plantation Tamil communities in Sri Lanka, theoretical frameworks addressing spatial rights and urban geography, and research on Buddhist nationalism and its territorial manifestations. Through this synthesis, a significant research gap emerges regarding how religious institutions function as instruments of spatial hegemony in rural plantation contexts.

Plantation Tamil Communities: Historical Marginalization and Contemporary Struggles

Literature on Sri Lanka's plantation Tamil population has extensively documented the community's historical marginalization and ongoing struggles for recognition. Bass (2013) provides foundational work on everyday ethnicity among up-country Tamils, demonstrating how identity formation occurs within contexts of sustained economic and social exclusion. His ethnographic approach reveals the quotidian mechanisms through which marginalization is reproduced across generations, though his analysis remains focused on identity politics rather than spatial dimensions of control.

Jegathesan (2019) advances understanding through examining gendered dimensions of plantation labor, particularly how Tamil women navigate postwar economic restructuring. Her work illuminates the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class within plantation spaces, yet the spatial itself remains background rather than analytical foreground. The physical environment of plantations appears as setting rather than as actively produced space implicated in power relations.

The housing conditions of plantation workers have received sustained attention from policy-oriented research. The Centre for Policy Alternatives (2017) documented the struggle for addresses and land ownership among estate sector residents, revealing how legal precariousness maintains vulnerability. Their work emphasizes administrative barriers to land rights but does not theorize how spatial control operates beyond property documentation. Similarly, Gunetilleke, Kuruppu and Goonasekera (2008) analyzed tensions within tea and rubber

plantations, focusing primarily on labor relations and economic reforms rather than spatial politics.

This body of literature establishes plantation Tamils as among Sri Lanka's most marginalized populations, yet predominantly frames their challenges through lenses of labor rights, citizenship status, and housing adequacy. What remains underexplored is how spatial control itself operates as a mechanism of ongoing marginalization, particularly through cultural and religious institutions that transform the physical and social geography of plantation communities.

Spatial Rights, Urban Geography, and the Right to the City

Theoretical frameworks addressing spatial justice provide essential conceptual tools for analyzing plantation dynamics. Lefebvre's formulation of the right to the city (1991, 1996) has generated extensive scholarly engagement, though predominantly focused on urban contexts. His concept encompasses both the right to appropriate urban space and the right to participate in its production, challenging capitalist spatial organization that prioritizes exchange value over use value.

Harvey (2001, 2008) extends Lefebvre's framework by connecting spatial rights to broader political-economic structures under capitalism. His analysis of 'accumulation by dispossession' illuminates how spatial transformation serves capital accumulation, displacing existing communities while concentrating benefits among elites. Harvey's work on neoliberal urbanism provides analytical purchase for understanding contemporary spatial restructuring, though his focus remains metropolitan rather than rural or plantation contexts.

Purcell (2002) offers critical excavation of Lefebvre's right to the city, emphasizing its radical democratic potential beyond liberal inclusion frameworks. He argues that genuine spatial rights require fundamental transformation of property relations and decision-making structures, not merely improved participation within existing systems. This theoretical elaboration proves valuable for analyzing plantation contexts where formal inclusion mechanisms may obscure continued marginalization.

Postcolonial geography scholarship adds crucial dimensions by examining how colonial spatial hierarchies persist through ostensibly postcolonial arrangements. Jazeel (2013) analyzes sacred modernity in Sri Lankan nationalism, demonstrating how environmental and spatial imaginations construct national belonging while excluding minority communities. His work reveals continuities between colonial and postcolonial spatial ordering, though focused primarily on environmental politics rather than built religious infrastructure.

Krishna (1999) examines postcolonial insecurities shaping Sri Lankan statehood, arguing that territorial anxieties drive exclusionary nationalism. His analysis connects spatial control to identity politics and state formation, providing framework for understanding why certain spaces become sites of nationalist assertion. However, his work operates at macro-political scale rather than examining everyday experiences of spatial control.

While this theoretical literature offers powerful analytical frameworks, application to rural plantation contexts remains limited. Urban geography scholarship assumes metropolitan settings with particular spatial characteristics and power dynamics. The question of how spatial rights frameworks translate to plantation environments where colonial spatial organization persists through corporate control and where religious institutions increasingly assert territorial authority requires further theoretical development.

Buddhist Nationalism and Spatial Control in Sri Lanka

Literature on Sinhala Buddhist nationalism has documented its historical development and contemporary manifestations, though spatial dimensions receive less systematic attention. Venugopal (2018) provides a comprehensive analysis of how nationalism intersects with development and ethnic conflict, demonstrating how Buddhist majoritarianism shapes policy and practice across sectors. His work illuminates institutional mechanisms through which Buddhist nationalist ideology operates, yet spatial control appears as a consequence rather than a constitutive mechanism of nationalist hegemony. Venugopal argues that postwar Sri Lankan development

initiatives frequently serve as vehicles for ethnic territorial consolidation, particularly in regions with significant Tamil populations, wherein ostensibly neutral economic modernization projects advance Sinhala Buddhist spatial agendas while marginalizing minority communities.

The concept of spatial colonialism in postcolonial contexts has gained theoretical traction, particularly regarding how dominant groups assert territorial control through cultural institutions. However, application to religious institutions in rural settings remains underdeveloped. Existing research on Buddhist temple expansion focuses primarily on urban areas or regions with contested ethnic demographics, leaving plantation contexts analytically marginal. Spencer (1990) documented how Buddhist religious institutions in rural Sinhala villages function as sites of cultural reproduction and political mobilization, yet his analysis does not examine how temples operate in ethnically mixed or minority-dominated spaces where they serve territorial assertion functions beyond community religious service.

Abeysekara (2002) examines how Sri Lankan Buddhism has been mobilized as political force asserting majoritarian dominance rather than operating as privatized spiritual practice separate from state power. He demonstrates that the rhetoric of Buddhism under threat has historically justified aggressive spatial and political assertion by Sinhala nationalist movements, constructing minority religious and cultural practices as existential dangers requiring state intervention. This politicization of Buddhism creates conditions wherein temple construction becomes not merely religious development but ethnic territorial marking, establishing visible Buddhist presence in minority spaces as assertion of majoritarian dominance.

Ambalavanar (1998) provides historical analysis of how colonial spatial organization in plantation districts created ethnically segregated landscapes, with Tamil workers confined to estate boundaries while surrounding areas remained Sinhala-dominated. She argues that postcolonial spatial politics in plantation regions involve ongoing contestation over these colonial boundaries, with Sinhala nationalist movements seeking to penetrate and reclaim plantation spaces through development projects, infrastructure expansion, and religious construction.

Gunawardana (1990) examines the historical construction of Sinhala Buddhist identity through spatial narratives connecting contemporary Sinhala populations to ancient Buddhist kingdoms and archaeological sites. He demonstrates that Sinhala nationalist historiography imagines the island's geography as inherently Buddhist, interpreting archaeological evidence selectively to construct narratives of unbroken Buddhist territorial control despite historical evidence of diverse religious and ethnic presence. Wickramasinghe (2006) analyzes how development discourse in postcolonial Sri Lanka has been mobilized to advance ethnic nationalist agendas under technocratic language of modernization and poverty alleviation. She demonstrates that infrastructure projects, tourism development, and religious construction in minority regions frequently operate as mechanisms of spatial control, embedding state presence and dominant group economic activity in areas previously characterized by relative minority autonomy.

Economic Exclusion and Ethnic Closure

Literature on ethnic economic segregation in Sri Lanka illuminates the mechanisms through which economic opportunities become ethnically monopolized in contexts of communal tension and nationalist assertion. Korf and Silva (2003) analyze how ethnic networks and patronage systems create barriers to economic participation for minority communities, demonstrating that formal equality masks informal mechanisms ensuring dominant group capture of emerging economic sectors. Their work on postwar economic reconstruction reveals patterns wherein Sinhala entrepreneurs receive preferential access to state contracts, development funding, and business opportunities through ethnic patronage networks operating through political parties, bureaucratic connections, and religious institutions.

Hettige (2000) examines class formation and economic mobility within plantation Tamil communities, documenting how structural barriers

limit Tamil workers' capacity to transition from plantation labor into alternative livelihoods despite educational advancement and skill acquisition. He demonstrates that ethnic discrimination in hiring, entrepreneurship restrictions, and lack of access to capital and markets trap plantation Tamils in economic subordination across generations. Hettige argues that this economic confinement serves political functions beyond material exploitation, ensuring Tamil communities remain spatially and economically dependent on plantation structures that facilitate control and surveillance while preventing the accumulation of resources that might enable political mobilization or autonomous community development.

Thiranagama (2011) analyzes how ethnic violence and intimidation function as mechanisms enforcing economic boundaries, preventing minority entrepreneurship in sectors where dominant groups seek monopoly control. Her research on postwar Jaffna demonstrates patterns wherein Tamil business owners face threats, property destruction, and violence when attempting to operate in sectors dominated by Sinhala or state-connected entrepreneurs. This violence operates alongside formal restrictions and bureaucratic barriers to create comprehensive ethnic economic closure, wherein minority communities internalize boundaries and self-censor entrepreneurial ambitions to avoid provoking retaliation.

Perera (2009) examines religious tourism development in Sri Lanka, documenting how Buddhist pilgrimage sites generate substantial economic activity captured predominantly by Sinhala entrepreneurs through ethnic patronage networks and institutional support from religious authorities. He demonstrates that temple administrations actively facilitate Sinhala business development through providing land access, endorsing specific businesses to pilgrims, and mediating disputes favoring co-ethnic entrepreneurs. Perera argues that religious tourism thus functions as mechanism of ethnic economic redistribution, transferring wealth from diverse pilgrims to Sinhala Buddhist communities while excluding minorities from economic participation despite their spatial proximity to pilgrimage sites.

Seoighe (2017) analyzes how development projects in postwar Sri Lanka operate as mechanisms of structural violence against Tamil communities, wherein economic initiatives framed as reconstruction and modernization systematically displace Tamil populations while transferring economic benefits to Sinhala settlers and entrepreneurs. Ruwanpura (2006) examines gender dimensions of economic exclusion in plantation communities, documenting how Tamil women face intersecting disadvantages through ethnic discrimination, gender-based wage gaps, and spatial restrictions limiting economic mobility. This intersectional analysis reveals that economic exclusion operates through multiple reinforcing axes of marginalization, ensuring most vulnerable community members face comprehensive disadvantage, limiting individual and collective capacity for economic advancement or political mobilization.

These literatures collectively demonstrate that ethnic economic closure in Sri Lanka operates through sophisticated mechanisms combining formal restrictions, informal violence, institutional discrimination, and ethnic patronage networks that systematically channel economic opportunities to dominant group members while excluding minorities. Religious tourism development in plantation contexts represents particular intensification of these patterns, wherein economic exclusion serves dual functions of material enrichment for Sinhala entrepreneurs and spatial-political consolidation of Buddhist nationalist territorial control over historically Tamil-inhabited spaces.

Taken together, existing scholarship provides valuable insights into plantation Tamil marginalization, Buddhist nationalism, spatial justice, and ethnic economic exclusion, yet these literatures largely remain analytically compartmentalized. Studies on plantation communities foreground labor relations, housing, and citizenship struggles (Bass, 2013; Jegathesan, 2019), while often treating space as a passive backdrop rather than an active mechanism of power. Urban and spatial theory offers robust conceptual tools for understanding spatial rights and dispossession (Lefebvre, 1991; Harvey, 2008), but plantation contexts remain marginal within these debates. Similarly, scholarship on Buddhist nationalism emphasizes ideological dominance

and state power (Abeysekara, 2002; Kapferer, 2012) while giving limited attention to how religious institutions materially restructure space in minority-dominated landscapes. By bringing these bodies of literature into dialogue, this study addresses a critical gap by analyzing how religious institutions operate as mechanisms of spatial hegemony in plantation settings, linking religious nationalism, spatial control, and economic exclusion within a single analytical framework.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do modern Buddhist religious symbols and institutions function as mechanisms of spatial control and hegemonic dominance over Tamil plantation communities? (Identifies appropriation and surveillance evidenced through land use change and vantage-point oversight.)

RQ2: What are the specific mechanisms through which Tamil plantation workers are excluded from economic opportunities created by religious tourism, and how do these exclusions reinforce existing patterns of marginalization? (Demonstrates "ethnic economic closure" via trade prohibitions, intimidation, and revenue monopolization.)

RQ3: How do Tamil plantation workers navigate, resist, or adapt to the changing spatial dynamics and restrictions imposed by the temple's establishment and associated Sinhala Buddhist hegemonic control? (Documents resistance/adaptation practices drawn from community narratives.)

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The research employs a critical ethnographic approach informed by political geography and postcolonial studies methodologies.

A critical ethnographic approach was employed. Fieldwork (February to June in 2025) included 27 semi-structured interviews with Tamil workers, Sinhala entrepreneurs, officials, and monks, selected for diversity by role, gender, and age. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants' lived experiences of spatial control, religious symbolism, and everyday exclusion while allowing flexibility to pursue issues that emerged during fieldwork.

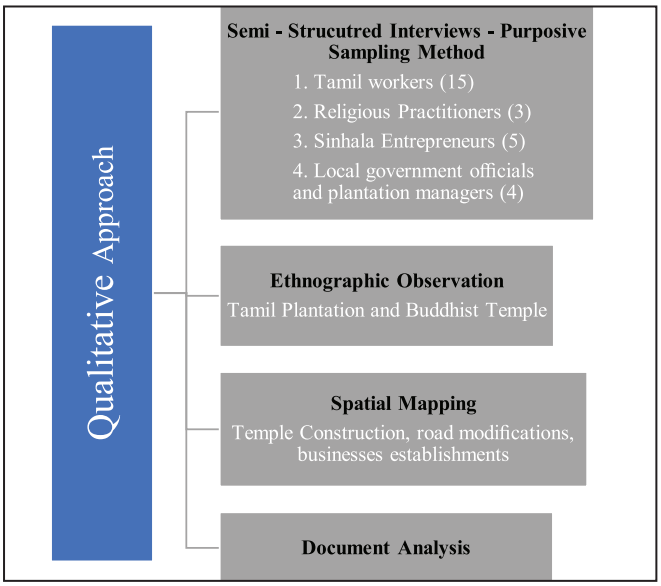

Figure 1: Qualitative approach (Figure created by Author, 2025).

This approach was particularly appropriate given the politically and ethnically sensitive context of plantation spaces, enabling consistent coverage of core themes alongside context-specific probing. It also ensured that marginalized voices could articulate their experiences in their own terms, aligning with the study's critical ethnographic and political-geographical framework. Site focus covered temple grounds, adjacent settlements, and worker 'lines.' Ethical procedures included informed consent, anonymization, and risk mitigation given intimidation and incidents such as a shop burning.

Data analysis employed thematic analysis, focusing on mechanisms of exclusion, legitimation strategies through Buddhist symbolism, resistance practices, and spatial transformations that reinforce social hierarchies.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study develops an integrated theoretical framework synthesizing Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city, Gramscian hegemony theory, and postcolonial geographical approaches to analyze how religious institutions operate as mechanisms of spatial control over Tamil plantation communities. The framework introduces the concept of 'spatial hegemony', defined as the deployment of cultural and religious symbolism to legitimize exclusionary spatial practices while manufacturing consent among subordinated populations. Existing

concepts of 'informality' (Roy, 2009) and 'spatial control' (Lefebvre, 1996) have been extensively developed in urban theory. However, what requires further examination is 'spatial indeterminacy'; the deliberate maintenance of ambiguous planning regulations and property rights as a governance tool in post-conflict settings. This concept refers to how authorities strategically avoid clarifying land tenure, zoning regulations, or development rights to enable selective enforcement that serves powerful interests while managing competing claims to urban space. Unlike informality, which Roy theorizes as produced through state power, spatial indeterminacy emphasizes the strategic value of legal ambiguity itself as a mechanism of control.

Lefebvre's formulation of the right to the city (1991, 1996) provides foundational understanding of spatial rights encompassing both appropriation (ability to access and utilize space) and participation (capacity to shape spatial development). While Lefebvre focused on metropolitan contexts, his framework extends to plantation settings where workers' long-standing spatial practices become delegitimized when external actors reimagine landscapes according to nationalist ideologies (Butler, 2012; Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2012). The transformation from use value (space for residence, subsistence, cultural practice) to exchange value (space for religious tourism and capital accumulation) exemplifies the production of abstract space that displaces lived community space (Harvey, 2001, 2008).

Gramscian hegemony theory (1971) illuminates how domination operates through securing consent from subordinated groups who internalize dominant ideology as 'common sense' through civil society institutions, particularly religious organizations (Forgacs, 2000; Crehan, 2016). In Sri Lankan context, Sinhala Buddhist nationalism achieves hegemonic status by presenting Buddhist cultural dominance as expression of historical rights rather than political construction (Spencer, 1990; Kapferer, 2012). The concept of 'passive revolution' proves particularly relevant, describing processes where apparent modernization or development such as religious tourism reinforces rather than challenges existing power relations when controlled by dominant groups (Morton, 2007; Chatterjee, 1993). This theory identifies mechanisms of cultural legitimation observable through temple permission requirements for community activities, internalized acceptance of institutional oversight, self-censorship, and discourse framing restrictions as culturally appropriate despite exclusionary impacts.

Postcolonial geography, particularly Jazeel's (2013) concept of sacred modernity and Venugopal's (2018) analysis of nationalism and development, provides frameworks for understanding spatial colonialism, the ongoing production of colonial spatial relations after formal decolonization. Jazeel demonstrates how spatial imaginations in Sri Lankan nationalism construct national belonging while systematically excluding minority communities through archaeological, environmental, and religious projects that erase Tamil spatial histories. The temple's elevated position creates what Foucault (1977) termed 'panoptic surveillance architecture', where built forms structure visibility and behavioral regulation. This theory identifies mechanisms of territorial assertion observable through Buddhist architectural dominance, erasure of Tamil spatial histories, surveillance capacity, monopolization of economic benefits by external Sinhala entrepreneurs, and state institutional support for religious development.

The integrated concept of '*spatial hegemony*' synthesizes these perspectives, operating through three interconnected processes: (1) spatial appropriation transforming lived community space into abstract religious property (Lefebvre); (2) cultural legitimation manufacturing consent through religious institutional authority (Gramsci); and (3) postcolonial territorial assertion materializing ethnic dominance through religious architecture and narrative control (Jazeel, Venugopal). This framework extends urban spatial theory to rural plantation contexts, spatializes hegemony theory by analyzing how consent is manufactured through material spatial transformations, and operationalizes abstract theory through clear empirical indicators. This framework enables analysis of how the 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' temple establishment operates as mechanism of contemporary spatial colonialism, systematically eroding Tamil plantation workers' rights to space, livelihood, and cultural expression

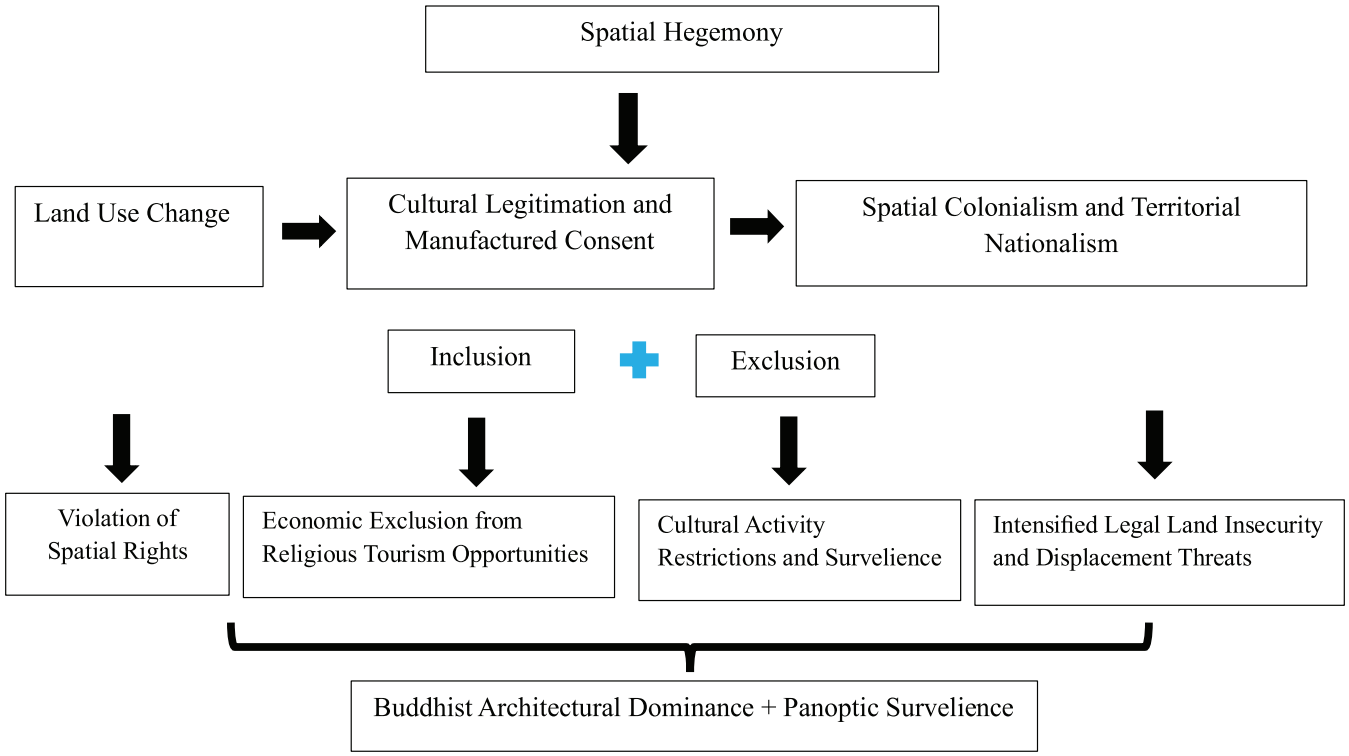

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

while presenting exclusion as natural through religious framing (Massey, 2005).

In this research, the main theme is '*spatial hegemony*', which can be identified in various forms such as land use change, cultural legitimation and manufactured consent and spatial colonialism and territorial nationalism. This space has been converted into a religious space representing both inclusion and exclusion. The reality of this space can be identified as one where some religious communities are attracted to this space while others are marginalized. Using these main ideas, the study identifies the main findings under various themes, including the violations of spatial rights, economic exclusion from religious tourism opportunities, cultural activity restrictions and surveillance and intensified legal land insecurity and displacement threats. These major themes emerge under conditions of Buddhist architectural dominance and panoptic surveillance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper advances the concepts of *quiet capitalism* and *quiet encroachment* to capture the subtle yet systematic economic and spatial transformations unfolding within the Hanthana plantation. Quiet capitalism refers to the informal and incremental consolidation of economic opportunities generated through religious tourism by Sinhala Buddhist actors, occurring without formal privatization or overt displacement. Instead, economic capture is facilitated through everyday mechanisms such as selective permissions, informal prohibitions on Tamil entrepreneurship, and institutional support extended through religious authority, echoing Roy's (2009) analysis of informality as a state-produced and selectively enforced condition. Quiet encroachment denotes the gradual territorial expansion of religious authority into plantation space through symbolic dominance, surveillance, and routinized regulation of movement and livelihood practices rather than explicit land seizure, resonating with Bayat's (2000) notion of "quiet encroachment of the ordinary." Together, these processes normalize exclusion, minimize resistance, and allow spatial and economic dispossession to proceed incrementally while appearing culturally legitimate, thereby embedding exclusionary practices within everyday governance and religious moral discourse.

The construction of 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' modern temple on former tea plantation land represents a systematic process of spatial appropriation that exemplifies what Gramsci (1971) theorized as cultural hegemony operating through spatial mechanisms. The temple's establishment on land once cultivated with *Beheth Nelli* (Indian gooseberry) plants demonstrates how religious symbolism functions to legitimize territorial control, transforming community space into sacred space under Sinhala Buddhist dominance (Harvey, 2001; Butler, 2012). Field observations reveal that the temple functions as what Foucault (1977) would recognize as a 'panopticon', a mechanism of spatial surveillance and control extending beyond religious practice, through its elevated physical position, continuous visibility over surrounding plantation housing, and the routinised presence of religious and administrative actors that renders everyday movement observable and self-regulated by residents.

The extensive grounds and elevated vantage point create new sightlines enabling continuous visual monitoring of Tamil residential areas, representing a contemporary manifestation of what postcolonial scholars identify as spatial colonialism (Jazeel, 2013; Krishna, 1999). This architectural dominance materializes ethnic territorial claims while simultaneously enabling systematic exclusion across multiple dimensions of Tamil workers' lives.

Violation of Spatial Rights

The establishment of 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' fundamentally disrupted Tamil plantation workers' long-standing spatial rights, manifesting what Lefebvre (1991) conceptualized as the transformation from lived space to abstract space. For generations, Tamil families cultivated relationships with this land through daily practices of residence, subsistence tea cultivation, and cultural gathering. The temple's construction severed these organic connections, reimagining plantation territory as sacred Buddhist space requiring institutional permission for access and use. This transformation exemplifies Harvey's (2008) analysis of how capitalist spatial logic prioritizes exchange value over use value, as land previously serving community subsistence needs became commodified religious tourism infrastructure generating revenue for external entrepreneurs.

Interview testimonies reveal the profound sense of displacement experienced by Tamil workers despite their continued physical presence.

"Now we feel that we are marginalized in our area. We have been here more than 40 years since our older generations. But now we face lot of problems because of various businesses and majority people who have been visiting this area are Sinhala community. We do not have any problem with the Sinhala community, but we do not have access to this space."[1]

This statement captures how spatial exclusion operates not merely through physical barriers but through cultural and economic mechanisms that render Tamil workers foreigners in their own ancestral spaces. The phrase *"our area"* followed by acknowledgement of lost access demonstrates the experiential reality of spatial dispossession; a form of what Purcell (2002) describes as denial of the right to appropriation, where inhabitants lose capacity to shape and utilize their lived environments according to their needs.

The spatial reconfiguration created zones of differential access structured along ethnic and religious lines. While Sinhala Buddhist pilgrims and entrepreneurs freely traverse temple grounds and surrounding commercial areas, Tamil residents encounter invisible but firmly enforced boundaries. These restrictions operate through what Gramsci (1971) identified as hegemonic mechanisms combining coercion with consent. Direct prohibitions on Tamil commercial activities are evidenced by repeated instructions issued by the temple's chief monk preventing Tamil residents from selling food, flowers or religious items within temple-adjacent spaces. This exclusion extends beyond fixed stalls to informal livelihoods.

As one Tamil three-wheeler (tuk-tuk) driver explained, "despite owning a vehicle, he is not allowed to provide hire services around the temple, while transport services in the same area are monopolized by Sinhala drivers from outside the village." This illustrates how spatial control operates not only through formal restrictions but also through the selective allocation of economic

1 *The discussion was with a 42-year man who works in the tea plantation and represents the Tamitl community*

opportunities, reinforcing ethicized hierarchies within the reconfigured plantation space.

Yet many workers internalize these restrictions as natural consequences of religious space designation rather than recognizing them as politically imposed hierarchies. One Tamil woman explained her self-censorship:

"We know we shouldn't disturb the religious atmosphere. Better to stay quiet and avoid problems."[2]

This manufactured consent demonstrates how spatial hegemony naturalizes exclusion, making dominated groups complicit in reproducing their own marginalization.

The contrast between Tamil dispossession and Sinhala spatial appropriation emerges starkly through comparative testimonies. A Sinhala entrepreneur operating near the temple articulated his relationship to this space:

"We are not the original people in this area. We come to this area day by day to run our business as temporarily. But we are really happy about this space because this hamuduruwo (monk) really helps us to develop our life. We have a plan to relocate around this space in future based on the success of our business."[3]

This statement reveals spatial rights operating as ethnically differentiated entitlements. While Tamil families residing for generations lack security and access, external Sinhala businessmen receive institutional support, enabling not merely economic activity but permanent settlement plans. The monk's active facilitation of Sinhala entrepreneurship while restricting Tamil economic participation demonstrates what Gramsci (1971) termed hegemonic leadership, dominant groups presenting their particular interests (ethnic territorial consolidation) as universal benefits (religious development and economic modernization).

The spatial rights violations extend beyond economic access to encompass fundamental aspects of community autonomy and cultural expression. Tamil residents report that previously routine activities children playing near the temple grounds, women gathering medicinal plants, families conducting small-scale subsistence cultivation have become fraught with anxiety about transgressing unstated boundaries. This transformation of everyday spatial practices into potential violations exemplifies Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, whereby surveillance produces self-regulating subjects who internalize control. As Foucault (1977: 201) argues, disciplinary power functions through the creation of a subject who is "the principle of his own subjection" modifying behavior in anticipation of observation and punishment even in the absence of explicit rules. The temple's elevated position functions as permanent reminder of oversight, its visibility from Tamil residential areas serving as constant assertion of Sinhala Buddhist territorial dominance.

Economic Exclusion from Religious Tourism Opportunities

Religious tourism generated by 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' created substantial economic opportunities systematically captured by Sinhala entrepreneurs, while Tamil plantation workers faced deliberate exclusion from participation. This pattern exemplifies what scholars' term *'ethnic economic closure'*, whereby dominant groups monopolize emerging economic sectors through formal restrictions and informal intimidation (Bass, 2013). The temple attracts hundreds of pilgrims weekly, generating demand for food services, transportation, accommodation, souvenir sales, and guide services. However, Tamil workers report explicit prohibitions on operating businesses, selling goods, or providing services to temple visitors. These restrictions operate through multiple reinforcing mechanisms combining institutional authority, social pressure, and direct intimidation.

Temple authorities established informal yet firmly enforced rules prohibiting Tamil commercial activity within approximately 500 meters of religious grounds. While no written regulations codify these restrictions, their enforcement occurs through monk interventions, police warnings, and community pressure. A Tamil shop owner who attempted to sell soft drinks and snacks to pilgrims described the consequences:

2 *The discussion was with a 54-year woman who works win the tea plantation and represents the Tamil community*

3 *The discussion was with a 49-year man (Sinhala) who owns two petty-shops near the 'Sandagiri Maha Seya' temple*

"The Sinhala entrepreneurs came from this space. They told me this is not proper for religious place. They said I should close or move far away. I was frightened after that. Two weeks later, my shop caught fire at night. Nobody knows who did it, but everybody understands the message."[4]

This testimony reveals how economic exclusion operates through violence and intimidation alongside religious justifications. The arson attack, officially recorded as accidental but understood locally as deliberate demonstrates the coercive dimensions underlying seemingly consensual spatial ordering.

Economic benefits flow exclusively to Sinhala entrepreneurs from adjacent settlements and external businessmen who established operations with temple approval and support. Participant observation documented approximately 20 Sinhala-operated commercial establishments surrounding the temple including restaurants, souvenir shops, clothing shops and parking services, none owned or operated by Tamil residents despite their proximity and historical presence. The monk actively facilitated Sinhala entrepreneurship through providing land access, endorsing businesses to pilgrims, and mediating disputes, while Tamil workers received no such institutional support. This differential treatment creates what Harvey (2001) analyzes as 'accumulation by dispossession', a process through which *"assets are stripped from local populations and concentrated in the hand of a few"* as communities are disposed by institutional power.

The economic exclusion perpetuates and intensifies pre-existing plantation hierarchies rather than offering pathways for upward mobility. Tamil workers remain confined to traditional plantation labor tea plucking, factory work, and maintenance, while new tourism economy jobs remain inaccessible. A young Tamil man expressed frustration with this structural exclusion:

"*I studied up to O/Levels. I can speak Sinhala, I know this area well, I could guide tourists. But there is no chance for us. All good jobs go to Sinhala people from outside. We are stuck in tea work forever."*[5]

This statement reveals how spatial hegemony reproduces class hierarchies through ethnic closure, ensuring Tamil workers remain economically subordinated even as surrounding areas develop economically.

The economic implications extend beyond individual income loss to affect community-wide development possibilities. Religious tourism revenue that could support Tamil community infrastructure improving housing, establishing cooperative enterprises, funding education instead flows entirely to external beneficiaries. This represents what Lefebvre (1996) identified as the 'right to participation' violated at collective scale. Tamil communities cannot shape the economic development of spaces they inhabit, their labor and land commodified for others' benefit, while they remain impoverished spectators. The temple's economic model exemplifies passive revolution (Gramsci, 1971), wherein apparent modernization and development reinforce rather than challenge existing power relations, benefiting dominant groups while maintaining subordinate populations in structural disadvantage.

Interview data further revealed sophisticated mechanisms of economic surveillance and restriction. Sinhala entrepreneurs reported receiving informal intelligence about any Tamil commercial attempts, enabling preemptive intervention before businesses could establish themselves. This surveillance network operating through monk connections, police contacts, and community informants ensures Tamil exclusion occurs efficiently and comprehensively. The effectiveness of this ethnic economic closure demonstrates how spatial hegemony operates through organized systems rather than merely individual prejudices, requiring institutional coordination and shared commitment to maintaining ethnic hierarchies in emerging economic sectors.

Cultural Activity Restrictions and Surveillance

The temple's establishment severely curtailed Tamil community cultural activities, transforming

4 *The discussion was with a 55-year man from the Tamil community who was trying to sell items near the temple*

5 *The discussion was with a 20-year boy from the Tamil community.*

autonomous social practices into supervised activities requiring institutional permission. This transformation exemplifies what Lefebvre (1991) identified as the subsumption of lived space where communities organically develop meaningful spatial practices into abstract space organized according to dominant group priorities. Previously, Tamil plantation workers regularly organized sports festivals, cultural performances, religious celebrations, and community gatherings using plantation grounds and adjacent areas. These activities constituted important expressions of community identity and solidarity, providing respite from plantation labor's monotony while reinforcing social bonds across generations. Following temple construction, virtually all such activities ceased or became subject to temple authority oversight.

Tamil community leaders report that temple authorities now require prior permission for any gatherings, cultural events, or celebrations conducted within or near plantation settlements visible from temple grounds. This permission requirement operates as mechanism of cultural policing, enabling dominant institutions to regulate minority cultural expression according to majoritarian sensibilities. A Tamil community organizer described this restriction:

"Before, we would organize Pongal celebrations, sports competitions, cultural programs whenever we wanted. Now we must ask permission from the temple. Sometimes they say okay, sometimes they say it will disturb pilgrims or create noise problems. We stopped organizing most things because it is humiliating to ask permission for our own culture in our own place."[6]

This testimony reveals how spatial control extends beyond physical access to encompass cultural autonomy, with Tamil social practices becoming illegitimate without Sinhala Buddhist institutional approval.

The permission requirement exemplifies Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemonic control through manufactured consent. Rather than directly prohibiting Tamil cultural activities, temple authorities established procedural mechanisms creating an appearance of inclusive governance while maintaining substantive control. Tamil communities participate in their own subordination by accepting permission requirements as legitimate administrative procedures rather than recognizing them as instruments of cultural domination. This demonstrates how hegemony operates most effectively when dominated groups internalize dominant institutions' authority as natural and proper, reproducing hierarchical relationships through seemingly voluntary compliance.

Surveillance architecture reinforced cultural restrictions by creating constant visibility of Tamil residential areas from temple grounds. The temple's elevated position functions as panopticon (Foucault, 1977), enabling continuous monitoring while making Tamil communities uncertain about when they are actually being observed. This architectural surveillance creates self-disciplining subjects who modify behavior based on potential rather than actual oversight. Tamil residents reported moderating noise levels, avoiding certain clothing styles, and restricting children's play to avoid appearing 'improper' from temple perspective, even when no one was visibly watching. This demonstrates how spatial control operates most efficiently not through constant direct intervention but through architectural arrangements creating anticipated consequences that shape behavior preemptively.

The cultural restrictions extended to religious practices, with Tamil Hindu celebrations requiring particular caution to avoid accusations of disturbing Buddhist religious atmosphere. Several respondents described scaling back Hindu festival celebrations, reducing music volume, limiting procession routes, and avoiding traditional practices perceived as potentially offensive to Buddhist sensibilities. This one-directional accommodation Tamil minorities moderating their cultural and religious expressions while Sinhala Buddhist practices face no reciprocal restrictions exemplifies what postcolonial scholars identify as majority hegemony, wherein dominant groups establish their cultural norms as universal standards requiring minority adaptation (Bhabha, 1994). The resulting cultural landscape privileges Sinhala Buddhist expressions while rendering Tamil cultural practices conditional, permitted only insofar as they do not challenge or disturb dominant group comfort.

Interview data revealed that cultural restrictions operated alongside economic exclusions to produce

6 *The discussion was with a 32-year man from the Tamil community*

comprehensive spatial hegemony. The inability to organize cultural events undermined community solidarity and collective identity, while economic marginalization prevented resource accumulation that might support cultural preservation. This intersecting exclusion demonstrates how spatial hegemony operates through mutually reinforcing mechanisms across multiple domains, ensuring subordinate populations remain politically fragmented, economically dependent, and culturally constrained unable to mount effective challenges to dominant group spatial control.

Intensified Legal Land Insecurity and Displacement Threats

Tamil plantation workers' already precarious land tenure became significantly more insecure following temple establishment, with legal vulnerability intersecting with spatial control to produce heightened displacement threats. Historically, plantation Tamils have occupied a tenuous legal position regarding land ownership, with most families residing on estate-controlled property lacking individual title deeds or formal documentation. Government promises to allocate seven perches of land to each plantation family remain largely unfulfilled decades after announcement, leaving workers vulnerable to eviction despite generational residence (Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017). Temple construction intensified this vulnerability by demonstrating that land historically used by Tamil communities could be appropriated for religious development without meaningful consultation or compensation.

A Tamil activist emphasized[7] that the temple was constructed on land historically belonging to the 'Uduwelawatta' Tea Estate and used by Tamil workers for generations. However, a video interview[8] with the chief monk presents a conflicting narrative: the land was allegedly earmarked for hotel development but was 'forcefully seized by the monk and a small group of individuals.' *(Image 1, 2 and 3)*. This discursive conflict illustrates what Said (1978) identified as competing narratives of

Image 1 and 2: Before the religious symbol was constructed, [Available at: *https://youtu.be/wmrYIelftM0?si=2JRID8IXy1qe9jmI]*

Image 3: The current situation of the Buddhist Symbol, [*Available at: https://youtu.be/wmrYIelftM0?si=2JRID8IXy1qe9jmI*]

territorial legitimacy, where hegemonic groups deploy religious justifications to naturalize spatial appropriation. A middle-aged Tamil woman expressed this fear:

"We live here 50 years, my husband's family even longer. But we have no papers, no ownership. When we saw them take the 'Beheth Nelli' land for temple, we understood they can take any land anytime. We have no protection, no rights. Tomorrow they might say they need our houses for parking or shops. What can we do?"[9]

7 Interview with a 42-year-old Tamil activist working for a non-governmental organization and residing in the '3 Kanuwa Uduwelawatta' Tea Plantation area.

8 TV Documentary Video, 17.07.2025 [Available at: https://youtu.be/wmrYIelftM0?si=2JRID8IXy1qe9jmI] (Accessed on: July, 2025)

9 *The discussion was with a 55-year woman from the Tamil community works in the 'Uduwelawatta' Tea plantation*

Image 4: Nature of the House of Tea Plantation Worker (Field Work, 2025).

This testimony reveals how spatial appropriation in one location creates generalized insecurity across the community, with past dispossession functioning as a warning of potential future displacement *(Image 04)*.

Legal insecurity operates as mechanism of political control, ensuring Tamil workers remain compliant and avoid challenging restrictions for fear of jeopardizing their already tenuous residential rights. Multiple respondents indicated that they refrained from protesting economic exclusions or cultural restrictions specifically because they feared retaliation through eviction or denial of promised land allocations. This demonstrates how legal vulnerability intersects with spatial hegemony to produce docile populations (Foucault, 1977), wherein subordinated groups self-censor and accept marginalization to preserve minimal residential security. The intersection of legal precariousness and cultural-economic exclusion creates what scholars term layered vulnerability, where multiple insecurities reinforce each other to maintain comprehensive subordination.

Temple authorities and associated Sinhala entrepreneurs occasionally made explicit or implicit suggestions that Tamil cooperation regarding restrictions might influence their residential security. A Tamil community leader described this dynamic:

"Sometimes the monk or others say things like 'we want peaceful coexistence, people who understand religious significance of this place can stay, but troublemakers might need to find other places. They never say directly 'do what we say or we will evict you,' but the meaning is clear. They remind us that we are here by permission, not by right."[10]

10 *The discussion was with a 56-year Tamil community leader in the Tea plantation*

These statements exemplify hegemonic control through combining coercion with consent, wherein subordinated populations "choose" compliance under conditions making resistance extremely costly.

The land insecurity also manifested through denial of infrastructure improvements in Tamil residential areas proximate to the temple. While Sinhala commercial areas received road improvements, electricity enhancements, and water connections facilitated by temple influence government intervention and the support from the Sinhala businessmen, Tamil residential areas experienced no corresponding improvements despite greater need. Respondents indicated that officials justified this differential investment by noting uncertainty about Tamil land tenure, suggesting infrastructure investment would be inappropriate until ownership questions were resolved yet no process for resolving these questions was initiated. This demonstrates how legal insecurity becomes pretext for maintaining unequal development, ensuring Tamil communities remain in substandard conditions while adjacent Sinhala areas modernize.

The cumulative effect of legal insecurity, economic exclusion, cultural restrictions, and spatial appropriation created what interview participants described as feeling like 'slow displacement', remaining physically present but systematically excluded from economic opportunities, cultural autonomy, and developmental benefits while facing constant uncertainty about residential rights. This condition exemplifies what Said (1978) analyzed as the production of perpetual liminality, wherein subordinated populations exist in permanent states of insecurity and provisionally, their presence tolerated but never secure, their rights conditional rather than guaranteed. The spatial hegemony established through temple construction thus operates not merely through immediate exclusions but through creating structural conditions ensuring long-term Tamil subordination and potential eventual displacement as religious tourism development continues expanding and plantation land becomes increasingly valuable for alternative uses beyond traditional tea cultivation.

This analysis demonstrates how spatial hegemony operates through Buddhist architectural

dominance and panoptic surveillance to produce systematic violations across multiple dimensions of Tamil plantation workers' lives. The four interconnected coded themes; spatial rights violations, economic exclusion, cultural restrictions, and legal insecurity reveal how religious institutions function as mechanisms of contemporary spatial colonialism, perpetuating colonial-era inequalities through ostensibly benign religious and developmental projects while rendering Tamil communities increasingly marginalized within spaces they have inhabited for generations.

CONCLUSION

This research contributes to political geography and postcolonial studies by theorizing 'spatial hegemony' as the deployment of cultural symbolism to legitimize exclusionary spatial practices. The 'Hanthana-Sandagiri Maha Seya + Uduwelawatta Tea Estate' case reveals how contemporary religious institutions operate as mechanisms of spatial colonialism, perpetuating colonial-era inequalities through seemingly benign cultural developments. The concept of 'right to the space' emerges as central to understanding marginalized communities' experiences of spatial control. For Tamil plantation workers, this right encompasses not merely physical residence but also economic participation and cultural expression within their lived environment. The modern temple's establishment has systematically eroded all dimensions of this spatial right while presenting exclusion as natural through religious framing.

The study challenges conventional understandings of secularization and modernization by demonstrating how religious institutions can intensify rather than resolve postcolonial spatial inequalities. Policy implications include the need for legal frameworks ensuring minority community consultation in religious land appropriation, economic inclusion mechanisms in tourism development, and cultural rights protections preventing religious institutions from restricting minority activities.

REFERENCES

1. Abeysekara, A. (2002). *Colors of the robe: Religion, identity, and difference*. University of South Carolina Press.
2. Ambalavanar, R. (1998). *Estate Tamils, the Ceylon citizenship Act of 1948 and Sri Lankan politics*. In S. Gamage & I. B. Watson (Eds.), *Conflict and community in contemporary Sri Lanka: 'Pearl of the East' or the 'island of tears'*? (pp. 97-114). Sage Publications.
3. Bass, D. (2013). *Everyday Ethnicity in Sri Lanka: Up-Country Tamil Identity Politics*. London: Routledge.
4. Bhabha, H.K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
5. Brenner, N., Marcuse, P. and Mayer, M. (2012). 'Cities for people, not for profit', in Brenner, N., Marcuse, P. and Mayer, M. (eds.) *Cities for People, Not for Profit*. London: Routledge.
6. Butler, C. (2012). *Henri Lefebvre: Spatial Politics, Everyday Life and the Right to the City*. London: Routledge.
7. Centre for Policy Alternatives (2017). *This House Is Not a Home: The Struggle for Addresses and Land in the Estate Sector*. Colombo: Centre for Policy Alternatives.
8. Chatterjee, P. (1993). *The Nation and Its Fragments*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
9. Crehan, K. (2016). *Gramsci's Common Sense*. Durham: Duke University Press.
10. Forgacs, D. (ed.) (2000). *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*. New York: New York University Press.
11. Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London: Allen Lane.
12. Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.
13. Gregory, D. (2004). *The Colonial Present*. Oxford: Blackwell.
14. Gunawardana, R. A. L. H. (1990). *The people of the lion: The Sinhala identity and ideology in history and historiography.* In J. Spencer (Ed.), *Sri Lanka: History and the roots of conflict* (pp. 45-86). Routledge.
15. Gunetilleke, N., Kuruppu, S. and Goonasekera, S. (2008). *The Estate Workers' Dilemma: Tensions and Changes in the Tea and Rubber Plantations in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Centre for Poverty Analysis.
16. Harvey, D. (2001). *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
17. Harvey, D. (2008). *The right to the city*, *New Left Review*.
18. Hettige, S. T. (2000). *Economic policy, changing opportunities for youth, and the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka*. In D. Venter & D. Neubert (Eds.), *Conflicting images: Contested identities in Africa and the global arena* (pp. 115-130). Transaction Publishers.

19. Jazeel, T. (2013). *Sacred Modernity: Nature, Environment and the Postcolonial Geographies of Sri Lankan Nationhood*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
20. Jegathesan, M. (2019). *Tea and Solidarity: Tamil Women and Work in Postwar Sri Lanka*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
21. Kapferer, B. (2012). *Legends of People, Myths of State*. New York: Berghahn Books.
22. Krishna, S. (1999). *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
23. Korf, B., & Silva, K. T. (2003). *Poverty, ethnicity and conflict in Sri Lanka. PREM South Asia*.
24. Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
25. Lefebvre, H. (1996). *Writings on Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
26. Massey, D. (2005). *For space*. Sage Publications.
27. Morton, A. D. (2007). *Unravelling Gramsci: Hegemony and passive revolution in the global political economy*. Pluto Press.
28. Perera, S. (2009). *Tourism in Sri Lanka*. Vijitha Yapa Publications.
29. Purcell, M. (2002). *Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant*, Geo-Journal, 58(2-3), pp. 99-108.
30. Ruwanpura, K. N. (2006). *Matrilineal communities, patriarchal realities: A feminist nirvana uncovered*. International Studies in Gender, State and Society, *13*(3), 232-252.
31. Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
32. Seoighe, R. (2017). *War, denial and nation-building in Sri Lanka: After the end*. Palgrave Macmillan.
33. Spencer, J. (1990). *A Sinhala village in a time of trouble: Politics and change in rural Sri Lanka*. Oxford University Press.
34. Spivak, G.C. (1988). 'Can the subaltern speak?', in Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 271-313.
35. Thangarajah, Y. (2003). Narratives of victimhood as ethnic identity among the Veddas of the East Coast. In P. Jeganathan & Q. Ismail (Eds.), *Unmaking the nation: The politics of identity and history in modern Sri Lanka* (pp. 287-310). Social Scientists' Association.
36. Thiranagama, S. (2011). *In my mother's house: Civil war in Sri Lanka*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
37. Thiranagama, S., & Kelly, T. (Eds.). (2010). *Traitors: Suspicion, intimacy, and the ethics of state-building*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
38. Venugopal, R. (2010). *Sectarian socialism: The politics of Sri Lanka's Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).* Modern Asian Studies.
39. Venugopal, R. (2018). *Nationalism, development and the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka*. Cambridge University Press.
40. Wickramasinghe, N. (2006). *Sri Lanka in the modern age: A history of contested identities*. Hurst & Company.