

The Historiography of the Social, Environmental, Economic and Political Systems of Pesalai, A Village in the Mannar District, Sri Lanka: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

Historiography reveals many visible and latent facts and opinions about how the history of communities and regions and the evolution of their social, environmental, economic, and political systems (SEEPS) are constructed according to the historian's perspective. This paper aims to provide a content analysis on how the historical construction of the discourse of the SEEPS effectively addressed the issues - especially in the textual and historical construction found in a historical text titled *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*, authored by S.A. Miranda. The book narrates the arrival and operation of the Western Colonizers resulting in the consequent socio-political transformation in the local community, changes in religious, cultural, and national identities and the ultimate evolution of new changes in the SEEPS. This content analysis focuses on establishing the relationships between the social, political, and environmental systems in the historical discourse of the book and assessing the historiographical representation of the SEEPS and the controlling factors in constructing the history of the Pesalai

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village and the Mannar District. The text combines integrated SEEPS providing governance-centric, anthropocentric, and eco-centric perspectives, while a theocentric discourse dominates the text. The book presents the information chronologically and thematically. This paper assesses the author's historical construction to study the impacts of the human-nature interface and natural and human-made changes related to the village system comparable to the whole district. It reveals the challenges and the creation of hybrid and multiple-use social and environmental systems, the interaction of the societal relationships with nature, and the village systems aligned to the political and social systems. The discourse reveals an attempt at reconciling a perennial conflict or competition of sustainable SEEPS against each other.

Keywords: *Content analysis; Mannar District, Pesalai Society, Social-environmental-economic-political systems, Sri Lanka*

Introduction

From a universal sense, Best & James argue that cultural development in human civilization has been based on research. It removes “ignorance by discovering new truths and encourages us to better ways of doing things and better products” (Best & James, 1986, p.184). Therefore, there is a need to look at the conditions of the Pesalai village of the Mannar District's socio-environmental, economic, and political systems (SEEPS) to understand the developmental constraints and possibilities comprehensively. Moreover, as per the discussions and debates in scientific forums at international levels, the need for community-based adaptation techniques to manage and combat the stresses on the systems induced by human-nature interfaces at the community level is deemed necessary. Thus, this paper aims to analyze how the historical construction of the discourse of systems effectively addressed the issues - especially in the textual and historical construction found in a historical text titled *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. This book traces how the local community has learned to adapt to the SEEPS's sustainable management, consumption and development and explores the grey areas or inadequate segments in the adaptation methods. The book narrates the advent of Western colonizers, the consequent socio-

political transformation in the local community, changes in religious, cultural, and national identities and the ultimate evolution of new changes in the SEEPS. There are historically three approaches to nature-society relations: the destruction, production, and co-production of nature (Robbins, 2012).

Ingold (2011) proposes three elements to understand the gap between the long history of nature-society relationships and their social construction in historical writing: the historical change (I), the global significance (II), and the new awareness regarding the relationships (III). This paper fulfils the research gap, interpreting the SEEPS covering the analysis of societies in the past with a resurging interest in civilizational studies at present (Jared Diamond, 2005).

Content analysis is a text-oriented qualitative research approach recognized by the multidisciplinary research community. The paper uses this analysis and approach to investigate this text about the history of the village, Pesalai. Moreover, the SEEPS of the village was and has been unexplored for the sustainable management, consumption, and development of the systems. Hence, this research project's importance at the local and national levels is justified per se.

In simple terms, this content analysis is comparable to using 'signal processing' described by Gnanaseelan & Manobavan (2009a & 2009b). They explain that “signal processing techniques are applied to decipher information sent via the environment as jumbled or mixed signals to infer the finite signals needed to understand the information. Similarly, when applied to a text, Discourse or Content Analysis techniques decipher the inherent details and ideas about the factors that might have prompted the author to tell or write the story. In addition, it helps to develop a descriptive model of the interfaces between society and nature.”

Objectives

- To establish the relationships between the social, political, and environmental systems in the historical discourse of

S.A Miranda's book, *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*.

- To assess the historiographical representation of the SEEPS and the controlling factors

Theoretical Constructs

Puteh et al. (2010) say that thinking in history may refer to using critical thinking skills in studying history. The biodiversity and socioeconomic and cultural discourses are invented, reinvented, and sometimes suppressed by social constructionism and movements as “territory plus culture” (Escobar, 1998). The text under focus in this paper reveals these processes of social constructionism. According to Qian & Western (2007), the causes and consequences of community “play in promoting, shaping, and resisting change in history.” The local community in the Pesalai village is shown to demonstrate these dynamic changes.

The content analysis focuses on “certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts for quantifying and analyzing the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the text messages, the writers, the readers, and the culture and the time” (Busch et al., 2005). Further, they list several texts for the analysis. They are “books, book chapters, essays, interviews, discussions, newspaper headlines and articles, historical documents, speeches, conversations, advertising, theatre, informal conversation, or any occurrence of communicative language” (Busch et al., 2005).

Berelson (1952 cited in Busch et al., 2005) provides the objectives for the uses of content analysis: revealing international differences in communication content, detecting the existence of propaganda, identifying the intentions, focus or communication trends of an individual, group, or institution, describing attitudinal and behavioral responses to communications, and determining psychological or emotional state of persons or groups.

The evolution of the integrated livelihood of this community is narrated in the book. Awang et al. (2016) reveal that content analysis emphasizes the past and digs into specific events based

on cause and effect. As historicized in the book, "the process of the systems is shaped by numerous sociocultural phenomena" (Daniel et al., 2012, p.8812). Cultural ecosystem services do not directly relate nature to culture (Winthrop, 2014). Instead, emotions, institutions, and perceived benefits control this historical thinking. The author of this book exemplifies many events to stress this point. However, they are essential in "understanding the relationships between people and their environments" (Raudsepp-Hearne et al., 2010, p. 576). While the book describes this relationship as a historical narrative, it asserts "authority rather than be authoritative" (Bassett & Peimer, 2015, p.157). Content analysis of this history book "shows how environmental knowledge and social order are co-produced" (Foucault, 1980; Hajer, 1995, cited by Bassett & Peimer, 2015).

In the discourse of the SEEPS, the nexus between the social and environmental domains "continued theoretical and empirical diversity in the field, as well as vibrant debates on local material practices and non-human representation" (Pickering et al., 2020, p.134). Sundberg introduces, defines, and relates discourse analysis with political ecology and socio-environment. The book discourse reveals implications of such nature. Cole (2001) advocates that the term 'historical' be added to the term sociocultural. He fears that sociocultural research overcomes ahistorical approaches. Therefore, this content analysis reveals the inevitable relationship between these two entities.

Sheregia & Arefev (2016) state that "the problem of historical consciousness is the subject of scientific analysis, at least for the last 50 years, but it is considered mainly through the prism of national identity." However, history has proved that socio-ecological relations legitimize power relations (Fairhead & Leach, 1996). This history book represents the events and descriptions of these approaches. In the text under analysis, the historical constructions of the society-environment relations build upon many questions that need to be addressed in the historical presentation. Keller (2012, p. 2, cited in Sina Leipold, 2019) describes the systems and orders in knowledge domains. He says, "The relationships between human beings and the world are

mediated utilising collectively created symbolic meaning systems or orders of knowledge." The content analysis witnesses 'discursive practices' (Fischer & Forester, 1993). Therefore, this history book presents a Westernised, Colonial, historical, or historicized narrative. It offers information gathered or collated on pre-Colonial and Colonial Pesalai village practically.

The research on the long-term impacts of Colonialism and Christianity caused paradigm shifts in the evolution and interactions of local societies, cultures and religions, and the post-colonial economy (Lenski & Nolan, 1984). The good examples can be seen in Sri Lanka or Ceylon, as formerly called. This book illustrates this trend in the village, Pesalai in the Mannar District in the North. There have been many studies on this topic in the West. Suppose Colonialism and its effects are discarded in describing the past, present, and future models of the relations between social, political, and environmental domains and sustainable development. In that case, it will lead to incomplete model specifications and distorted results (Kerbo, 2005).

According to McNeill, the SEEPS unity in diversity is exaggerated due to the increasing social and political demand for institutional, job and funding opportunities. Thus, environmental studies are more important in many research works incorporating and integrating SEEPS. The pro-environmentalists suspected this social or historiographical construction of the SEEPS (McNeill, 2003, p. 5-43). However, this research paper counterargues the position of pro-pure environmentalists and reestablishes the SEEPS integration based on the text's historical construction.

Foucault states that the environmental domain was shaken by the demographic boom renewing the opposition of the eighteenth-century political economy between population and resources. It disrupts an optimistic vision of our relationship with nature (Foucault, 1980). Consequently, the environmental domain transformed into a political problem, but it had previously belonged to the domain of science and technology. Due to this situation, a lasting opposition between societies and the environment is identified (Ingold, 2011). This research on the SEEPS of Pesalai demonstrates the integration of social and

environmental resources. However, as it is a human history book, social elements dominate.

The historiographical investigation must accommodate "the relationships between societies, the sciences, and the environment. Our times must grapple with the environmental question, as the eighteenth century did with the political question and the nineteenth century with the social question (Ingold, 2011; Moscovici, 1977). All three questions are integrated into this analysis of the history book. These questions should not be "avoided when placing man within the biosphere," when going beyond the human/natural dichotomy, or separating history (of human affairs) from evolution (of the biological world)" (ibid.). The object of historical research has to internalize "moving from the perspective where man is, according to Descartes, "master and owner of nature" (Ingold, 2011; Guéry, & Roger, 1991).

This paper analyses the arrival of the Western Colonialists cum Christians to Mannar, narrated in the history book. The colonialists integrated the SEEPS and socially constructed it to suit their needs and wishes as truth to their convenience. The book shows that from the beginning of its colonial venture and exploration, the West defended and constructed universal geographies and economic and political globalization of the world order. Therefore, Pumain (2009) says about other disciplines capturing the geographical project. The content analysis of this history book reveals that what was formerly carried out by geographers is today worked on by biologists or historians.

Literature Review

Studies on content analysis of history texts or discourse studying of history texts for integrating the SEEPS have been rare and limited internationally and nationally.

According to Krippendorff (1967), historians focus on transmitting past to present information using languages (written) or any communication code. Historians have been concerned with such problems as content priorities, the authenticity of texts, social constructions, competing attributions of authorship, the time order in which the events were composed, reliability of the sources used by an author, and inferring historical events from reports, social records, and biographies.

On the side of the socio-environment domain, Hamidizadeh & Farokhi (2021) analyzed the elementary school social studies textbooks from the perspective of environmental components. Though this analysis was made on the school textbooks used in Iran, this research focuses on the same theme and methodology the present research has chosen human-nature interactive relationship. Both Hamidizadeh & Farokhi (2021) and the research of this paper chose the same theme and methodology.

Hamidizadeh & Farokhi (2021) used a descriptive-qualitative method to review selected SEEP components in the textbooks for elementary school in the 2020-2019 academic year. The present study also selected certain domains related to the environment and society. This review included six main components: Water, soil, air, forest, sound, and waste and 15 sub-components. The results show that the forest and water components dominated, and the lowest level of attention was related to the noise and waste components. The text section dominated the images section. Some texts ignored environmental components when they should have. The present study also provides similar findings on the text priorities for social and environmental information.

Similar to the present study, which also focuses on the theme of the economic domain and priorities in the SEEPS discourse in the history book about the Mannar District, in the area of content analysis in the economic domain, Rashed et al. (2020) explored the

essential economic values related to the themes of production, savings, moderation in expenditure, labour, and economic development included in the Saudi Arabian Educational Policy Document and their reflection in a high school vocational textbook. In this research also, the chosen text was a school textbook. The researcher used a systematic quantitative descriptive approach. Results showed the production domain value in the Policy Document and some economic values in the vocational textbook.

Further, content analysis on journal articles, social media, mass media like TV and films, magazines, non-history books, and literary texts is significant. Adams & Shriebman (1978) used content analysis in television news reporting on SEEPS. The study explored current trends and problems with news criticism of news media. Though this paper focuses on a history book, contemporary content analysis research focuses more on internet content. Zhang (2005) conducted a thematic meta-analysis to examine how researchers applied content analysis to the World Wide Web after 2000. The websites had content from all the disciplines, which included what this paper focuses on, SEEPS.

The research gap for this research paper is that though there has been sufficient content analysis on the content of journal articles, social media, mass media like TV and films, magazines, non-history books, and literary texts, they approached a single system in SEEPS and the SEEPS integration was not the priority or focus in analyzing the texts. It is rare to see content analysis on history books while touching on an integrated analysis on the SEEPS.

History books or documents have rarely come under content analysis based on the literature review available online and offline. The Sri Lankan situation also is the same. Mosley (2006) says that social historians have yet to explore the nature-society relationship. Opportunities for integrating social and environmental histories should be created. Research collaboration in this area is the need of the future. The literature review confirms that a content analysis of this nature, SEEPS information in a history book, is an innovative attempt at research, especially since it is a first of its kind in Sri Lanka. The content analysis of a history

text reveals the relationship status and the opportunities and supports research collaboration. He identifies three issues related to SEEPS: the interconnection between social inequality and environmental resources, environments and identities, and consumption and the environment.

Profile of the District and the Village

Mannar District is geographically located in the Northwest of Sri Lanka. Mannar's West and Northeast sides are surrounded by sea, about 50 square miles (130 square km), and Mannar Island is linked to the rest of Sri Lanka by a causeway. It is mainly covered with vegetation and sand. Its main settlements are Mannar and Erukkalampiddi on its eastern coast and Pesalai on its northern shore, all connected by the A 14 road leading across the bridge to mainland Sri Lanka ("Mannar District", 2010). It is in the geographically significant location of the Island proximate to India.

According to Mannar District Secretariat (2017), compared to the rest of the areas of the Mannar District, the population living within Mannar Island enjoys economic and social infrastructure developed to a reasonable standard. However, other divisions need to be more sparsely populated, and infrastructure facilities must be developed. By Faith, Christians dominate the population. Next comes Islamists, Hindus, and Buddhists. Pesalai is primarily a fishing village northwest of the Island of Mannar, populated by the Tamil ethnic community. The villages have sub-areas such as Pesalai, including Kataspathri, Siruthoppu and Murugankovil.

The district surrounded by sea possesses ideal weather conditions for breeding fish. Therefore, it is a vibrant fishing ground. In addition, the district has played a crucial role in supplying seafood and paddy for the other parts of the country.

According to Mannar District Secretariat (2017), the district's primary economic activities are crop agriculture (mainly paddy), fishing and livestock farming. There are 11 primary and medium irrigation schemes servicing 36,613 Acres. The contribution of crop agriculture, fisheries and other activities for production and employment are 70%, 20% and 5%, respectively. Environmentally forest covers 50% of the land area, and the high depletion rate of

forests and sea resources and sea erosion are serious environmental problems in the district.

The industries found in Mannar include processing and canning seafood at Pesalai, rice mills for processing paddy, salterns, boat construction, crab fattening, and Beach de mer (sea cucumbers). In addition, the Island produces natural vinegar. The small cottage industries are drying fish, pottery, carpentry, handicrafts, and Jewelry manufacturing.

Methodology

The history books on Mannar and its urban and rural areas are rare. The historical documentation of the history of the Mannar District and its villages needs to be adequate. The textual information from the Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society authored by S.A. Miranda was compiled to form a workable database of the primary data. Afterwards, the researcher performed a thematic-level content analysis to develop a basic understanding of the management and utilization of the SEEPS of Pesalai, Mannar and their relationship (Figure 1).

It is a content analysis of a history book that investigates history from the historian's perspective. It critically analyses how he constructed the village and district histories. Therefore, it is crucial to understand that this paper does not analyze the history of the village or Mannar District in general, referring to all the history books and consulting all the relevant people in the area. Thus, this content analysis of a single history book must fully represent and generalize the district's history and SEEPS holistically.

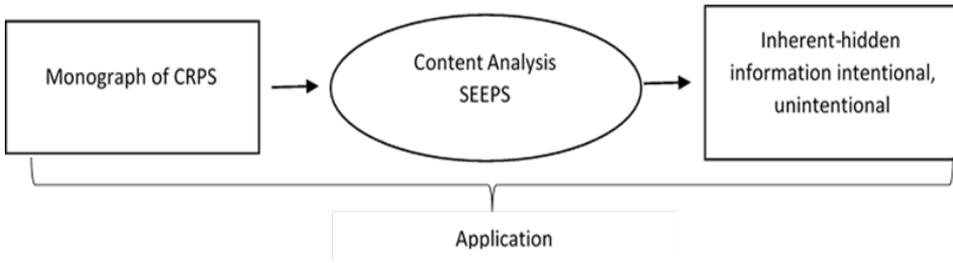


Figure 1. The Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed on the book content based on the local knowledge of the system dynamics identification of stresses caused by the human-nature interface systems. Finally, the researcher interpreted it to identify socio-environmental adaptation, grey areas, and missing links based on the content of the history book.

This research has taken content analysis as a methodological tool. Content analysis offers “features depending on the nature of data and statistical principles” (Stempel, 1986, p. 132). This research technique facilitates “the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p.111). According to Elo & Kyngäs (2008), obtaining a description of the phenomenon and outcomes builds up a conceptual model, system, or map. This paper develops a model to represent the three social, political, and environmental systems based on the content analysis. This research analyses the historiography of a history book.

Historical Background and Historiography – An Overview

The text needs to trace the etymological information of the district's name, Mannar. It means Silt River (“Mannar District, 2010). Mannar means the raised place [of sand], which is thought to have come from the Island's geology formed by the accumulation of sand (Mannar Island, 2022). Mannar's etymology consisted of the term, Manthai. According to Gunasingam (2016), Hindu saints from India visited Mannar. They sang Thevaram devotional songs of historical importance during the Saiva Renaissance (5-10th

ACE), and the Jain and Buddhist religions disappeared in India. However, S.A Miranda's historicization began with Christianity's arrival. Being a staunch Christian, Miranda might not have been interested in recollecting this information.

Pesalai is near the ancient port, Mantota, Mathoddam or Manthai (meaning Mango Gardens). It is the location of the ancient Sivan temple, as indicated in Egyptian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Dutch maps. Further, this area is environmentally significant because the Malvatu Oya (Aruvi Aru) provided a direct water route from Mantota to the Ancient capital Anuradhapura (Gunasingam, 2016; "Mannar District", 2010).

The text needs to include some significant points about Mannar in describing Mannar Island and Pesalai. First, Ptolemy may have named both sides of the sea with the same name on his Greek map. Second, Ramayana refers to Mannar in epic terms. Third, the Adam's Bridge connected South India with the Mannar District. Fourth, according to the Ramayana Ithihasa, King Rama built the temples of Ketheeswaram and Rameswaram. Finally, the book offers the environmentally crucial historical information that India and Sri Lanka remained one land mass during the ice age (Gunasingam, 2016; Britannica Encyclopaedia, 2015; "Mannar District", 2010).

Historiography has strengths and weaknesses. The events and descriptions are not supported by relevant archaeological information. Before the thirteenth century, Mathottam or the great port, opposite Mannar on the northwestern coast, was the busiest trading port on the Island. Archaeologists have excavated many articles of foreign origin, including coins and porcelain ware at Mannar. In addition, villages with Naga names surrounded the port. e.g., Nagarkulam et al., 2016; "Mannar district", 2010; de Silva, 1981).

The text focuses on the post-colonial Christianized village, Pesalai and the region, Mannar. The text does not mention any events related to the pre-colonial Saiva Era during the Cholas and post-

Cholas period and Jainism during the pre-Cholas period (Gunasingam, 2016). It has maintained the Roman Catholic identity since the arrival of the colonialists.

The first settlers to Mannar were members of the Nagas and Yakshas (Gunasingam, 2016; Bohingamuwa, 2017; “Mannar District”, 2010). However, the arrival of settlers and traders from South India is mentioned. The text does not say the geopolitically important and most significant port in the Indian Ocean. Traders from East Asia and the Mediterranean regularly visited this great port. During the Catholic conversion, the Portuguese systematically destroyed the Sivan temples of Rajarajeswaram and Thiruketheeswaram and transformed Mannar into forts made of stones from the temples and pagodas (Gunasingam, 2016). The text does not mention this destruction.

Mahawamsa narrates that Prince Vijaya, a bandit prince and his 700 men banished from their motherland, landed in Tambapanni. Moreover, Mannar, located at the Aruvi Aru's mouth, had easy access to the capital Anuradhapura, situated on the banks of the same river. However, with the increased emphasis on the South-East Asian Sri Vijayan Kingdom as the main center of trade after the seventh century ADE, the port of Mannar had diminished to some extent (Bohingamuwa, 2017; “Mannar District”, 2010).

However, Mannar retained its historical significance in the seventh and the twelfth centuries. On the contrary, it functioned as a vital trading center where South Indian merchants flourished. The author mentions this in the text. However, by the fifteenth century, Mathottam appears no longer an important port. The text begins its history in the sixteenth century.

Analysis

This research investigates establishing the relationships between the social, political, and environmental systems in the historical discourse of S.A Miranda's book, *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. It uses thematic-level content analysis to develop a basic understanding of the management and utilization of the SEEPS of Pesalai, Mannar and their relationship.

Introduction to the Book

S.A. Miranda wrote *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society* in 2006. It was published by the Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar. It describes the cultural and historical preservation of the SEEPS of the village, Pesalai-Mannar. The activities and events related to arts, literature and the Church are presented chronologically and thematically. The activities and events related to arts, literature and the Church are presented chronologically and thematically. It narrates the history of the Sri Lankan Tamil Christians in the Pesalai village and the Mannar District. The book chronicles the socio-environmental history of these areas for 500 years. In addition, the religious, political, and cultural history and the traditional practices of the past are recorded in the book. The book mentions the transformation process of each aspect of the SEEPS and its impact.

The Organization of the Front Pages of the Book

The organization of the book's beginning before the main contents demonstrates the author's position and historiography (Table 1).

Table 1. *The Organization of the Front Pages of the Book*

Sequence	Discourse Construction
	<i>Pictures of St. Mary, Christian statues, the sea and a school and portrayals of art and music</i>
<i>Title picture:</i>	<i>The title, name of the author, 'publisher, year</i> <i>The Church and the Sea</i>
<i>[Dedication</i>	<i>Christian Church</i>
<i>Picture:</i>	<i>Christian Statues</i>
<i>Preface:</i>	<i>By the Author</i>
<i>Picture:</i>	<i>Roman Catholic Church</i>
<i>Forward</i>	<i>By Most Rev. Dr Joseph, D.C.I. Rome, Bishop of Mannar, 18-03-2006</i>

<i>Forward:</i>	<i>Rev. Fr. P. Jesurajah, Valvuthayam, Mannar</i>
<i>Picture:</i>	<i>Saints</i>
<i>Criticism:</i>	<i>Rev. Dr G. Pilendren, Head, Dept of Christianity and Islamic Civilisation, University of Jaffna</i>

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

The front pages offer a Catholic identity prominent among the Sri Lankan Tamil community. The texts of the Forward written by the Roman Catholic Church present a summary reflection of the socio-environmental and politico-religious discourse of the historiography. The Late Most Rev. Dr Joseph, R., Bishop of Mannar, writes the book's Forward. The text primarily underlies the Catholic history of Mannar. It mainly represents Catholic socio-religious life. It describes the Sri Lankan Tamil people's life in Mannar in general. The 500-year history does not contain the pre-Catholic history of the Mannar Tamils. The information on the socio-environmental history of the district is full of positive aspects of some environmental resources avoiding the negative aspects of the hot climate, aridity of the land and non-availability of other resources. There is a significant description of the resources and the management of religious and cultural aspects.

Table 2. *The Structure of the Preface by the Author*

Theme	Discourse Construction
1	<i>Significance of recording the history; the divisional content of the text; His original intention, interests, limitations, and final output</i>
2	<i>Significance of the 500-year history of the village</i>
3	<i>People and their faith</i>

- 4 *People and their arts and culture*
- 5 *The names of the government agents and colonial officers, appreciating the service of the book printers, excuses for the limitations and imperfections and his assurance for accuracy.*

Note: Miranda, S. A, (2006) *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

This history book shows a keen positive interest in the recording history of Mannar and its surrounding villages, revealing the people's events, culture, and social and economic life. The recording is significant in providing information. However, the book must provide sufficient references, citations, and evidence behind each event narrated or activity described. The professional credits and standards need to be revised in this history writing. In the Preface (Table 2), the text looks at history positively and takes for granted the colonial religion. It positively appraises economic and environmental resources holistically without a proper objective data collection and assessment. It avoids specific environmental and economic issues that affect sustainable economic and human development.

Based on the information extracted using macro-level discourse structure and organization, the paper describes how the text portrays the Pesalai and Mannar systems and represents the 'systems' from the authorial perspectives.

Table 3.1. *The SEEPS Discourse I: The Text Organization (301 Pages)*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
1.1	<p><i>The importance of recording history, The origin of the Sri Lankan Tamils</i></p> <p><i>Westerners navigating to India; The colonialists in search of wealth.</i></p> <p><i>Religious wars all over the world</i></p>

1.2. *Tamils from South India to Mannar, natural resources; the world learnt the message of the God-the missionary, St. Francis Xavier; the missionaries towards Sri Lanka- Portuguese and the Rome*

1.3 *Religious conversion and the anger of King Sankilian;*

The Royal Genealogy: The King Sankilian and the massacre of the 600 innocent converted people, the furore of the chief priest of Thiruketeeswaram on conversion, the Jaffna Kingdom, the settlers from Jaffna

The glory of Parathavar: the Indian epical origin Ramayana, Fishing folk, the great poets and wise men, the arrival of the Jesuit priest from Kochchin, the first Parish Priest and the church construction

A Mannar Island map of 1789, the history of the evolution of the name, Pesalai

The service of Gova Town Priests: the death by loose motion or diarrhoea (500), More missionaries from Kochchin in 1602 - 1628

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Table 3.1 reveals that the text could have given more substantial input on the origin of the Tamils and the history and colonialists' arrival (3%). Since the book is historical and about its roots, there should be 10% of the total textual input. However, importance is given to pro-and anti-religious activities (4.3%). Also, social activities are integrated into religious history.

Table 3.2 *The SEEPS Discourse 2: The Text Content Organization*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
1.4.	<p><i>The Dutch Rule and the Fall of the Portuguese: the introduction to the Dutch</i></p> <p><i>The subjects following the path of the king: the arrival of the Dutch to Mannar in 1658 and Protestant Christianity</i></p> <p><i>The Inhuman religious fanaticism: The Dutch on the Catholics and the Hindus</i></p> <p><i>The rooted faith: The growth of the R.C. church in secrecy</i></p>
1.5.	<p><i>The Fall of the Dutch and the Rise of the English: The unfair heavy taxation by the Dutch and the decline in the Dutch income, religious freedom, and the renovation of the churches</i></p>

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Table 3.2 reveals the arrival of the Dutch and the consequences (1.6%). Again, intra-Christian rivalry and conflict gain prominence. However, again, the religious discourse dominates history.

Table 3.3. *The SEEPS Discourse 3: The Text Content Organization*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
2.1	<p><i>The glory of the ancient period: the city of the Three Kings, the church and faith development, the first appearance of the Church of the Lady of Victory and the changes later</i></p> <p><i>The unforgettable memories: the structures of the Church, the graveyard, the podium, and the statue</i></p>
2.2	<p><i>The esteemed hearts in the esteemed positions: Religious and Church descriptions</i></p>
2.3	<p><i>A new church for the Lady, the church festivals, the Glory of the Lady, and the chariot</i></p>

2.4 Description of the artistic works in the Church and the village cultural programs

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Table 3.3 reveals the continuity of the pro-religious and Roman Catholic events (3%), incorporating infrastructure, architecture (12%), art and culture (10%) about religion. However, the text constructs the community's religious history as its cultural history and roots.

Table 3.4. *The SEEPS Discourse 4: The Text Content Organization*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
3.1.	<i>The rule of the Church</i>
3.1.1	<i>Pesalai under Kochchin, Jaffna and Mannar dioceses</i>
3.1.2.	<i>The bishops of Mannar and Jaffna and their services</i>
3.1.3.	<i>The detail of the parish priests and their services</i>
3.1.4.	<i>The priests and Rev. Sisters hailed from Pesalai.</i>

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Table 3.4 reveals the Roman Catholic Church's administrative structure and hierarchy (1.3%). Notably, 8.5% narrate about the monks and nuns hailed from the village and 5% about the outsiders coming to their village for the service. Religious practices are part of cultural practices. Culture, a broad umbrella term and domain, comprises more than religious practices, such as social relationships and social, environmental, economic, political, and educational practices. However, the discourse of religious history is dominant in this book.

Table 3.5. *The SEEPS Discourse 5: The Text Content Organization*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
4.1	<p><i>Developments of Livelihood, education, art, and traditions</i></p> <p><i>Livelihood: fishing, Jaffna and Mannar dioceses, income-generating fishing, songs while working, types of fishing based on nets, the purchase by the southerners, Indian fishers, Jaffna fishers, the introduction of fibreglass boat and out-motor, tin fish factory, oil wells, the invasion of the other villagers in fishing</i></p> <p><i>The loss of Kalliyaddy paadu (fishing port): Vankalai and Pesalai, the recommendation of the Fisheries Dept, Asthiripaadu, and the Murugan Temple People and fishing: the Indian origin, the problems caused by the Indian fishermen from Tamilnadu</i></p>
4.2	<p><i>The educational development: the Christian missionaries, the government and non-government servants</i></p> <p><i>Other professions: Palmyra-based industries, masons, carpenters, goldsmiths and drivers, and printers</i></p>
4.3	<p><i>Art and cultural development: mostly religious-based dramas, songs, poems, folk dance, and folk dramas</i></p> <p><i>Technological introduction, sound and light, drawing, and sculpture</i></p> <p><i>Leisure and entertainment: games and sports, and cinema</i></p> <p><i>The suffering refugee life: camps in Pesalai, the Pesalai people in India, the military restrictions, and personal and community insecurity</i></p>

The happiness of living together: fisheries, Palmyra, multipurpose societies, RDS, WRDS, NGOs,

Sports, education, elders, missionaries, societies, and Diaspora of Pesalai origin living in the West

Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Table 3.5 is the largest and shows the dominating discourse in large quantities. The fishing livelihood covers 3.6%, but the insecurity for the livelihood is 2.3%. However, the author offers essential information on the educational development of the community (3.6%) but attributes it to religious missionaries. The government and non-government services and skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers account for 1.6%. The description of artistic, cultural creations, entertainment, and sports amounts to 7%, which is more appropriate for writing this history book.

Table 3.6. *The SEEPS Discourse 6: The Text Content Organization*

No.	Chapter, Section and Macro-Themes
4.4	<i>The traditions and rituals: community structure organisation, wedding, puberty, lent season, first communion, and funeral</i>
4.5	<i>Authority, power, awards, local village authorities, and reconciliation Board Honorary awards: Chevalier, Justice of Peace, Pulavar, annaviyaar, Kalapooshanam, The service in health: traditional medicine, naatu vaithiyam (country medicine), hand medicine, conventional medicine men for poisonous bites, the service of the government hospital, and spiritual service and healing</i>
	<i>Reference</i>

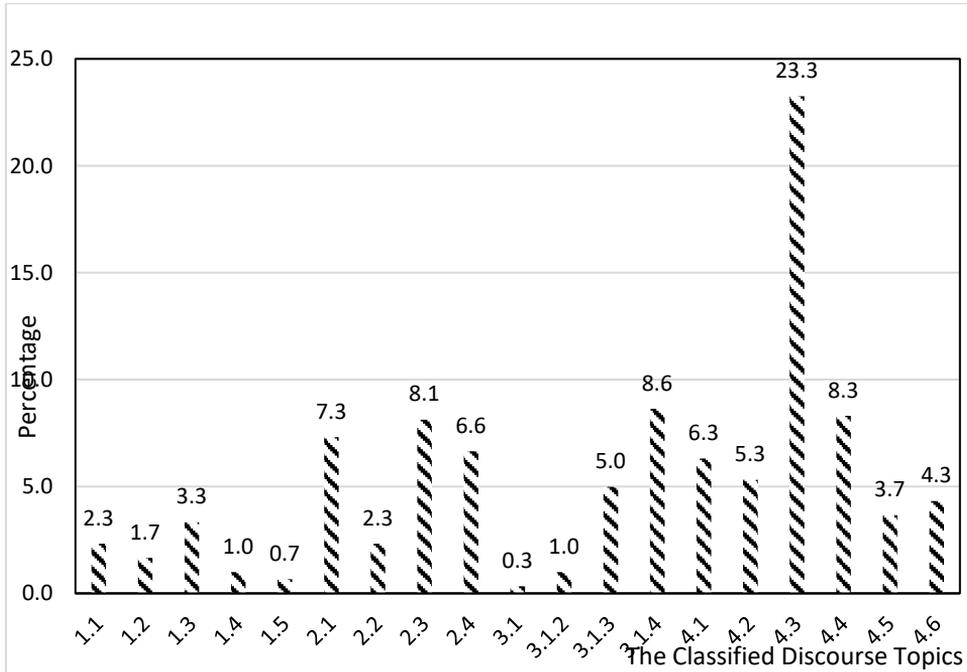
Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) *The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society*. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Another profound contribution is narrating political, economic, community and personal insecurity during the intensive conflict between the government forces and the Tamil militants (4.6%). The text balances the insecurity discourse with the resilient community life as societies and institutions (11%). The Diaspora of Pesalai origin in the West is also accounted for.

Table 3.6 depicts the cultural core describing the cultural activities in all aspects of their life cycle (8.3%), local governance and recognition (3.5%), and health (3.2%). However, religious influences underlie their cultural activities (1%). One critical issue is the need for more references. Though acceptable, a history book about cultural and social roots needs more reference and evidential support. However, the author's limitation in all aspects might have prevented the further search for evidence and extension.

The functionality is on three interacting spheres. It is titled Three Sphere Model (TSM), namely Political, Environmental and Social. These spheres are the main functional elements in the model of Pesalai-Mannar.

Figure 2 displays the quantity of the total classified discourse discussed above.



Note: Miranda, S.A, (2006) The Cultural Roots of the Pesalai Society. Fatima Club of Pesalai, Mannar.

Figure 2. The Quantity of the Total Classified Discourse

These three spheres intertwiningly interact in a land with natural resources for human subsistence, survival, and development. The original settlement in Mannar Island by the villagers is narrated as follows:

"Frightened by the threat of the Muhamedians, the people from the South India coastal areas (including Seranaadu, present Kerala) set foot on Pesalai and Mannar coastal areas after crossing the Palk Strait on wooden boats (Miranda, 2006, p. 9)

The validity of this above statement is yet to be proved with sufficient reliable historical and archaeological evidence and reference. The origin of Tamil and Sinhala ethnic communities in Sri Lanka is historically and archaeologically researched and published in many books and journal articles with professional standards by eminent Sinhala and Tamil historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists. There are many controversies

about the origins of the Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka. These distinguished scholars have researched and recorded the origin of the Sri Lankan communities (Gnanaseelan, 2021). Therefore, the above-quoted statement aligns differently with their research findings mostly.

The text focuses on the arrival of the human population through migration and displacement mechanisms to Mannar from South India and Jaffna and the colonization function, which establishes the pioneer colonies of the various kudis (settlements) or clans.

These pioneering colonies gradually begin habituating, adapting to the local environment (concurrently transforming and adjusting to the environment) to develop the early village-based systems.

According to this historical discourse, a human community-based system will develop and thrive in a geographical area if the proper civil administration, policy-making, and political security are possible through the appropriate and optimal political machinery. Using a 'governance-centric' perspective, this model presents the interactions and their importance for societal persistence and survival. It is an overtly idealistic explanation of the social system of Pesalai-Mannar. However, the emphasis on the necessity of good governance through the appropriately optimal political framework from the pre-colonial, colonial, to post-colonial periods is a fact.

It portrays the gradual development of a 'sustainable (village level) society model'. It could chronologically be regarded as a continuation of the process initiated by the interactions prescribed in the three-sphere model' (TSM). It explains how various system functionalities prompt the development of a sustainable society in a geographical region (i.e., the Mannar region). Whilst functionality of the political component of the system is given much prominence in the TSM, the model emphasizes the gradual system development where society, through its cultural and religious practices, develops livelihood via sustainable interfaces with the environment and political governance. Even the discourse of health measures is related to metaphysical or superstitious ideas:

Cholera plague came to the village with the people from India in 1892. It spread like wildfire as no prevention or

curing measures were available; around 800 people, including children, became victims. Crying and wailing reached the sky. The settlements were vacated. The forest and open areas sheltered them. The dead were buried in one place. They wanted nobody to visit this burial place because of the contraction to pestilence, so they spread ghost stories connected to the large Tamarind trees around it. As expected, the stories frightened the children, and they avoided visiting this place. (Miranda, 2006, p. 40)

The author needs to adequately present religious practices among the villagers before the arrival of Christianity. However, these village-based systems later developed Christian churches and worshipped Christian deities. This spiritual and cultural element was first brought into the system when it was colonized. The Church functioned as the coordinating center for all the village activities, such as fishing, environmental protection, social development, political governance etc.

The text relates environmental issues to religious and social activities as follows:

Due to the displacement, deaths caused by the monster, cholera, uncontrolled lifestyle, and hardened livelihood efforts, the village population deteriorated. The church priests observed this and made efforts to resolve these issues. As a result, Pesalai prospered, livelihood improved, unwanted behaviour and lifestyle changed, human reproduction increased, and the number of worshippers attending the church rituals increased. (Miranda, 2006, p. 35)

The Church's coordination was informal yet effective as an element of 'God fearing' was attached to the process and was exercised through rituals and festivals. With the Church acting as the general management committee and informal legislative body via the cultural approach, the system gradually developed into a stable, steady state to form the 'sustainable village system'. In this model, since the management is informal and considered an inherent element of the cultural rituals and festivals — there was no need for a robust political function. The Church and the administration excluded anybody violating the rituals, religious practices and traditions. Being Theo-centric in the discourse

construction of history, it relates natural disasters to religious activities as follows: "The roof of the church could not withstand the heavy blow of the typhoon during the winter seasons and constant heavy rain." (Miranda, 2006, p. 36) ,

As such, the model prescribed is anthropocentric as it emphasizes the human as an individual and society as the primary focus of development. This model is far ahead of its time as the 'anthropocentric focus' for development was only realized as per the Agenda 21 of the UN Rio Declaration much later, only in 1992. It establishes that human society is the center of development.

Apart from the surface level of theocentric historiography, at the deeper level, the sustainable society perspective can be regarded as a cost-effective and highly stable time-tested model for the system's sustainability. The analysis finds that an anthropocentric SEEPS existed in Pesalai-Mannar for many centuries. Thus, the text gives more space for the discourse construction of the social system (65%); environmental and economic systems get 15%, respectively, but the political system is related a little (6%). The political governance of the marine and coastal environment for sustainable livelihood and development needs further concentration.

From an environmental management perspective, the text describes a system and its management in an eco-centric manner in the following steps. First, the natural environment comprises sea, terrestrial, and vegetation interactions. Second, the natural environment, mainly Mannar Bay's coastal belt, impacts society and determines its livelihood and survival. Third, the dry tropical climate affects the natural environment and human society. Fourth, if the community is to survive, expand and grow, it must manage, mitigate, and sustainably control the sea-based natural environment.

The historical representation is divided into four major areas: 1) social, 2) environmental, 3) economic, and 4) political. According to Figure 3.1, the social domain covers 66% of the total discourse and contains social, educational, sports, entertainment, religious, arts and cultural elements. The environmental domain covers 15% of the discourse and has environmental and health issues. The

economic domain covers 13% of the discourse and contains economic, livelihood, and income generation topics. Finally, the political domain covers only 6% of the entire discourse and has conflict and 'post-colonial governance, environmental governance, taxation, and civil administration features.

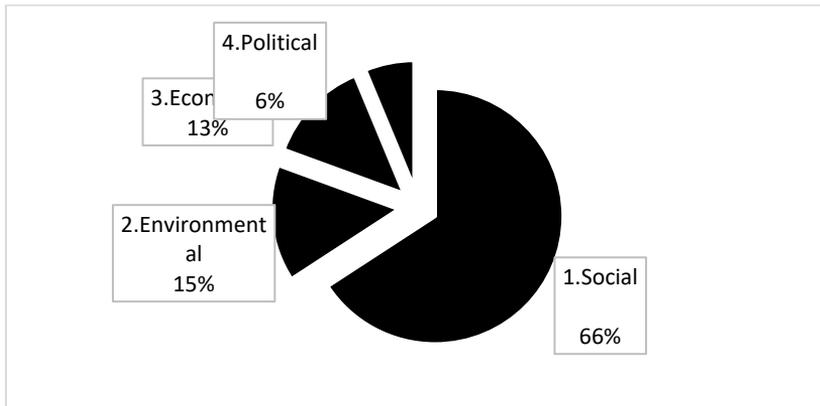
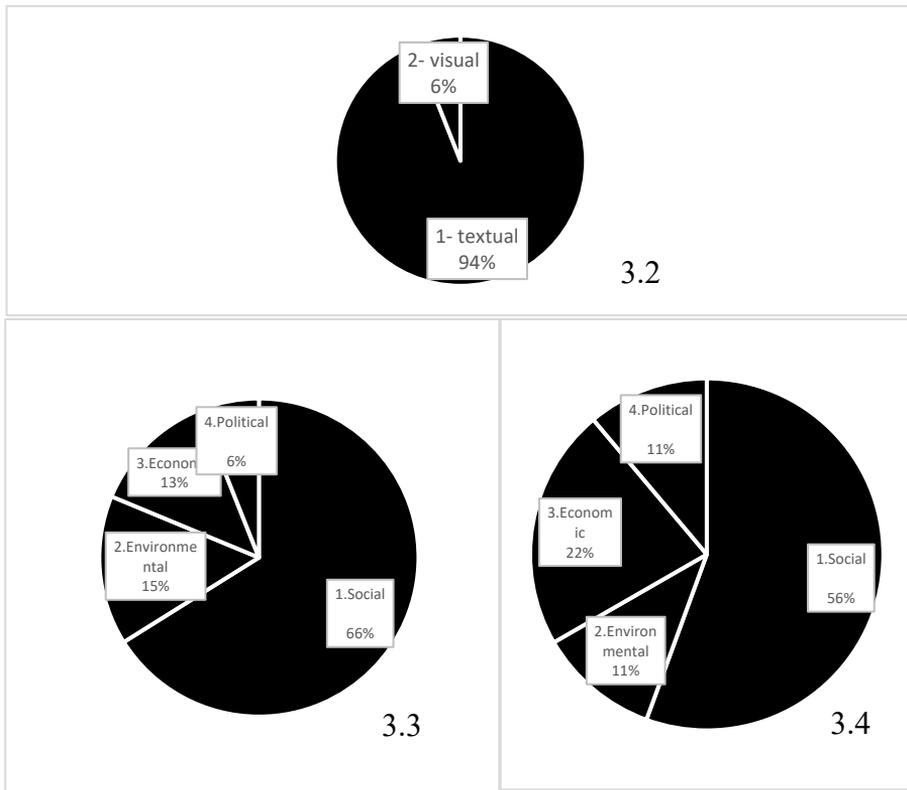


Figure 3.1. The Total Quantity of the Classified Discourse of the SEEPS of the Historical Representation of CRPS

Another aspect is that this historical discourse occupies 94% of the textual information (Figure 4.2). The text's insufficient visual information is a shortcoming in reinforcing objectivity and evidential support because collecting visual information on historical aspects demands more time, expertise, fund, availability, and accessibility. Further, the quantity of textual data (Figure 4.3) resembles the total amount of the classified discourse (Pl. see Figure 4.1). However, in presenting the visual content, the distribution is balanced, allocating more space to the economic (22%) and political (11%) domains (Figure 4.4).

The text presents that the village-level administrators' responsibility is to plan strategies and finance proper coastal environmental management; it also assumes the model for 'present-day' is to be adapted based on the impacts of the environmental and livelihood sustainability model found in the text.



Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4. The Textual and Visual Composition, the Textual Quantity, and the Visual Quantity of the Discourse of the SEEPS of the Historical Representation of CRPS

In that case, the text lacks concentration on the coastal sea area's environmental preservation and sustainable development based on resources. However, the fishing methods of the Indian trawlers, which accelerated the extinction of fish reproduction, are another focus. Therefore, it would substantially impact (the villagers' sustainable sea-based livelihood means and pose a danger to the village system's existence.

The text points out the neighboring villagers' invasion and the Indian fishermen exploiting the sea resources around Pesalai. A proper approach can improve the present-day Pesalai and Mannar Island model into a more sustainable one if the 'political functionality is developed optimally and appropriately. It ensures

sustainable interfaces with the natural environment are maintained in the 'right' manner to ensure environmentally viable livelihoods for the survival and sustenance of the society of Mannar villages. Livelihood, environmental sustainability, and women's participation are interrelated and described as follows:

Though the people have been engaged in various livelihood activities for over 500 years, fishing has been the chief livelihood means. They practiced a type of traditional fishing called *karaivalai* (a kind of fishing by pulling the net from the shore), which was environment friendly. They sold their catch to both local and Indian traders. Women participated in the maintenance of the net. However, due to the arrival of modern equipment and accessories related to fishing, their sustainable, environment-friendly livelihood methods had to change (Miranda, 2006, p.148.).

Findings and Discussion

The macro-level information organization in the text is as follows: (1). Topography and Physical features; (2). Histories: (ancient, modern and political) and Archaeology; (3). Population, religion, and education; (3). Human security issues (livelihood, climate, health, industry, communication); (4). Society—nature interfaces (scientific descriptions of fauna, flora, and their utilizations); (5). Administration (the management of the region over the last 500 years in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial periods); and (6). Sociology (culture, ceremonies, customs, feasts, festivals). The Macro-thematic Discourse Structure for the SEEPS of CRPS; Miranda (2006) is given in Figure 4.

The innovative information organization at the macro-level has been given adequate space to highlight and describe Pesalai-Mannar's significant social, environmental, and political aspects, dynamics of the marine livelihood system (regulation and management), applications, and economic activities. It is indeed a unique feature in the text — and has not been touched by recent writers focusing on rural Mannar's development, regional development, or natural resource sustainability.

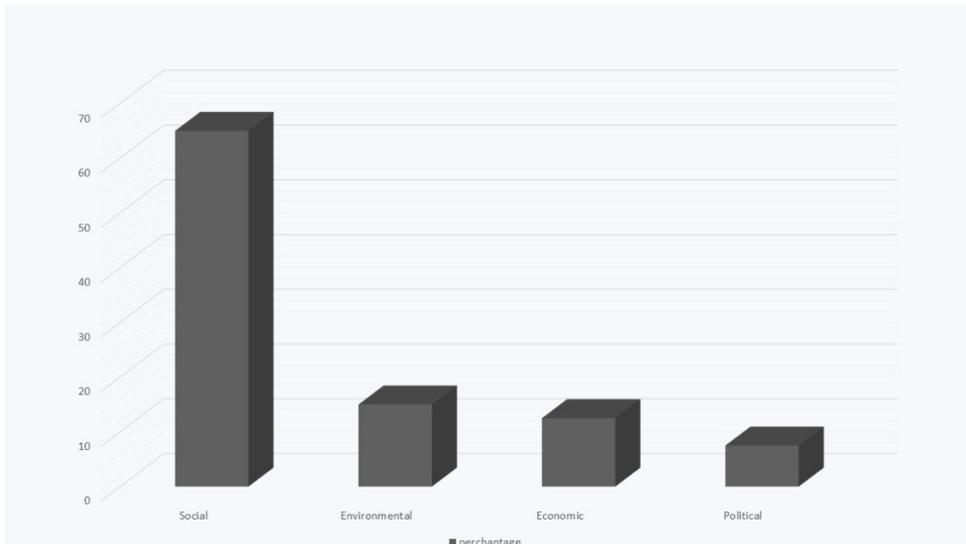


Figure 4. The Macro-thematic Discourse Structure for the SEEPS of CRPS; Miranda (2006)

The text highlights developmental issues, marine resources management, and livelihoods and prescribes sustaining interfaces between society and nature. This feature is evident in the textual organization of the book. The research lists out the inferences from the analysis of the textual organization as follows:

- a. The text presents a Westernized, colonial, historical, or historicized narrative.

It shows information gathered/collated on pre-Colonial and Colonial Pesalai-Mannar practically.

- b. The text reflects Christian perspectives from being part of the Colonial system that managed Mannar to create wealth or profit. It is the traditional or standard Colonialist perspective.

- c. However, the writings give elaborate poetic descriptions of a resourceful and religious Pesalai-Mannar; it attempts to provide a SWOT analysis of Pesalai-Mannar and succeeds. The language of the text is only sometimes scientific. It is sometimes literary and figurative.

d. Hence, this practical and realistic text differs significantly from other prominent historical texts about Sri Lanka and its regions describing the sociocultural, political and environmental systems.

However, the adequacy in giving a truthful historical account of the environmental composition of Pesalai-Mannar is slightly questionable and needed for 'sustainable development.'

The findings highlight key features to develop a model of rural Mannar's sociocultural, political, and environmental system during pre-Colonial and colonial times. This model can then compare rural Mannar's sociocultural—ecological system. In addition, it will be helpful as a tool that will provide valuable information on strategies for ensuring sustainable interfaces between rural Mannar's social and natural resources. Therefore, they need to be incorporated into development plans.

Conclusions

This content analysis infers the facts found in literature towards developing conceptual models of sustainable interfaces for the SEEPS of Pesalai-Mannar. This work has combined the governance-centric, anthropocentric and eco-centric perspectives to visualize how an ideal sustainable system for describing the systems can be presented. The SEEPS of Pesalai-Mannar functioned regardless of proper governance and management through the appropriate political machinery.

This historical discourse mainly focuses on the social and environmental aspects. Generally, a book of history gives importance to politics and the economy, but this history prioritizes people's lives integrated into environmental resources and sustainability. On the other hand, Popov et al. explain that "the environment is perceived as a universal and regional value affecting a person's and society's spiritual life. It ensures their spiritual security; management decisions in the environment should be associated with understanding this phenomenon as a sociocultural one, which increases the degree of responsibility and importance of the environment for the continuity of generations of

cultural carriers” (Popov et al., 2020). The text needed to be conscious of these conceptual applications. It was not critical about Colonialism and Christianity and their impacts on the local environment of Pesalai-Mannar and the country at large comprising the social, political, and environmental domains. It simply presents a text of the chronological events and social, cultural, economic, artistic and environmental practices, some of which existed and some in dynamic change. It simply accepts the existing and changing phenomena as they are.

The findings emphasize the system maintenance and development holistically with people's participation in regional decision-making (Bollens, 1997). This analysis assumes that the regulation of the systems can partake in the region's nature-based development. As a guiding principle, the texts sought to capitalize on the Vanni region's diversity in its land and sea. The analysis reveals the integration of the SEEPS with the goal of sustainable livelihood management and developing environment-friendly systems. The serious drawback is the de-emphasis on the exact causes and the consequences of the Colonial and post-colonial political conflicts and events related to sustainable environmental and economic development. The text implicitly uses abstract ideas to describe concrete events of the conflict:

"When violence showed its ugly head, the transport became disrupted, and the people experienced food scarcity, Rev. Fr. J.B. Theverajah took measures to address these issues, and the people benefited” (Miranda, 2006, p.115).

However, surprisingly, it has been researched and revealed that ‘scientific knowledge is a culturally and politically mediated representation of the material world’ (Pickering, 1992; Jasanoff, 2004). Even when scientific knowledge is questioned for objectivity, the researcher cannot confirm this history book as scientific or systematic. Therefore, the discourse of the systems is 'always situated, contingent, and mediated' (Neumann, 2005, p. 50). The book implies that the SEEPS is pre-social, nature-based, and beyond social construction, the evolution and revolution of natural mechanisms and processes.

The finding emphasizes the creation of mixed and multiple-use environments with environment-friendly systems. Regulation of societal relationships with nature goes beyond crisis management. The system regulation needs to be aligned with political and social commitment. The constructive historical discourse on the systems must encounter all the obstacles to establish integration. However, there may be hidden dangers of over-interpreting the texts.

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