

A Study of the Traditional *Pasan* Singing Style
(With Reference to Catholics in the Western Province of Sri Lanka)
Iranga Samindani Weerakkody¹

Chanting of *Pasan* is a prominent feature that can only be seen in the commemoration of the Passion of Christ in the Lent period. This is a qualitative research and by judgment sampling, three research areas in the Western province, *Doowa*, *Pitipana* and *Maggona* were chosen. Interviews, participation observation and analysis of data collected by audio-visual equipment were the main data collection methods.

The main aims of this research are to identify the characteristics of *Pasan* singing style that gives it its identity and to study about the cultural and psychological importance of *Pasan* chanting as well as analyzing the changes in *Pasan* singing styles with socio-cultural changes in society.

A clear variation of *Pasan* singing styles can be observed from region to region. One of the main reasons for this is the involvement of folk drama and folk literature of that region in *Pasan* chanting. Another reason is the addition of new items to traditional *Pasan* singing styles, which has led to the establishment of the identity of *Pasan* within these regions. New forms of *Pasan* chanting can also be seen due to modernization. A group worship ritual like *Pasan* chanting can be seen as a very effective method of demonstrating the catharsis effect.

It can be seen that *Pasan* chanting has found its roots as a singing style and as a cultural facet in the Catholic community of Sri Lanka.

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¹ University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka.
iranga.w@vpa.ac.lk +94 71 846 3194