

## **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON INDIGENOUS DEFENSE TACTICS DISPLAYED BY THE WELANHINNA FORT OF ANCIENT UVA KINGDOM**

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Welanhinna Fort is located in Diyathalawa - Walgahawela road, 4.3 Km away from Diyathalawa town in Badulla District of Uva Province. The entrance to the site of the Welanhinna Fort is found by reaching to the top of the hill along the road which runs in front of the Welanhinna school. Problem of this research is the lack of awareness of this fort and unavailability of analysis conducted through a military perspective. The aim of this study is to analyze the tactical importance of maintaining such a fort in the nearest mountain range which faces to the Idalgashinna Pass. Data collection methodology is comprised of primary data methods such as observations, unstructured interviews and secondary data methods such as published books, journal articles and other secondary source. Since the Kandyans used to destroy the enemy by bringing them to the own land, it can be logically argued that the Welanhinna Fort, located next to the Idalgashinna Pass was an invaluable complement of the tactical element. Absence of any ruins of this fort but the trench standing on the top of the mountain signifies that this point could have been used as a Balungala (observation center). Therefore, it could be argued that the Welanhinna Fort was used as a communication centre in case of an enemy invasion, because it is clearly visible through the surrounding of this place. Further, the air distance from the Welanhinna Fort to the Idalgashinna Pass is 4.8 km and it is 29 km to the city of Badulla which is important for communication in order to prepare Uva Kingdom in advance to counter any invasion. According to the analysis, the ancient fortress of Welanhinna which is the closest to the Idalgashinna Pass gives an important strategic support for the safety of the Uva land as an offensive complement, observation center, communication centre and as a defense complement. This suggests that this tactical location on the ground of Sri Lanka should be developed as a monitoring center and properly conserved for the learners who are interested in studying on History and Defense.

**Keywords:** *Welanhinna Fort, Idalgashinna Pass, Uva Kingdom, Ancient Military Tactics*