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LANKA

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1994: Endless Conflicts

— *Mervyn de Silva*

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POPE'S BOOK ON HOPE

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MEDIA TRAINING INSTITUTE

THE

GAMINI COREA REPORT

THE POVERTY THREAT

URBAN POOR: Susil Sirivardana

RURAL POOR: *Tisaranee Gunasekera*
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TRENDS

No new taxes

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has instructed her ministers to cut down on expenditure rather than impose new taxes on the people in the forthcoming budget. The Government is also hoping to narrow a budget deficit by selling off state ventures such as Telecommunications, Electricity, Insurance and Petroleum, according to informed sources. The government is under pressure by international lending agencies in any event to privatise these ventures.

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Return of Sirisena Cooray

Former UNP General Secretary Sirisena Cooray, a powerful minister of the previous regime but now out of parliament, is to be brought back to re-organise the party. The new UNP leadership wants him back and a national list MP has been asked to resign to accommodate him, party sources said.

President on TV

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga will appear more often on national TV (Rupavahini) to talk to the people on pressing current issues. The appearances will be in the form of interviews.

Tea companies in the red

Private companies running the nationalised plantations are deeply in the red. Twenty of the 22 management companies have run up huge losses amounting to Rs 3,517.6 million (at end June 1994).

According to industry sources wage hikes forced by politically powerful union leaders and lowered prices in the world market were preventing recovery and healthy growth.

BRIEFLY...

Revised tender saves Rs 240 million

A call for revised tenders for the supply of three AN 32 B aircraft saved the state US\$4.8 (about Rs 240 million). A lowest bid of US\$3.2 million per aircraft was accepted.

President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga cancelled an earlier tender deal under the previous regime where the same bidder had quoted US\$ 4.8 million.

Review of VOA

The government has appointed a ministerial committee to review the Voice of America agreement. The projected VOA complex at Iranawila, a west coast fishing village, has come under heavy attack by religious and peoples organisations. The protesters fear that the American presence and influence will disrupt the cultural and economic life of the local community and also be a security threat to the nation.

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1994 : YEAR OF THE BALLOT — and of course, the bullet

Mervyn de Silva

Two national elections, parliamentary and presidential, and the assassination of the UNP leader one of the presidential candidates, dominated 1994. Both elections, the second more crucially, turned the spotlight on Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, the daughter S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (prime minister 1956-59) and Sirima Bandaranaike the world's first woman prime minister and twice Sri Lanka's.

This unique legacy of the daughter of two prime ministers is frequently emphasised in current commentaries but not always is its true or its many sided significance, correctly identified.

Consider the 1956 Revolution. Of course it was not a revolution but "revolution" is the only word that could convey the explosive April '56 outburst, the emotion that seized the anti-Establishment forces which had come together to topple, to sweep away the Bourbons, from the seats of power. "The memories of men" says John Still in the only line that has been found quotable in his book on Ceylon, *THE JUNGLE TIDE*, "are too frail a thread to hang history on". My own memories, re-ordered perhaps by present history, identify the following as the most salient.

(1) "1956" instantly earned the honoured title "Revolution" because the revolution promised by the revolutionary vanguard had not in fact swept Sri Lanka (Ceylon). And that pre-independence vanguard had been formed in fact by the "brightest and the best" of the native middle-class intelligentsia, many of them educated in Europe and U.S.

(2) The power-base of these Marxist revolutionaries was the working class, and its trade unions.

But the "proletarian revolution", based on the Sinhalese working class and the "Indian" Tamil plantation proletariat, did not oblige the prophets. The British, the smartest of colonialists, had converted its "model" colony to a laboratory, their main experiments yielding lessons on the smooth transfer of power, the best-timed, the most tidy, and of course the most profitable.

They had already picked a leader, a giant named D.S. The only questions left were the mode and the timing of the transfer, to the Senanayake-led United National Party.

All went well, although the results of the first general election did sent out a somewhat disturbing signal to the ruling elite and their British trainers and jockeys. There was a strong (anti-UNP) opposition.

The very first major 'conflict' (the word was not all that fashionable then) was sourced in family allegiance, and inevitably in a realm of human affairs dominated by the pursuit of power, the question of succession. D.S. had his son Dudley in mind, not his parliamentary deputy and natural heir, Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Leader of the House. In the emerging capitalist Ceylon, there were strong residual traces of feudalism and dynastic loyalty. The result? Bandaranaike launched the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, a moderate socialist party.... historically, a necessary, perfectly timed, benign intervention.

The UNP had been losing ground steadily. The alternative available to the electorate was a Marxist coalition, which if its pronouncements were to be taken seriously, would use Parliament to demolish

bourgeois institutions and install a socialist regime. Bandaranaike, for all his Oxford education had a far surer grasp of the mass mood, that is the Sinhala electorate, than the "champions" of the working classes. He was particularly sensitive to the aspirations of the Sinhala voters, and their increasingly vocal avant-garde, the *veda-guru-sangha* combination (monk, Sinhala teacher, ayurvedic physician).

The Oxford Union orator Bandaranaike had become a Buddhist, and sported national dress. He became the eloquent advocate of a new ethos, Sinhala as the official language, cultural revivalism (indigenous arts and crafts) nationalisation of foreign capitalist enterprises [the busiest port in the region, public transport owned by the bus *mudalalis* etc], — a heady, policy cocktail. The 'mixed economy' was matched in the field of foreign policy by a vigorous Third Worldism or activist nonalignment, the second to become the platform on which Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike was become an international figure.

ANTI-TAMIL

Unfortunately, the domestic policies of both S.W.R.D. and Sirima Bandaranaike — Sinhala only and the pro-Buddhist line, particularly on the schools take over — were destined to create an entirely negative image among the national minorities, specially the Tamils and the Christians. It was Sinhala only that finally produced Prabhakaran, altering fundamentally the **mode** of Tamil protest from parliamentarist and public agitation to violent gestures, until it gave birth not only to an armed secessionist movement but to the toughest exponents of undiluted terror, the Eelam Tigers. A look at the World today is to recognise the phenomenon of 'identi-

ty conflicts', nearly all inspired by language or religion.

The Sri Lankan conflict resulted in military intervention — albeit by invitation, the Gandhi-Jayawardene Accord. But 60-70,000 Indian troops could not crush the 3-4,000 strong guerilla group. The IPKF was asked to withdraw, by President Jayawardene's elected successor, President Premadasa. The 'war' costs over a million dollars a day, swelling a defence vote which is over 5% of GDP. Meanwhile the LTTE has become one of the first secessionist guerrilla groups to establish a naval arm, and now experiment with "flying objects"!

PEACE CANDIDATE

Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge, the younger daughter of Prime Ministers' Solomon and Sirima Bandaranaike, is the child of the 1956 revolution, both its achievements and those policies that produced or exacerbated tensions in our multi-ethnic society, and under-developed dependent "Third World" economy.

She has been brave enough to recognise the problem and the urgent need to resolve the conflicts produced by such deep-rooted resentments — whether it be the armed struggle of the separatist Tamils or the strikes, demos, *gheraos* of lower-middle class youth, workers, and trade unions. With each passing week and each confrontation, the P.A.'s strength is proving to be less than sufficient to meet the assorted challenges. The confrontations of the past fortnight reveal the following:

(1) The charisma of Chandrika is the PA's principal strength — underscored by the 64% as against the 50% at the mid-August general election.

(2) Though she goes through the ceremonies of consultation, compromise and consensus — the Premadasaist mantram — it is as much a "one woman show" as the original was a "one superman show".

(3) The AMO/RMO strike was settled only to produce a GMOA strike — a plan lack of administrative experience.

(4) Prof. G.L. Pieris, a scholar of the highest rank, "boasted" on TV he had settled 44 strikes — leaving the audience, including reporters, diplomats, wire services, foreign businessmen, would be investors to ask "How many UNRESOLVED disputes? Image of instability.

(5) The ideologically assorted grand coalition exposes different tendencies,

the radical-Left and the unions more demonstrative and vocal than the conservative SLFP middle. The PA lacks cohesion.

(6) The VOA-Church-NGO's-Buddhist clergy etc involved IRANAWILA issue reveals the diversity and the confusion. Diversity could be a source of strength but right now it is an all-too visible sign of discord.

The Scholars' Tale — 21

*The warp and Weave of Unfolding Tapestry
Caught in clawing crimson the passing Century
Swift with blood and flames from the unlucky start
So that even Hiroshima was soon past the State of the Art
Even such calculated extermination
Cold and relentless in its mid Century notation
Retgressed to savage ethnic engineering
That left old Genghis and Timur seem still learning*

*So the Global linkage on the Capital net
When famed Imperial suns began to set
Signalled each variation of the Holocaust
The shameful theme this Century will Outlast*

*As our Hero tuned his Programme interface
To the fossil Code on Money's Master Plate
The warped genetics in Capital's Recession gene
Proved by no means a repro-recessive theme*

*Just when the Jones' had never had it so good
The Syndrome surfaced with dire Depression's brood
Thus Global immunity to the Slumping Sickness
Was increasingly deficient despite Hi-Tech trimness.
To the sophistication of the Century's last Quarter
The Writing on the Wall was the chill curt Answer
Since the launch-pad kill could not spike the Economy
Only Ethnicity maybe could end the Monotony*

*So commencing with the Jewel in the Crown
Race and religion falconed the cruel Count down
The Holy lands of Capital needed Salvation
The Indies, Cathay, Araby, Byzantium and the Balkans.
The Empire with the Frenzied fires of Hate
Held Ethiopia, Angola and Afganistan at the Stake*

*Linking Lanka on this Global Programme
Our, Hero waited, reading Arms and the Man*

U. Karunatilake

The Pope's Best-Seller

Alan Friedman

Call it a publisher's dream. Or better still, the answer to every agent's prayers.

The Pope has written a book, the first by a sitting Pontiff that is not a theological treatise but is to be marketed as a potential bestseller.

Earlier this year, in utmost secrecy, the Vatican gave world rights to the book to Leonardo Mondadori, chairman of the eponymous Italian publishing house.

The advance paid by Mr. Mondadori, who is a devout Catholic, was zero. This is because all royalties on the Pope's book, which is likely to be translated into more than 20 languages, will go to charity.

Those involved calculate the book could sell more than 10 million copies worldwide, meaning that revenues from hardcover and paperback global retail sales would come to more than US \$ 100 million.

In late March, with Pope John Paul II still completing his handwritten manuscript in Polish, Mr. Mondadori contacted the New York superagent Mort Janklow to sell world English rights. And recently Mr. Janklow sold those rights to Random House for an advance estimated to be more than \$ 6 million.

For the 74-year-old Pope, the book of essays — "Crossing the Threshold of Hope" — is a chance to convey his innermost thoughts about life and religion to readers around the world. His previously published works include catechisms, plays written in his youth in Krukow, and a collection of poetry.

For the publishers and agents, handling a book written by the spiritual leader of more than 900 million Catholics is commercial heaven.

Mr. Janklow, who said he was "flattered"

to be asked to become the Pope's agent, is forecasting big sales. "I think this book will see the kinds of numbers that are stratospheric", he said in an interview.

Indirectly, the deal will also bring prestige to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, who still controls 47 percent of Mondadori, having last month sold majority control of the Milan-based publisher in an international stock offering.

The royalties will be handled through a special account being set up at the Istituto per le Opere di Religione, the Vatican bank.

Mr. Mondadori signed the contract on June 30 with Joaquin Navarro the Vatican spokesman who was acting on the Pope's behalf. He received the 35-chapter volume, which will make for a 230-page book when it is published this fall, only after it had been translated by the Vatican from Polish to Italian.

Mr. Janklow, who is believed to be getting his usual 15 percent commission, refused to disclose the precise advance he had won from Random House, which will publish the book in the United States under its Alfred A. Knopf imprint, and in Britain, Australia and New Zealand through Jonathan Cape, a British subsidiary.

He calls the book "a tremendous literary idea and a tremendous commercial idea". He says the book is "about the role of religion generally, and Catholicism particularly about the role of spirituality in a changing world". And, he adds, "It also deals with God and his relationship to man, and man's relationship to God".

Mr. Janklow, whose clients have included Sidney Sheldon, Judith Krantz, Danielle Steele and former President Ronald Reagan, figures "this will be one of those books that will cross over" between Catholics and non-Catholics the world over.

Mr. Mondadori, who has read the book, said that perusing it "is like having a personal audience with the Pope in your own home".

The book evolved after the Pope cancelled what would have been his first television interview, with the Italian journalist Vittorio Messori, last autumn. After the interview was annulled, the Pope began writing essays in his spare time that corresponded to the 20 questions Mr. Messori had submitted in writing. These questions, expanded to 35, formed the basis of the Pope's spontaneous authorial effort.

Sonny Mehta, the president of Knopf who handled the rights purchase along with Alberto Vitale, the Random House chairman, said, "I think it's probably going to be one of the most important books we've ever published".

Carmen Balcells, the Barcelona-based agent who also handles Colombia's best-selling author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, will sell world Spanish language rights. These could fetch as much as US \$ 2 million in advance money, while the other big prospective markets are thought to be Germany and France.

In France, Mr. Mondadori already has set things in motion. In early June he met in Paris with Ivan Nabokov, nephew of Vladimir Nabokov and head of Editions Plon, which published the Pope's last catechism.

"The Holy Father," Mr. Mondadori recalled, "gave us an indication of his French publisher through his spokesman Mr. Navarro, and we are still talking.

"This autumn, the Pope is scheduled to visit the United States, probably just before the book appears. But this is an ecclesiastical visit rather than a promotional book tour.

Urban Poor: The Sri Lankan Experience

Susil Sirivardana

Sri Lanka is a particularly rich case for the study of Urban Poverty Alleviation through Community Based Programmes. The specific mix of pro poor and non pro poor experiences and initiatives played out between the people and the state, is an inviting field for the learner and the analyst. **What is perhaps unique is search for coherence and systemic change.** In 1993 its Human Development Index rank was 83, way above her South Asian neighbour. Yet it is been wracked by **deep political crisis**, manifesting itself in youth insurgency and protracted ethnic war. The purpose of this essay is to **get a clearer perspective into core areas issues, and move beyond stereotypes and mystification.** These core areas and issues would be fruitful for the discussions at the regional Workshop on Community Based Programmes for Urban Poverty Alleviation.

The essay is in five parts. It opens with an overview sketch of the general perspective and the urban context. Thereafter, we move on to a macro outlining of the main Poverty Alleviation policies and programmes, including their urban sector application. The third section focusses on the micro experience of poverty alleviation in the capital city Colombo, and aspects of urban housing. The fourth section deals with the issue of the strategic option which in my opinion, is the **crux** of the search for a coherent breakthrough in urban poverty. This is done by scrutinising in some detail the innovative initiatives of selected CBOs and NGOs, who have graduated out of the process as it were. In the final section, we reflectively frame a set of critical and strategic issues, which must be addressed in depth, if the search and praxis is to move into its next productive phase.

1. Perspective and context

1.1 Liberalization, Crisis and Response 1977-94

Sri Lanka liberalized and opened her economy in 1977. She was the first South Asian state to do so. The impact was far-reaching and systemic. Now with hindsight, we are able to see how different segments of civil society and the state responded.

The liberalization process basically produced a set of contradictory outcomes. While there was high growth and high short term employment, it was accompanied by a parallel process of pauperisation, widening social inequities, ethnic war and youth insurgency. In other words while the opening up produced an accelerated development process, it also produced its own counter-development process. The pre 1988 structural adjustment package produced deep social stresses in the form of increased malnutrition, increased school dropouts, stunting and wasting of children, and worsening income distribution¹. There were new safety nets introduced in the form of Food Stamps, but they were sorely inadequate, especially in the shorter term impacts of adjustment. Obviously, there was something essential missing in the initial liberalization response.

The post 1988 period tried very hard to put the corrective. System-wide crisis, in the form of youth insurgency (1987-89) and ethnic war, demanded a daring and unconventional response. The crisis was also the oppor-

tnuity for system change. The response took the form of immediately putting in place a **second macro economic policy leg in the form of a national poverty alleviation programme and strategy called Janasaviya.** In actual fact, the response was multi-faceted in that a **whole pro poor policy package** was tried out. What made it fundamentally different in quality and content — not more of the same — was its basic methodological premise. While the pre 88 state system worked on the basis of top down delivery-oriented bureaucratic strategies, the new post 88 pro poor order was based on **mobilizational strategies, involving capacity building and organizations of the poor.** This was an attempt at a major paradigm shift.

1.2 Urbanisation

Let us take a quick overview of the Sri Lankan urban scene. It has 51 Urban Local Authorities. They are subdivided into 13 Municipal councils and 38 Urban Councils.

Table 1. Sri Lanka: Population growth and urban population growth annual growth rates

	Annual growth rates						
	1953	1963	1971	1981	1963-71	1971-81	1963-81
Population (000)	8,098	10,582	12,690	14,848	2.3	1.6	1.9
Urban							
Population (000)	1,239	2,016	2,848	3,192	4.4	1.2	2.6
Percent Urban	15.3	19.1	22.4	21.5	-	-	-

Source: 1981 Population Census, Department of Census & Statistics

The above Table shows that the urban population growth rate declined since 1953 from 4.4% between 1963 and 1971 to 1.2% between 1971 to 1981. This resulted in a 2.6% urban population growth rate for the period 1963 to 1981. For the period 1971-81, urban growth rate for the period 1963 to 1981. For the period 1971-81, urban growth was actually slower than total population growth. Another point is that while the share of urban population has been progressively rising during 1953, 1963 and 1971, it has actually **fallen** to 21.5% during 1971 to 1981 period. This is an uncommon trend.

Several factors have contributed to these low growth rates and pattern of urbanization. Sustained investment and emphasis for broad based rural development and decentralization, originating during the 1930s and continuing unbroken thereafter, have offered rural people life choices in the village itself. Cheap transportation and comparatively short distances have enabled easy commutation from villages to urban areas. The success of family planning programmes has also felt. The relative lack of industries in urban areas outside of Colombo is another factor.

Table 2 lists the population of the principal towns. The primacy of the Colombo Metropolitan Area with its cluster of suburban towns — Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia, Moratuwa, Kotte, Negombo, Gampaha, Kulutara and Panadura.

Table 2. Population of principal towns (thousands)

Principal Town	1981	1983 (1)	1984 (1)	1985 (1)	1986 (1)
Colombo	589	623	643	664	681
Dehiwala-Mt. Lavinia	175	181	184	188	191
Jaffna	119	128	133	138	143
Moratuwa	136	137	138	138	138
Kotte	101	102	102	102	104
Kandy	99	114	120	125	130
Galle	78	88	95	102	104
Negombo	62	68	72	76	79
Trincomalle	45	48	50	51	52
Matara	39	47	52	57	62
Anuradhapura	36	41	44	46	48
Badulla	33	39	42	44	47
Kalutara	32	39	43	47	51
Batticaloa	43	45	46	47	49
Matale	31	36	39	41	45
Ratnapura	37	44	47	51	54
Kurunegala	27	36	40	44	49
Nuwaraeliya	22	22	23	24	25
Chilaw	21	24	24	26	29
Puttalam	22	23	24	25	27
Kegalle	16	17	17	21	24
Mannar	15	16	17	18	18
Vavuniya	19	20	21	22	22
Hambantota	09	11	12	13	14
Total	1,806	1,949	2,035	2,110	2,186

Source: Registrar-General's Department, Department of Census & Statistics
 Note: (1) Provisional (PADCO 1990)

Table 3 gives a breakup of the urban population classified by Town Size for two different periods, 1953 and 1981.

Quite extraordinarily, one of the biggest increases (534.6%) in population has occurred, not in the biggest segment of towns by size, but in the third segment of towns containing population of 20-50,000. The biggest increase of 622.5% has occurred in the fifth segment of small towns with populations ranging from 5-10,000 people. This suggests that the impacts of suburbanization are **predominantly in small and intermediate towns**. That is also where growth is dominant. These features are noticeable mostly for the period of the late 1970s and the 1980s. The trend is concentrated around Colombo. However, a point to note is that the conventional authority based definition of 'urban' to mean Municipal and Urban Councils, means that suburban growth was not classified as 'urban growth'. So, we may conclude that the urban sector comprising an urban core, its periphery and the suburbs, probably represents a higher proportion of the national population than is apparent from the official share of urban population.

There is a gap in more recent data as the 1991 decennial census was not done on account of the freak population movements arising from the long-drawn northern civil war. However, the Colombo Municipal Council states that the current resident population of Colombo is 1,000,000 where approximately 300,000 are displaced from the north. In addition, its floating and commuting population is estimated at 500,000.

Table 3. Sri Lanka urban population classified by town size

Town size	No. of towns	1953 urban population towns	Percent of total popula.	Number of	1981 urban population 1953-81	Percent of total	%	change urban
100,000+	1	426,127	28.9	5	1,115,265	37.8	+	161.7
50-100,000	6	383,038	26.9	4	292,132	6.1	-	23.8
20-50,000	6	154,727	10.5	31	981,837	30.4	+	534.6
10-20,000	15	213,150	14.5	34	498,002	16.5	+	133.6
5-10,000	4	29,691	13.8	30	214,521	6.2	+	622.5
5,000	11	37,400	6.3	30	90,832	3.0	+	180.4
Total	43	1,239,133	100.0	134	3,192,489	100.0	+	117.9

Source: Statistical Abstracts 1985, Department of Census and Statistics ADB, Urban Sector profile. (PADCO 1990)

Table 4. Distribution poor relief stamps (food stamps) under public assistance programme all Island (Sri Lanka) for the year 1987

Districts	Number of persons receiving stamps	Mid year population	Percent of population who receive stamps	Provincial average
Colombo	337,833	1,833,000	18.4	-
Gampaha	505,125	1,535,000	32.9	-
Kalutara	379,839	896,000	41.4	(28)
Kandy	487,913	1,075,000	45.4	-
Matale	218,072	386,000	56.5	-
Nuwaraeliya	151,326	617,000	24.5	(41)
Galle	364,720	867,000	42.1	-
Matara	290,872	682,000	42.6	-
Hambantota	234,872	480,000	48.9	(44)
Jaffna	694,648	919,000	75.7	-
Mannar	79,030	128,000	61.7	-
Vavuniya	80,757	118,000	68.4	-
Mullativu	63,047	100,000	63.0	(67)
Batticaloa	270,008	379,000	71.2	-
Amparai	287,702	466,000	61.7	-
Trincomalle	151,803	301,000	50.4	-
Kurunegala	744,055	1,335,000	55.7	-
Puttalam	331,487	568,000	58.4	(57)
Anuradhapura	308,405	720,000	42.8	-
Polonnaruwa	119,425	327,000	36.5	(41)
Badulla	238,018	658,000	36.1	-
Moneragala	218,493	327,000	66.8	(46)
Ratnapura	465,399	879,000	52.9	-
Kegalle	331,169	713,000	46.4	(50)
Total	7,345,018	16,309,000	45.0	-

Source: Department of Social Services, Sri Lanka 1987, Unpublished data and Health Bulletin, 1986.
 Published by the Ministry of Health of Sri Lanka. As quoted in ADB Urban Sector Profile (P.30) (PADCO 1990).

Overall, up to the 1980s, the dominant feature of Sri Lankan urbanization is its **moderate and balanced character**. Internal migration has been more from rural to rural than from rural to urban. But it is most likely, that the decade of the mid 80s and the 90s, has seen a much greater influx into the Colombo Metropolitan Area.

1.3 Urban Poverty

A fairly simple but telling index of Colombo's urban poverty is afforded by Table 4 below, which is a district-wise breakdown of Food Stamp receivers for the year 1987. What is at once noticeable is, that of all twenty five districts in the island, Colombo district is the only one with a percentage below 20 (the actual being 18.4%), with the next lowest being 24.5%.

Ratnayake (1994) has offered the following summarized characteristics of the urban poor.

- (a) The majority are working in the informal sector as casual construction labour, in factories, in retail trade, in transport, in personal services etc. Petty trading is particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of the informal market. Their incomes are uneven and unstable.
- (b) Some of the recent migrants — mainly female — who are employed in the garment factories of the Free Trade Zone, though employed, find that their wages are inadequate. They are a new category of 'employed poor'.
- (c) Some find employment in poorly paid industries which are prone to unpredictable changes in employment conditions (seasonal employment, temporary shutdowns).
- (d) Single parent households are particularly vulnerable and susceptible to fluctuations in income and the increased cost of child care. Such mothers have restraints on working because of their obligations to their children. The absence of extended family networks reinforces these vulnerabilities.

The following additional characteristics are also noteworthy.

- (a) As a reservoir of immense hidden creativity, ingenuity, effort, efficiency and leadership, the urban poor constitute an indispensable resource. In this respect, can one for a moment think of our cities and towns functioning without **their** contribution to urban GDP?
- (b) The poor are supported by an infrastructure of micro processes and networks which are part an parcel of the informal sector. They are strategic in sustaining the informals as a productive constituency.
- (c) Poor women have distinguished themselves as a community of persons with **great qualities of integrity, commitment, tenacity, leadership, responsibility and culture**. Poor women are subject to the triple burden of being mothers managers of households and being poor.

Focusing on housing stock and its quality in Colombo, gives us an idea of urban poverty. The position is as follows:

Permanent Dwellings	40,861	
Slum Settlements	22,358	in 700 locations
Shanty Settlements	20,685	in 750 locations
Total Units	83,904	

Bearing in mind that both slum and shanty settlements are quite heterogeneous in income terms, it would be generally correct that they contain a concentration of the urban poor.

1.4 Poverty Line

The position of the poverty line before and after the watershed of 1988/89 are different. Prior to 1988, the position was that there were many poverty lines, each being derived from within particular programmes. The mainstream poverty line then as now was the Food Stamp cut off point, which was Rs. 700/- or US\$ 14.50 monthly family income. However after 1988, utilising the initial experience of the Janasaviya Programme, an attempt was made to systematise this inconsistency. Based on the experience in family identification of the Very Poor by the communities themselves, the following threefold categorization of the poor was introduced in 1990 and is yet functional.

1. Very Poor Families below Rs. 700/- a month: where no member of the family has an earning capacity: these accessed to Public Assistance.
2. The very Poor Families: those whose asset bases and monthly family incomes were less than Rs 700/- a month, they access to the Janasaviya Programme benefits in Divisions coming within each Round of the Programme.
3. The Less Poor Families: those whose monthly family incomes are between Rs. 700/- and Rs. 1,500/- are also poor, but they have slightly better asset bases: they access to all other development benefits excepting the Janasaviya Programme.

The distinction between the Very Poor and the Less Poor was found to be extremely functional in the Sri Lankan context. The idea was to harden the targeting and net in only the Very Poor for the Janasaviya Programme. But for all other poverty alleviation purposes, including the Janasaviya Trust Fund, those below Rs. 1,500/- a month constitute the poor. It is only in Janasaviya Programme that the Very Poor/Less Poor distinction is relevant.

Though this reform was an attempt at having a new order regarding the categorization of the Poor, that has not been possible. For example, the National Housing Development Authority uses the cut-off points of Rs. 4,000/- or US\$ 83 for the urban poor and Rs. 3,500/- or US\$ 73 for the rural. This figure is close to the cut-off point quoted by the CBOs/NGOs participating in the Workshop, which is Rs. 3,000/- a month or US\$ 62.50.

2. Macro poverty alleviation policy and programmes

2.1 The Janasaviya Programme

The new national Poverty Alleviation policy and programme was the centrepiece of the new President's plan of action, initiated in December 1988. It was called the Janasaviya Programme. Janasaviya means "**people's capacity-creativity-power**". It was spearheaded personally by the Head of State, whose vision and innovation it was. It was also the lead programme of the new government.

Its implementation was to encompass the whole country over eleven Rounds or cycles. Each round covered anything between 20-28 Divisions. These were not concentrated but distributed across each of the 25 Districts. As of today, four rounds comprising 99 Divisions have been implemented. The fifth round will commence in June 94 with an additional 26 Divisions,

bringing the total upto 125 Divisions. This is well above one-third of the country as the country's total number of Divisions is 301. Upto now 455,132 poorest of the poor families have participated. They have been identified out of a total of 1,118,331 families.

The Programme is perceived almost wholly as process. The whole process has been well captured in the six Janasaviya principles.

1. Trust the people, especially the poor.
2. People, decide and do: others support them.
3. The Poor should be separately organised.
4. A countrywide process of learning by doing.
5. Always do what is just and right.
6. All procedures to be open and transparent.

The main features of the Programme can be summarised thus:

1. **Identification of the Poor:** The Poor are identified by their peers in the hamlet through an open, community based process. The threefold categorization of the poor is used, plus a fourth sub-category, the Youth of the Very Poor families and the

Youth of the Less Poor families. Identification is facilitated by the application of Divisionally derived local criteria relating to employment, asset bases, earnings from casual employment etc.

2. **Two mutually reinforcing streams of direct support:** Each poor family, irrespective of size, enjoys two infusions of direct support. One, for human development and living, valued at Rs. 1,458/- or US\$ 30, is available for a fixed twenty four month time period. This takes the form of food and non-food articles. It is also tied to a regime of productive work. One member of each family must put in 20 days of work (primarily for the benefit of the family) and participate in four days of community review of actual work done. The second infusion of support is for investment and income generation. It takes the form of access to credit when the family is ready with a feasible project.

(To be Continued)

Note

1. Sri Lanka: The Social Impact of Economic Policies during the last decade — A Special Study, UNICEF, Colombo, June 1985.

The partition option

S. D. Muni

One of the proposals formulated by Pakistan under "six alternatives" for resolving the Kashmir question is to partition Jammu and Kashmir. In such a partition, Pakistan wants to retain the Northern territories, Mirpur and Poonch which it already has under its illegal occupation, and add to it Ladakh and the entire Valley of Kashmir. The only area that Pakistan is prepared to concede to India is Jammu. Notwithstanding diplomatic fanfare attached by Pakistan's Foreign Minister Sardar Aseef Ahmed Ali in making this proposal, there is nothing new in it.

The idea of a partition-based solution was first mooted by India as early as in 1948, when futility of the UN efforts to resolve the question through plebiscite had become clear to all concerned. In such a partition, India was willing to concede Gilgit, Poonch and Mirpur to Pakistan if in return India's claims on the Valley, Ladakh and Jammu are recognised by Pakistan. Nehru sounded the idea on his Pakistani counterpart Mohammad Ali Jinnah but there was no response. India then informally mentioned it to the US for

taking initiative in this regard as India was not willing to put forth this proposal formally and openly as this was incompatible with the spirit of J & K's accession to India and also in conflict with Nehru's publicly stated position both within the country as well as in the UN.

US stance

The US did not favour any initiative on the partition option initially. While maintaining that any proposal mutually agreed by India and Pakistan could be considered, the US continued to resist the partition option. In November 1948 it managed to keep the option out of the Report submitted to the Security Council by the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan. In 1952, the State Department cautioned Mr Chester Bowles, its Ambassador in India, from pursuing the proposal and asked him to discourage India from pressing for it. There were various considerations behind this US reluctance. The US, along with its close ally on the issue, the British, wanted to keep the issue engaged in the UN and use it to build the Western influence and clout in the subcontinent, particularly in Pakistan. An acceptance of the partition option as suggested by India, it was thought by the West, would

recognise the *fait accompli* of Indian position, deny any share of the Valley to Pakistan and thus alienate the latter from the West. The US Representative in the UN, Ambassador Huddle, clearly underlined this concern in his communication to the State Department of November 1, 1948. In the overall strategic perception of the US for South Asia, which was being evolved in close consultation with the British, nothing could be done to alienate Pakistan. That would have hindered the Western plans being finalised at that time, to get Pakistan recruited in their strategic schemes and military pacts for 'Middle East' and South Asia.

Ceasefire line

In the face of the UN-exhausting its patience and efforts to resolve the Kashmir problem to the satisfaction of both the West and Pakistan, the US was forced to give up its reluctance on initiating moves towards a partition-based solution of the Kashmir problem. The US Secretary of States, Mr Dulles, came round the view during 1957 that cease-fire line between India and Pakistan may be adjusted somewhat to Pakistan's advantage to compensate for India's hold over the Valley. This position was altered due to the influence

Prof. Muni of the Nehru University specialises on South Asian security issues.

nances of the British and the US Defence Department and lower State bureaucracy, in favour of complicated criteria for partition, based on geographical contiguity, administrative divisions, religious concentration and potential hydropower schemes. This was to accommodate the Pakistani interests as far as possible. However, when Pakistani Prime Minister Feroz Khan Noon was sounded on the partition proposal in 1958 he was not willing to concede anything more than Jammu to India. President Eisenhower, concerned with the rising Chinese challenge to South Asian security, asked Pakistan's President Ayub Khan in December 1959 to accept a permanent partition of Kashmir along the "present armistice line" but Ayub's response was an emphatic No. Explaining his response, Ayub drew Eisenhower's attention to the location of the "vital communication systems" of Pakistan such as roads, military establishments and "no fly zones" covered under the US Strategic Air Command facilities in Pakistan. Ayub argued that a partition-based solution would bring India within fifteen miles of some of these facilities which would be too close for comfort to Pakistan. President Eisenhower did not pursue the matter further as some of these facilities were set up under the US military assistance to Pakistan and the Defence Department would have strongly supported Pakistani position for their stakes in keeping Pakistan as a military ally. But the State Department in a Policy Planning paper prepared in November 1960 under the title, "Another Look at the Kashmir Problem" again concluded that partition with special arrangements for the Valley was the "most realistic solution". Objectively, the view that the partition option presented the most pragmatic approach to resolving the Kashmir question was expressed in the US establishment on many occasions even earlier.

An opportunity to test the partition-based approach came when the US, in the context of China's military aggression against India in October 1962, pressured India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir question. In the six rounds of negotiations which took place between the two countries during 1962-63, India went to the extent of offering more than 1,500 sq. miles in the north-eastern sector of the Valley, in Poonch and Kishan Ganga

areas, but Pakistan would not consider anything less than the whole of the Kashmir Valley.

Concessions

The US pressured India to make further "substantial" concessions to Pakistan in the Valley but even that would not have satisfied Pakistan. Because by now, the Ayub regime had become disenchanted with the US and through the active initiatives and efforts of Foreign Minister Bhutto, it was cultivating China as a counter-weight to India. Towards that end, it had ceded a sizeable chunk of territory in Kashmir to China along the border, to clinch a boundary agreement in December 1962, barely two months after the Chinese attack on India and at a time when the first round of India-Pakistan talks, induced by the Western powers, had commenced in Rawalpindi. When these talks were being concluded in New Delhi in May 1963, without any results, India's then Foreign Secretary, Mr Y. D. Gunde-
via, even pleaded with Mr Bhutto that by being unrealistic on the partition package offered by India, he was vitiating the best chance in history available to the two neighbours to arrive at an amicable settlement of the disputed legacy. Mr Bhutto was not quite moved by such pleas.

This being the background of the partition proposal and Pakistan's lack of sincerity in pursuing it, the revival of the proposal and its thirty-year old stance by Pakistan is interesting, if not intriguing.

Alternatives

The announcement of "six alternatives" by Pakistan soon after its diplomatic debacle in New York seems to be aimed at conveying different messages to the home and the international audiences. At home, it is meant to reiterate the traditional stand and telling the Pakistani masses that the government has not run out of its options. Since the "alternatives" have been attached with the condition of "India coming to the negotiating table with a political will to solve the problem", the announcement also intends to project the governments stand that, if at all, India will have to talk to Pakistan on Kashmir on the terms dictated by Islamabad. The hollowness of the governments posturing on Kashmir through the announcement of "six alternatives" has already been co-

mmenced upon by the opposition leader Mr Nawaz Sharif.

Pakistan is becoming acutely conscious of the fact that the sympathies of its traditional friends for its stand on Kashmir are fast getting eroded. With regard to the partition option in particular, Pakistan seems worried that its obstinacy may force the US to shift its position to the disadvantage of Pakistan. There are some indirect indications in that direction. An American expert, James Clad, had written in newspapers and also argued in his Congressional testimony in May 1993 that solution of Kashmir problem may be sought along the cease-fire line. Again in April 1994, a powerful Democratic Party leader in the Congress, Representative Lee H. Hamilton, said in his address in Asia Society: "Over the course of four plus decades, the line of control dividing Kashmir has taken on the attributes of an international border.... The only realistic solution may be to recognise the Line of Control as the international border between Pakistan and India — provided, of course, that the political and human rights grievances of the Kashmiris are met".

Pakistan is fully aware of the fact that the partition option as spelled out by Foreign Minister Ali is a non-starter. It cannot befool the world as a cover for not engaging in constructive discussions with India.

LETTER

No electricity yet in Jaffna

In your news background of *Lanka Guardian* of September 15, 1994, your contention 'lights have been switched on again in the streets and homes of Jaffna, is not correct. I was in Jaffna, for a week last month, and I found few streets lit with kerosene oil lamps and the houses too have this facility.

The Powers that be have so far failed to take any meaningful steps to restore electricity supply to Jaffna.

S. Mavadiyan

Vavuniya.

Censorship and Society: Some Reflections

G. L. Pieris

The role of Censorship in modern society is a matter which warrants earnest consideration in the troubled times in which we now live. During periods of crisis all communities recognise the need for some form of censorship. There are occasions when, in the interest of public harmony and peace, dissemination of news and comments on some aspects of contemporary events need to be controlled. In particular, where there is reason to think that racial or religious passions are likely to be inflamed, there is a paramount need for some degree of censorship. This is equally applicable to situations involving public security.

However, the point which needs to be stressed in the context of any society which values the democratic way of life is that the occasions when censorship is regarded as legitimate and appropriate must be treated very much as the exception rather than the rule. The best form of restraint is exercised through self censorship. Voluntariness and spontaneity have intrinsic value in this field. It is only when this kind of restraint turns out to be futile that compulsory censorship by having recourse to the law needs to be contemplated.

This is especially true because of the character of the modern age. Ours is an era of sophisticated technology, particularly in the area of mass communication. Given the conditions of such a society, it is exceedingly difficult and indeed impractical to suppress news with regard to matters in which the public has an interest. If this is sought to be done, the negative result all too often is that the media begin to lose credibility. What is whispered and speculated upon becomes easily identified as the truth. Besides, it will be found that the international media will give extensive coverage to events which are sought to be relegated to the background locally.

In these circumstances the essence of censorship in modern society is the delicacy of the balance which needs to be struck between freedom and order, between the values of self expression and security of

the community as a whole. This is an area in which the formulation and the implementation of constructive measures calls for the perception and involvement of all who are concerned with the media.

The greatly increased sophistication of mass media and their significant role in moulding public opinion at the present time make it necessary for traditional principles of law to be refined and developed to ensure protection for the individual in the light of his greater vulnerability. The power of the printed word in the Press, the image conveyed by television and the dissemination of information and comment by radio has today assumed unparalleled proportions in shaping the attitudes of individuals to one another and to broad social questions. In societies where standards in public life are not consistently high, and where the opportunity for corruption is rampant, there is naturally a great deal which investigative journalism can accomplish to identify existing evils and to promote acceptable solutions. Lack of information often facilitates the perpetuation of vice, in spheres of public as well as private morality, so that exposure to public scrutiny often acts as an incentive for adherence to more exacting norms of integrity. These are contexts in which it is the duty of journalists committed to the ideals of their profession to ferret out information which is in the public interest and to give it suitable publicity in order to put problems in their proper perspective. There are many instances in which dishonourable acts connected with the use of public power or the exercise of administrative discretion have come to light as a result of the fearless initiative of journalists. With regard to the administration of justice and the suppression of crime, investigative journalism has a valuable role in making known to the public the facts of undetected crimes, so that information which may culminate in the discovery of the offender may be forthcoming. Risks attendant upon the use of drugs or certain forms of sexual behaviour may be emphasised in the public mind in consequence of the investigations of journalists and the publication of their findings. Fuller information in respect of such matters as patterns of unemployment, the causes of violent crime, problems connected with

law enforcement and the value of custodial sentences in controlling the spread of crime can frequently provide a basis for the formulation of sound policy. Where legislative action is contemplated in significant sectors of the economy, or in relation to particular industries or organizations, it has generally been the practice to appoint Commissions of Inquiry with a view to informing the mind of government in regard to the character and magnitude of existing problems. The fact finding functions which is a necessary prelude to the devising of approaches to a solution depends for its effectiveness on the free flow of information. Commissions which have been appointed in our country in recent years to probe matters like the problems of the film industry, the conduct of public examinations, the efficiency of the public transport system and the activities of Airlanka are examples of this.

The dramatic transformation of the structural framework of mass media, and the rapidity and accuracy with which information can be disseminated today because of unprecedented technological advances, are not merely a feature of life in any particular country but an international phenomenon. While these advances have placed in the hands of journalists the potential to do enormous good for society by encouraging the purity of social institutions, it is undeniable that there is also unlimited scope for the abuse of this potential. The power engendered by the complexity and sophistication of mass media can certainly be used for malicious purposes, or with ulterior motives, so as to inflict grievous harm on individuals and social groups. This reality enhances, to an extent unparalleled in the progress of civilization, the social responsibility of professional journalists. The law plays an important part in enforcing this responsibility in the interest of safeguarding the reputation and the wellbeing of the individual against unwarranted attack.

Modern social circumstances have made necessary a revamping of the principles of the law of defamation to afford the individual the requisite degree of protection. The Roman-Dutch Law of defamation, as it has been developed in its traditional mould, has steadfastly emphasised the concept of fault. The underlying

The former Vice Chancellor of the Colombo University, is now Minister of Justice & Constitutional Affairs.

premise was that the defendant was liable to compensate the plaintiff for injury to his reputation only if the defendant had reason to anticipate the likelihood that the plaintiff would be lowered in the esteem of society in consequence of words uttered or published by the defendant. Fault was therefore identified with moral blame, and the foundation of the law was that the defendant's duty to pay compensation depended on the imputation of culpability to him. This analysis was found to serve society adequately in regard to defamatory material contained in private communications.

However, modern courts, when confronted with problems arising from dissemination of defamatory statements on a far larger scale through the medium of newspapers or other similar publications, have felt the need to modify their approach basically. It is today an established principle in the modern Roman-Dutch Law as applied in Sri Lanka as well as in South Africa, that the proprietor of a newspaper is liable for defamatory statements embodied in his newspaper, whether he had knowledge of the existence of such defamatory material or not. It is no longer a defence, as it was in some situations in the classical law, that the proprietor of a newspaper was entirely free from moral blame since he neither knew, nor had reason to suspect, that the newspaper carried defamatory matter. Modern judges have gone so far as to suggest that

even the absence of negligence on the part of newspaper proprietors or editors makes no difference. This is, in substance, a form of strict liability which has been recognised by the prevailing law of defamation in respect of those who own or control mass media of communication. The basis of the modern law is that there is an absolute duty devolving on the proprietor of a newspaper to make certain that his publication is free of defamatory or other offensive material. It is incumbent upon him to adopt all necessary measures to achieve this result. If the precautions he takes, in the form of control mechanisms and delegation of responsibility to subordinate staff such as sub-editors, prove insufficient, the law holds him personally liable to compensate the party defamed for the wrongful impairment of his reputation.

The concept of strict liability is one which the Roman-Dutch Law regards with suspicion and even hostility. The philosophic foundations of the Roman-Dutch civil law are inextricably interlinked with ideas of moral and ethical culpability. However, the development which has taken place in the modern law of defamation represents a departure from this coherent pattern and is all the more significant because it is incompatible with values sustaining the traditional law. The reluctant acceptance of strict liability in relation to newspaper proprietors, editors and others in a comparable situation represents ack-

nowledgement by the modern law that the exceptional power they wield should carry with it a correspondingly onerous responsibility. Any principle which falls short of acceptance of this conclusion leaves the individual without the protection to which he is entitled. The decisive modification of legal values which this development entails can be explained only on the footing that a protective principle vis-a-vis the individual has been considered desirable in terms of social policy because of the virtually unlimited power which the media are capable of exercising today in respect of the individual.

The law of defamation is constructed on the basis of a compromise between competing social interests. On the one hand, the cultural tradition of the Roman-Dutch Law recognizes that an individual's interest in the integrity of his reputation is just as worthy of protection as his interest in his bodily wellbeing and in the possession of his property and assets. The entrenchment of personality, sentiment and feeling is an objective to which great importance has been attached by the principles of our law throughout their development. But there is another side to the coin. The law recognizes that the interest of society is placed in jeopardy if the individual's right to his reputation is protected to such an extent that freedom of expression and communication is significantly inhibited.

(To be continued)

PREMADASA POLICY

Tackling Rural Unemployment

Tisarane Gunasekera & Dayan Jayatilleka

A major component of the poverty alleviation effort of the Premadasa administration was addressing the problem of rural unemployment, which has assumed crisis proportions by the late 80's. The 200 Garment Factories Programme launched in 1992 was an attempt to combine the tasks of redressing rural poverty and unemployment with the export promotion drive. Though garments became one of Sri Lanka's major exports in the 80's, the industry was, in the main limited to the Free Trade Zone areas. Under Premadasa's 200 Garment Factories Programme, a garment factory was to be set up in each of the country's Assistant Government Agent (AGA) Divi-

sions. The factories were export oriented and the government offered an attractive investment package including preferential credit. **There were conditionalities imposed on the employers — regarding the number of workers to be employed, the minimum wage and the working conditions.** The objective was to ensure that the benefits of this rapidly growing industry are shared with the rural poor by harnessing the industry's potential to the task of rural development. As President Premadasa explained at the inauguration of the programme:

"...to what extent has the employment generated by the surge in growth of the

(garment) sector benefitted the economically impoverished rural areas and the silent millions? Did the employment generated lead to quality of life gains on the part of the workers? On the contrary, was there any deterioration?

Because of this high concentration in a few districts, the employment generated is being increasingly met by migrant labour. One of the sacrifices of labour to employer interest is separation from families and alienation. Taking note of the odds, such as the mechanical character of much of the work, the sub-standard nature of housing, the cost of relocation and commuting, lack of co-

mpensation in wages, it is a matter for wonder that there is any labour at all such employment in these districts.

The criteria and requirements of this Scheme are intended to cater to the needs of the neglected and the deprived sections of our people. They are intended to bring about equity and social justice.

One of its criteria is that garment factories will be dispensed among AGA Divisions throughout the country. No longer will the investors/convenience be the determining consideration. Each factory so established must employ around 500 workers. This is because they should make a substantial contribution to employment and income generation in the peripheral areas.

The salary of the individual worker should be a minimum of Rs. 2000/- per month. With it must go certain benefits such as a free breakfast, tea and medical attention at the work place. Employee welfare and employers interests are intricately inter-woven. Exploitative ideas are self-defeating. Recruitment to the work force will not be left to employers convenience. It will not be because, employment generated must respond to poverty alleviation strategies. Such strategies should incorporate distributive principles" (18).

The 200 garment factories programme constitutes a significant departure from the path of neo-liberalism. It combined government intervention in four important areas: poverty alleviation, employment generation, export promotion and industrialization. Though the factories were 100% privately owned, the state still retained the authority to make some of the key decisions such as the location, the number of employed, minimum wage and working conditions. The poverty alleviation component was further enhanced by the government order that all those employed should be members of Janasaviya families.

There has been a change in the original programme, in the aftermath of the assassination of Premadasa (only a total of 150 factories will be established and more than 100 are already in operation). Despite this and despite the unsubstantiated reports that some of the factories are in difficulties, this ambitious programme has made an indelible mark on our rural areas. The minimum wage requirement a significant step forward as Sri Lanka does not have a minimum wage regulations in ge-

neral. It also goes against the neo-liberal dogma of non-interference by the state in the labour market. The programme has also provided employment opportunities to not very well educated rural youth from poor families whose only other avenue of employment would have been domestic aides (chauffeurs, maids) here and abroad. The socio-cultural change this has given rise to, is an area which should be explored thoroughly by sociologists. The programme has also resulted in some infrastructural development in the rural areas such as roads and electricity. All this is likely to make a significant contribution to decrease rural — urban migration and bridge the gap between the cities and the countryside.

Since by 1988, the One Million Housing Programme has been completed successfully, a 1.5 Million Housing Programme was launched after Premadasa became the President in 1989. The purpose was to "simultaneously attack the twin problems of SHELTER and POVERTY. First it will provide basic and appropriate shelter to ALL THE NEEDY in the villages, towns and plantations. Second, it will simultaneously take steps to get them out of poverty... There will be specific programmes for each of the following segments of the population, whose need for housing is imperative:

1. Neediest of the Needy: those with no affordability at all.
2. The Needy: those who can afford small housing loans.
3. Plantation Workers: They will be incorporated into mainstream housing development in villages on estate land in the peripheries.
4. Middle Income Groups: those with moderate affordability.
5. For the first time, private sector employees and public servants will have access to credit for land and housing through the use of EPF/ETF funds as security" (19).

Another aspect of the Housing Programme was to choose an underdeveloped area and launch a number of development programmes which culminate in an exhibition cum fun fair every year.

The aspects of this Accelerated Integrated Development Programme includes Housing, Water Supply, Electrification, Education and Development Programmes, Health Services Programme, Agricultural and Irrigation Programmes (20).

Self Reliance of a New Type

Another corollary of the gigantic effort at alleviating poverty was the 15,000 Projects programme launched on April 14th, '93, less than a month before President Premadasa was assassinated by the fascist LTTE on May 1st, 1993. Under this programme, the government was to provide funds to build necessary public facilities such as roads, bridges, wells etc., in 15,000 under developed villages. The people of the villages were to make all the decisions including what the necessary public facility should be. The objectives were employment generation and fighting poverty by enabling the people to solve the problems of their village, themselves.

It is important to understand the context in which all these efforts were made. Sri Lanka is a totally aid and trade dependent country. Due to the economic devastation caused by the (then still ongoing) Polpotist uprising, the country was pushed in 1988 into seeking, and was granted, a Structural Adjustment Facility and subsequently an External Structural Adjustment Facility, by the IMF — with the usual conditionalities attached. This meant that the country was extremely vulnerable to external pressures regarding the kind of economic strategy it should adopt. The continuing war against the fascist LTTE is contributing to increasing this dependence on the donor countries and international financial institutions. It's in this context and within these considerable constraints that the Premadasa administration had to work.

President Premadasa's most important contribution was his effort to create an amalgam of export oriented open market economic policies and direct State intervention to alleviate poverty and raise the living standards of the labouring masses. This new amalgam can best be described by his own statement: "I'm a firm believer in entrepreneurial activity. However you must not interpret this to mean that I'm a champion of old style capitalism. If anything I'm for economic democracy" (21).

It's possible for us to now identify the main components of the new Development Paradigm that Premadasa strove to create.

1. **The pivotal role accorded to poverty alleviation.** Alleviation of poverty was the single common denominator of all Premadasa's development efforts. Helping the poor to help themselves was a key objective of all the major development programmes of

the Premadasa administration: "Because of Janasaviya a large number of people could get interested in development work. We can involve the people in various rural development programmes at village level... we have our Housing Programme. We can bring in the Janasaviya recipients into that programme. Today there is a programme to alienate land to those who do not have land. These people too could be brought into that programme" (22).

Other programmes such as the provision of free school uniforms and a free mid day meal to all school children were also directed at achieving this aim. What this entails is a holistic approach to the problem of poverty and the task of poverty alleviation. Also emphasised is the need for **direct action by the State** to achieve these aims. This constitutes a radical departure at both the level of concepts and praxis, from the neo-liberal dogma of 'trickle down' and allowing the free play of market forces to redress poverty at some future date. Instead of an unavoidable evil, poverty is regarded as a 'crime' and a 'social disease' which must be addressed immediately.

"Development, in any sense should help people live. Our party is aware that there is no meaning in any development that keeps the people in hunger and in malnutrition, leading to death. If hunger cannot be eliminated through science, and if it cannot eliminate sickness and physical weakness, we have no need for that science. If technology cannot eliminate poverty, unemployment, want, we have no need for that technology. If the scientists and the technologists cannot provide relief to the poor, what we need have humanity for such a scientist or technologist." (Providing Assets to the Assetless — 13.2.89).

2. **Prioritising Rural Development.** In Sri Lanka 79% (23) of the total population lives in rural areas. Yet rural development was not genuinely accorded priority by any of the previous administrations, however 'progressive'. A rural bias is clearly discernible in all Premadasa's development efforts as a deliberate and conscious attempt to redress a historic injustice. The directional thrust of

all key programmes was the upliftment of the rural poor (through the provision of houses and employment opportunities and through developing and modernising rural areas).

3. **A new role for the State.** During the years of the Premadasa administration the entrepreneurial role of the State declined markedly — as evidenced by the massive privatisation programmes. But simultaneously, the role of the State in the development process expanded rapidly. This was partly due to his new approach to development which regarded the alleviation of poverty as a sine qua non for genuine economic development. "I consider it a crime to tolerate poverty in any society. Whatever development we may bring about should be to the benefits of the poor" (24). This meant a vanguard role for the State in this broadly defined development process — to lead the struggle against poverty, underdevelopment, landlessness and unemployment. Since all economic activity (which was largely in the hands of the private sector) was supposed to be directed towards achieving these goals, enhanced state intervention in the development process became necessary to ensure the attainment of this objective.

State as the arbiter to ensure a measure of social and economic justice, not in the faraway future but in the present. We have termed this 'Direct Action by the State'.

4. **Emphasis on People Centered Development**

The development programmes launched by Premadasa entailed greater community participation and the devolution of decision making powers to the periphery and the grass roots. The emphasis was on involving the people in the development process not as instruments but as active participants and direct beneficiaries. The stated objective of State intervention was to empower the people. For example, under the Housing Programme, "the Government provided financial support, training of artisans and craftsmen and facilitating services. **The main thrust concentrated on maximum involvement of the builder families and encouragement of community participation**" (25). A similar approach is discernible in both the JSP and 15,000 projects programme.

For instance, under the 15,000 projects programme, the people of the selected village identify the project. The necessary funds are provided by the government and the responsibility of undertaking and completing the project completely rests with The best evidence is the 200 garment factories programme. This entails a different, new, more socially beneficial role for the people. (Though it's too early to say how well this approach has worked in practice — particularly in the aftermath of President Premadasa's assassination — there's evidence to think that at least in some instances it has been successful).

Next: A 3rd path?

Notes

14. A Charter for Democracy.
15. Land Commission - 1985.
16. Dept. of Census & Statistics and the Agrarian Research & Training Institute.
17. The land Task force identified 709, 846 areas of the state land to be distributed among landless people. Upto 31-12-92 327368 areas have been distributed among 353436 landless families. The majority of the allottees were Janasaviya recipients — Janasaviya Entitlement Certificate Holders.
18. The Address on the Establishment of Garment Industries at AGA Division Level — 18th February, 1992.
19. 'A New Vision, A New Deal' — the UNP's Presidential Election Manifesto — 1988.
20. The last such programme was in the Anuradhapura District. According to statistics given by Sirisena Cooray, the current Minister of Housing and Construction under the Accelerated Integrated Development Programme, the following development activities were completed or will be completed in the district within the course of the year; 15,755 houses newly built/renovated; 637 km of trunk roads and 819 km of rural roads renovated; 7 major water supply schemes constructed; 334 new Tube Wells sunk and 721 existing tube wells renovated. 52 Reawakened Villages, Model Villages and Urban Housing Schemes provided with electricity; 13 Rural Electrification Schemes commissioned; 335 schools provided with new buildings and other facilities through the Educational Development Programme; 281 agricultural wells constructed under the Agricultural & Irrigation Development Programme. Centre for the Promotion of Agro Based Exports Products set up.
Source: Daily News, June 24, '93.
21. A Charter for Democracy.
22. R. Premadasa — 4th Sept. 1989
23. 1991 figures — HDI Report, '93
24. R. Premadasa — 'Providing Assets to the Assetless' - 13.2.89.
25. R. Premadasa — Address at the International Shelter Seminar organized by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA - 28.7.76.

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Report on the establishment of a media training institute

At a meeting chaired by Hon. Ranil Wickremasinghe M.P., Prime Minister on August 16 1993 and attended by the Hon. Tyrone Fernando, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, the State Minister for Information and Broadcasting the Hon. A. J. Ranasinghe, as well as officials, journalists and others, it was decided to set up a committee to consider and report on the feasibility of establishing an institute for the training of journalists and others engaged in the media. The Committee comprising the following seven members was appointed by the Prime Minister.

1. Dr. Gamani Corea (Chairman)
2. Mr. Manik de Silva
3. Mr. Mervyn de Silva
4. Mr. B.H.S. Jayawardene
5. Mr. Edmund Ranasinghe
6. Mr. A. Sivanesaselvan
7. Dr. Sunananda Maddumabandara, Director of Government Information (Convenor)

In the past six months the Committee has had eleven sittings. It has benefited from the views of the major publishing firms, the leading journalists associations and unions, the Vice-Chancellors and staff members of the Universities engaged in the teaching of mass communications, and a representative of the Department of External Resources of the Ministry of Finance. The Committee also received a number of written submissions including the Report of a Seminar organised by the Department of Information on 17 & 18 August 1993. A list of those who appeared before the Committee as well as of written submissions is provided in the Annex to this Report.

Apart from the oral and written submissions, the Committee also found useful the experience of media training institutions in other parts of the World, particularly South Asia. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have already established training institutes to serve the rapidly expanding needs of the national media. Such examples, as well as the high degree of autonomy they enjoy, should serve as an encouragement to the effort to create comparable facilities in Sri Lanka.

The Need for a Training Institute

Journalism and other crucial aspects of media work require professional skills that are increasing in both range and intensity. The requirements of those engaged in this field extend beyond an aptitude for expression, a knowledge of legal constraints and an understanding of the technological aspects of the media. It embraces also an awareness of the wider processes at work in the world around them, both national and international, and an understanding of the goals and aspirations of the society in which

they live and work. Strong and competent national cadres of journalists and media workers serve also to counter or moderate the impact of the external media emanating from powerful world centres that has become so much a feature of the "communications revolution" of our time.

The need for professionalism in the media field has another, in fact more fundamental, dimension. In a recent seminar addressed by the Prime Minister on the theme of "Press Freedom"¹ a spirited debate on freedom of expression underlined the issue of moral and social responsibility and its link with professionalism, training facilities, codes of ethics and so on. As with other professions, it was argued, a self imposed ethical code must hold a professional answerable to the public for his or her conduct. Otherwise, the "power" of the press may be easily abused at the expense of the individual and the community². The purpose of training is thus not merely to improve skills and aptitudes but also to help establish, strengthen and preserve a sense of moral and social responsibility among the cadres engaged in the media field.

The need for a new initiative in the field of training of media personnel stems from such considerations as well as from the absence today of a well structured facility with a special focus on this objective. The journalist community in Sri Lanka is relatively large and has grown rapidly over the years. The Committee was informed that, if provincial correspondents were included, the numbers serving the major publishing houses already amount to about 1800. A further 600 journalists are said to be engaged in the smaller publishing houses. These figures do not include the growing number of persons occupied with the audio-visual media — broadcasting and television — for whom the arguments for specialised training and for broadened horizons are equally applicable. They do not either include those employed as information officers in the several agencies of government.

Yet, despite their number, these cadres, and specially those concerned with the print media, do not have at present any specialised training facility that has been designed specifically for their needs. In the past, these needs were largely met by in-service, or on-the-job, training when experienced journalists were able to devote sufficient time and energy to guiding junior cadres and new recruits. There was a reservoir of in-house talent which new entrants could freely tap in their own learning process. The requirements of that time were, in fact, met with such success that Sri Lanka, despite its size and modest resources, came to be widely regarded as a regional leader, even a trend setter, in the media field³. The situation today is

different. The relatively few skilled and experienced journalists are far too over-burdened with daily, high pressure, tasks to devote themselves to training functions. At the same time, the newspapers themselves are barely able mid-career journalists for training abroad at internationally reputed centres of excellence — even for relatively short courses that take up a few months.

The need to remedy this state of affairs has been recognised for some years. The Sri Lanka Press Council, established in 1973, had among its objectives the need (1) to ensure that newspapers and journalists maintain the highest standards of journalistic ethics and (11) to improve the standards of recruitment, education, welfare and training in the profession of journalism. The Universities in Sri Lanka themselves responded to the need for training in mass communication. In 1973 the University of Kelaniya established a Department of Mass Communications that conducts graduate and post-graduate courses. The University of Sri Jayawardenapura also provides courses related to journalism. The Open University has itself initiated "mass media" courses while the University of Colombo conducts both diploma and degree courses relating to the broad field of journalism⁴. In addition, training facilities are provided by the Sri Lanka Television Training Institute and the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Training Institute for personnel employed in the audio-visual media.

The Committee gave consideration to the relevance and adequacy of these facilities in the light of the need for the specialised training of media personnel. It had the benefit of highly valuable discussions with the Vice-Chancellors and other representatives of the Universities. The Committee felt that the existing facilities are of much value but that they do not supplant the need for a facility that is specially tailored to the training needs of working journalists and others actually employed by the media. In fact, once such a special facility or institute is established there could be a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between it and the universities.

The university courses have, generally speaking, an academic orientation embracing a range of subjects of relevance to mass communications. Many of these courses have their origins in the efforts of the universities to extend and rationalise their programmes to take account of issues that acquire a new relevance in a changing world. Their purpose is not exclusively the training of professionals. In fact, the students that pursue such courses are not essentially working journalists and the products of the campuses have yet to acquire positions of prominence in the operational media. The particular training needs of working journa-

lists call for a facility that is designed and essentially administered by the media itself. As mentioned such a facility — that should take the form of a specialised institute — should have a close working relationship with the universities and their programmes. The Committee was encouraged by the willingness of the university authorities to extend and develop such a relationship through such means as the sharing of staff and equipment and the launching of joint programmes.

The Functions of a Training Institute

In the light of the discussion above the Committee is of the view that the need is urgent to proceed with the establishment of a new institution specially devoted to the training of media personnel. The media training institute would be broadly committed to the "freedom of expression, including publication" guaranteed by the Constitution of Sri Lanka. Its aims and objectives should include the following:

- (1) The provision of training facilities for media personnel in order to improve professional skills.
- (2) The promotion of professionalism and the idea of a professional community to which each member is answerable.
- (3) The creation of an awareness of the need for a self imposed code of ethics founded on the most fundamental ethical principle of media communication⁵.

The Institute should bear in mind that its work will be judged in terms of its contribution to professionalism and hence to Sri Lanka's standards of journalism.

The training needs of media personnel cover the needs of those working in all branches of the media. The audio-visual media — broadcasting and more recently television — are coming to exert an increasingly strong impact worldwide on the public in consequence of the "communications revolution" arising out of far reaching developments in technology. Apart from the technical know-how associated with a particular medium, professionals working in each of them have a common need to understand the processes at work in society and their dimensions, both national and international. They could all benefit, therefore, from the facilities of a media training institute.

The Committee feels, however, that it would be practicable if in the initial phase the new institute were to devote its efforts to the training of personnel from the press and the written media who constitute the vast bulk of media employees and for whom facilities are at present lacking. In a subsequent phase the media training institute should seek to extend its coverage to include personnel from the audio-visual media as well. However, it should be possible, at even an early stage to admit such personnel to selected courses that are pertinent to their

needs. This should also apply to the personnel that work as information officers and related occupations in the several ministries, departments and agencies of government and even the private sector.

As mentioned, the courses to be conducted and the work programme of the Institute in general will need to be prepared in consultation with those engaged in the media — publishers, editors and senior media personnel. The character of the courses should be determined by the clearly identified needs of the press. They should be conducted in all three languages as far as possible. The main areas of instruction and the principle focus of the activities of the Institute will naturally deal with reporting, sub-editing and feature-writing. The instructors will be specialists in this field and one of the main objects of the Institute would be to harness the accumulated experience that now exists before it is lost irretrievably. The executive head of the Institute would need to be in direct and constant contact with the editors and management of the main newspaper establishments.

Special attention would need to be paid to the needs of provincial or local correspondents whose role is likely to gain in importance with the spread of the development process beyond the metropolitan area. They must be taught not only their craft but to understand also the linkages between local developments and wider national strategies. Their function should be not merely to report on isolated public events but also to highlight the impact of change and to warn about possible consequences. Their training requirements, however, would require special courses; they cannot be met entirely through the more conventional training programmes.

The Institute should also serve some broader goals. Journalists of today, as mentioned already, need to be aware of the political, social, economic, cultural and technological dimensions of the environment in which they work. There are various areas of specialisation — "development journalism", economic and business matters, science and technology, culture, sports and so on. The Institute should serve to enhance the journalists' knowledge of such areas. It should be actively engaged in promoting debate and discussion on profession-related matters such as the revolutionary changes in the global communications system and their impact on audiences in the developing countries and on their way of life. The Institute should become a lively meeting place for all members of the media profession, provide opportunities for exchanges of views and invite distinguished visitors for public lectures. The Institute should also establish close contacts with similar institutes in the Asian region, the Commonwealth, the U.S.A. and the European Union. In these and other ways it will not only contribute to a better understanding of issues but also promote an "esprit de

corps" so essential to the self esteem of the profession and to public recognition and respect.

The character of the Institute

Statutory Provision

It was understood from the outset that the Institute would not be a governmental body but an organisation that will essentially be supported and managed by the media itself. The initiative of the Prime Minister in establishing this Committee was an indication of the willingness of the government to assist in the launching of the Institute and in meeting some of its needs, particularly in the earlier phases of its existence. This broad concept is closely relevant to a number of matters such as the status of the Institute, its funding, and its direction and management. It is not possible for the Committee at the present stage to make detailed and definitive recommendations on all such issues, particularly those that relate to the longer term. Some questions can only be determined in the light of actual developments relating to the way in which the Institute evolves. Accordingly, the views of the Committee as expressed here have a special focus on the initial phase and on the steps needed to establish and administer the institution during this period.

A Media Institute can be established as a wholly private venture that is incorporated, for example, under the Companies Act. As already indicated it is the Committee's understanding that it is the view of both the government and the media interests that the Institute should indeed be an autonomous body rather than a governmental agency. The committee agrees with this view. It feels, however, that given the national role that the Institute is expected to play and the recognition by the government of its importance it would be desirable to establish it by an Act of Parliament. The Act would indicate its autonomous character and set out its broad objectives and functions. This will give recognition and stature to the Institute and also open the way to obtaining support from donor agencies for some of the needs of the Institute, both current and capital. The launching of the Institute need not, however, await the passage of such an Act. It can be established on a pilot basis with the concurrence of both the government and the media.

Funding

It is difficult at the present stage to be definitive about the eventual scale of funding required by the Institute and the sources from which such funding would be derived. In principle it is expected that the Institute will be a fee levying body and that such fees will contribute towards a significant proportion of its current operating costs. It is also expected that since most of the trainees of the Institute will be working journalists and media personnel such fees will be met by the publishing houses or other agencies that employ them.

It is the view of the Committee that, in addition, the publishing houses should be invited to contribute to the capital of the Institute. At its discussions with representatives of the publishing houses the Committee was pleased to note a willingness in principle on their part to making such a contribution although the extent of the contribution and its distribution among the publishing houses could only be determined in the context of specific estimates of capital requirements.

The precise scale and nature of the contribution from government towards the funding of the Institute cannot also be determined with any finality at the present stage. In principle, some contribution from the government would be desirable in view of the role and character of the Institute and the part played by the government in its establishment. But the contribution should not be at variance, except perhaps at the initial stage, with the concept of the Institute as an autonomous body in whose administration and management the media would intimately be involved. The contribution of government can take a number of forms. Particularly at the initial stage the government can help meet recurrent costs by making office space available or by meeting rental and salary expenses. In the longer run it can assist through the provision of land and help in the construction of premises.

External aid is also a possible source of finance for the Institute. The Committee was informed that it would be necessary if official donors were to be approached for the government to give due priority to the needs of the Institute. External aid can contribute towards the costs of buildings and equipment and towards the conduct of training programmes by funding, for example, the participation of outside lecturers and the costs of specialised training abroad. The Committee feels that if the Institute were to establish a reputation for excellence it could succeed in attracting foreign support.

Management and Direction

The nature of the management and direction of the Institute cannot be unrelated to its autonomous character and the way in which it is funded. It is envisaged that the Institute will be administered by an overall Governing Council which would be composed of a Chairman and not less than 6 other members drawn essentially from among representatives of the media but including the Director of Information as an ex-officio government member. The media representatives would be made up of professionals such as editors and selectees from journalist associations and unions. There could also be members of the academic community associated with media studies. Since the publishing houses themselves are expected to contribute towards the funding of the Institute provision would need to be made for their representation on the Governing Council.

The Institute would need a permanent staff

headed by a Director. The quality of the professional staff will be a key determinant of the efficiency and image of the Institute. The scale of its remuneration is thus a factor of utmost importance. The Institute should become, and be seen to be, a centre of excellence that compares with the best the country has to offer.

The phasing of the Institute

Once the government is ready to take a decision in principle regarding the establishment of the Institute several steps could be taken without too much delay. These will essentially be on a provisional basis. Once such step would be the appointment of a Director of experience and stature entrusted with the task of pursuing the several actions needed to bring the Institute into being. The Director could be assisted by a temporary Advisory Board, the forerunner of the eventual Governing Council. The Director will need to concern himself with a number of processes on which work should commence as early as possible. Among these would be the following: (1) The immediate registration of the Institute on a temporary basis and the determination of an appropriate name. The drafting of a bill for the establishment of the Institute as a statutory body. (2) The securing of a limited temporary budget to cover costs during the initial phase. The government will need to be the main source of funds at this stage but a good beginning would be made if the publishing houses also agree to contribute from the outset. (3) The securing of temporary premises for the Institute. (4) The recruitment of a small nucleus staff with at least one or two professional collaborators. (5) The designing of preliminary courses to be conducted by the Institute in consultation with media representatives and relevant academies. (6) The establishment of contacts with other media institutes in the region and elsewhere and the assessment of possibilities for external aid. All these processes will be absorbed and expanded upon as relevant by the new statutory body once established.

An outline budget for the establishment and initial phase of the Institute and a tentative time schedule for its launching are annexed.

Conclusion

In a country blessed with an extraordinarily high literacy, the national press should help cope with the formidable challenges of nation building. An irresponsible press or a journalistic approach not sufficiently alive to the importance of that task could do incalculable damage. In the last analysis the behavior of the media and certainly its image are seen as a function of the men and women who present and comment on the news. Ultimately it is these practitioners that must set the standard. Ideally, the Media Institute should help the Sri Lankan journalist to gain public recognition as a full-fledged professional, with all the rights and responsibilities that go with the title.

The Committee wishes to conclude this report with an expression of deep gratitude to the Director of Information Dr Sunanda Maddumabandara and to the Deputy Director Mrs. D M S Jayaratne for their invaluable and sustained contribution to all aspects of the Committee's work. It was their success in briefing the Committee and making arrangements for its meeting that made this report possible.

Signed:

Gamini Corea (Chairman)

Manik de Silva

Mervyn de Silva

B.H.S. Jayawardene

Edmund Ranasinghe

N. Sivanesaselvan

Sunananda Maddumabandara, Director of Government Information (Convenor)

Notes

1. Organised jointly by the Lanka Guardian and Marga Institute, Colombo, 27 June 1993.
2. When he raised this issue of accountability, Joseph Pulitzer, whose name is associated with one of the world's most coveted prizes, was in fact arguing the case for a school of journalism. In 1904 he wrote: "Nothing less than the highest ideals, the most scrupulous anxiety to do right, the most accurate knowledge of the problem it has to meet, and a sincere sense of moral responsibility will save journalism from a subservience to business interests, seeking selfish ends, antagonistic to public welfare".
3. The worldwide posthumous tributes to a Sri Lankan editor recently was a timely reminder of the proud past of our national press. Tarzie Varindra Vittachi was the first editor of the "Asian" just as his equally eminent colleague Denzil Pieris was editor of the London based "South", a Third World journal. Such men were not manufactured on assembly lines nor did they need media laboratories.
4. According to information provided to the Committee, the University of Kelaniya, through its Department of Mass Communications conducts a general degree course for a batch of 150 students; a special course for 20 students; external courses for a batch of 160 students. A post-graduate course in Sinhala or English is also available. The Department employs 3 lecturers with doctorates and 5 lecturers with a Masters degree in Mass Communications. The Jaywardenapura University conducts 2 courses related to journalism; (a) a post-graduate diploma in journalism and (b) a diploma course in journalism. The Faculty of Educational Studies of the Open University has a "Mass Media" course in 3 languages. It has a fully equipped Audio-visual Laboratory for Mass Media studies. The University of Colombo offers a diploma in journalism mainly for practicing journalists and freelance media personnel. The course began about 8 years ago. In May 1992 a General Arts Degree in journalism was introduced.
5. "It is necessary to say that the most fundamental ethical principle of media communication should not be just that of holding the scales evenly between government and opposition but that of being open and responsive to the whole range and diversity of needs, interests, opinions and aspiration within civil society". R. Siriwardene, AMIC seminar paper.
6. It has been suggested that the Institute be named the Sri Lanka Press Institute. This would be an appropriate title but for the possibility, even desirability, of expanding the services of the Institute to include the audio-visual media. A title such as the Sri Lanka Media Training Institute is a possibility among others.



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Bonded Labour: Next Explosion?

Caste and Cultural Identity Among Tamil Plantation Workers In Sri Lanka

By Oddvar Hollup

Publishers: Charles Subasinghe & Sons

Reviewed by P. Pillai, Hatton

There is a crisis looming in the plantations. The estates no longer register for employment the Tamil youth from the resident population entering the labour market. Unemployed youth from the plantations are also no longer content to spend their lives as domestic servants in middle class homes or being subjected to exploitation by small time shop keepers in urban areas.

The relatively few from this community, who are educated, soon discover that without the right connections it is not possible to secure employment in the state services. The Indian Tamil community comprises 5.5% of the total population of Sri Lanka. However, their share of employment in the state services is only 0.1%, in the provincial services 0.2% and in the semi-government services 0.5%. This inequality, sad as it is, masks an even more glaring discrimination — a disproportionately large number of those employed are in the minor grades such as sweepers and cleaners far removed from decision making responsibility.

The gross under-representation of this community in government service may be one reason why the bureaucracy as a whole is indifferent or even hostile to the implementation of projects designed for the welfare of this community.

All these have contributed to the frustration and disillusionment of the plantation youth with their own political and trade union leadership whom they are beginning to accuse of collaborating, for their own personal gain, with one or other of the major political parties. The response from the Sinhala leadership hitherto to the problems facing the plantation youth is the same refrain that they are an 'alien enclave' who have contributed to the pauperisation of the Kandyan peasantry. If we ignore the lessons of history and allow the present situation in the plantations to continue, we may soon find ourselves heading towards a Bosnia-like situation in Sri Lanka.

Scanty Information While there is a considerable volume of literature on the economic aspects of the plantations, not much information is available on the life and living conditions of this community — their culture

and ideology, their hopes and aspirations, especially of the youth. In this context, R Jayaraman's "Caste Continuities in Ceylon", published in 1975, is a seminal work, which throws some light on the life and living conditions of the plantation workers in Sri Lanka. He traces how these migrants from South India to the coffee and tea plantations in Sri Lanka brought along with them their religion and traditional customs and practices. Based on a detail socio-economic survey of three tea estates, Jayaraman examines the continuity and change in the social structure and culture among this community and arrives at the conclusion that the traditional caste affiliations and cultural practices still persists and governs the life of this community.

Much of the data in Jayaraman's book on the socio-economic conditions of the plantation workers relates to the period prior to 1970. Since then there has been some major changes in the ownership and management of the plantations and the external political environment. *Oddvar Hollup's "Bonded Labour"*, appearing 20 years later, dealing with the same subject, takes into account some of these changes and fills a gap in our understanding of the life of this community.

Oddvar Hollup is a research fellow at the Department of Anthropology, University of Bergen, Norway. During 1982-84, he carried out field work among Tamil plantation workers in the upcountry area. During this period he also visited some villages in South India from where labour migration to Sri Lanka took place. His particular interests are in forms of social stratification and inequality in plantation societies, together with continuity of caste and culture in Indian overseas communities in general.

Residing in an estate in the centre of the tea country, acquiring a working knowledge of Tamil adequate for the purpose of communicating with the workers, sharing the quarters with a junior clerk within the estate and moving freely with the estate population, Oddvar Hollup was able to carry out in depth study of the life and living conditions of the Tamil workers in the tea plantations.

The introductory part of the book includes a chapter on the country and its population,

the place of the plantation sector in the economy of the country, the social background and origins of the migrants from the days of the coffee plantations and the way in which they were recruited and confined within the estates as captive labour.

The authoritarian and paternalistic relations between the British planters and the Tamil workers, and the Head Kangany system through which the planters exercised control over the workers is described and supported by excerpts from conversations the author had with some of the older generation of workers. His observation on this management system is interesting:

"the Head Kangany system and the paternalistic structure of management maintained a peaceful docile and stable labour force.. (and) remained an effective mechanism of labour control and discouraged the estate labourers from uniting and organising. The pattern of recruitment and migration under the Head Kangany system tended to strengthen and maintain caste and kinship ties in the estate setting"

The chapter on 'Local Setting' describes in detail the estate environment and settlement pattern, statistics in respect of the estate population, their living conditions and the work cycle in the estate where the field work was carried out with a comparison between two other estates in different areas.

A chapter devoted to 'Household and Family Structure' examines the composition and character of the households and more importantly the impact of the plantation organisation upon the family structure and role behaviour. His sweeping generalisation at the end of this chapter that "Life among these estate labourers is generally hard, their behaviour, speech and habits are inarticulate, unsophisticated, crude, rough, and narrow-minded all features characteristic of lower class people living in misery and poverty" although exaggerated contains some elements of truth.

A chapter devoted to wages and cost of living is titled appropriately 'How to Make Ends Meet — The Shared Experience of Poverty'. Commenting on the relatively low wages in the estate sector and the non-ma-

rket character of the estate labour power, the author argues how this has led to a captive labour situation:

"The fact that the estates offered subsistence wages is that...labour.. was essentially immobile and the estates usually relied on their own relatively rich supply of cheap labour. The payment of a subsistence wage is possible due to the lack of or restricted mobility of the Tamil labour force. With limited chances of escape and restricted possibilities of alternative employment and mobility, the concept of 'bonded labour' becomes clear."

After a detail review of wages, supplementary income from other sources, pattern of consumption and expenditure and savings and indebtedness, the author arrives at the conclusion;

"The general picture of the estate worker's living conditions is one of poverty and marginalisation. The poor income derived from estate employment, combined with the high cost of living, makes most households economically nonviable units... For the majority of the Tamil plantation workers, complete emancipation from the tea estates is not attainable. The lack of mobility results in a captive labour force".

As real wages have not increased substantially, the situation described above still remains valid.

Those interested in understanding the underlying reasons for the deterioration of labour management relations in the plantations will get some meaningful insights in the chapter on 'Occupational Hierarchy and Status Groups'. "The Sinhalese managers", from the observations of the author, "show an indifferent attitude towards the labourer's living conditions and they do not visit the labour lines as the British planters did... The disregard of the Tamil labour force is partly due to the growth of Sinhalese nationalism, accompanied by an attitude which considers the Estate Tamils as aliens... The relationships between Sinhalese management and the Tamil labour force have become increasingly marked by ethnic boundaries and racism."

The Tamil workers and the staff, regard the estate managers as of poor quality and less competent compared to the British planters of the earlier days. "Sinhalese estate managers are accused of taking less care of the work force, agricultural conditions and production of tea. They stick to their own private business matters and are frequently absent from the estate, unable to control what is going on. Poor management or even mismanagement which occurred after nationalisation, is claimed to be one of the major factors contributing to the great losses in the tea industry today". These observations of the author based on lengthy interviews with

a wide section of the workers and first line supervisors are regrettably still valid.

The changing pattern of leadership from the Head Kangaries of the past to the trade union leaders of the present day, the multiplicity of trade unions and the rivalries among them, their affiliations to political parties, the role of the union leaders as patrons and brokers, because of the poor education of the workers their dependence on the trade union leaders are all highlighted in the chapter on trade unions.

"The trade union movement" the author concludes, "has not yet contributed significantly to the education of the workers by improving their political awareness and social consciousness, although the unions have some improvements regarding daily matters such as wages, housing etc"

There is to-day much talk of the integration of the plantation workers as equal citizens with the rest of the population of Sri Lanka. The author's discussion of the subject throws much light on the obstacles that still stand in the way of achieving this integration:

".....due to hisotrical circumstances and socio-political conditions the Estate Tamils did not get fully integrated with Sri Lankan society, partly due to the 'closed' nature of the plantation system itself, but also due to their separate linguistic, religious and cultural identity. The Tamil estate workers are not only geographically and socially isolated on the plantations, but as a result of their lack of citizenship for some decades, the majority of them were excluded from political participation because they enjoyed only limited voting rights. Their low socio-economic status, the captive nature of the estate labour market, and low educational standards also made them occupationally immobile and restricted their opportunities for upward mobility within the society at large...Tamil plantation workers who belong to an ethnic minority are unable to compete with other ethnic groups (Sinhalese and Sri Lanka Tamils) for the allocation of scarce resources in the society at large and draw the benefits of state patronage the way Sinhalese villagers are doing. Lack of mobility within the greater society only reinforces their non-integrative character and their position as 'bonded labour' or coolies. Their unstable and now income, combined with their absolute poverty, is largely responsible for the 'captive' situation from which there seem to be few roads of escape.

"Since many Estate Tamils lacked citizenship and were perceived by Sinhalese chauvinists as 'aliens', 'non-nationals', 'Indians' etc., they experienced a feeling of social, economic and political insecurity. The fact that many were deprived of citizenship meant that they were denied the facilities of agricultural development programmes, co-

munity and rural development projects. They were not given equal attention by the authorities regarding land alienation, housing schemes etc... The Estate Tamils life careers and employment opportunities outside the plantation sector have been determined and limited by national Sinhalese priorities and communal politics to a great extent."

Although the majority of the Tamil plantation workers have now obtained their citizenship rights, yet in practice the disabilities to which they are subjected to still persist and they are at the bottom of the growing anger and frustration amongst plantation youth.

The author devotes a whole chapter to caste and arrives at the conclusion that although several areas of social life have become relatively 'caste free', caste still determines many aspects of social interaction. This is especially true in the case of opportunities for employment with Tamil merchants, the possibility of starting ones own small shop and access to credit. Since a majority of the Estate Tamil trading community in the bazars and towns belong to the high castes, there tends to be a clear correlation between caste membership and upward mobility.

Religion plays a dual role in the life of the Estate Tamil community. At one level, the religious festivals and rituals in which there is generally the participation of all castes, contribute to the most effective bonds of community cohesion and constitutes an important part of the Estate Tamil identity. At another level these religious beliefs and practices also reinforce the ideology of a ranked caste hierarchy and legitimise the unequal ritual status allocated to and accepted by the different castes. This was particularly evident during the past several years when under state patronage religion was exploited by particular high caste groups to mobilise political support in the plantation area.

It is now ten years since the author carried out his field work. There have been major developments in the plantations during this period affecting the life of this community. The granting of citizenship rights is perhaps the most important event. This has enabled several members from this community to be elected to the provincial councils and parliament and a few even appointed to ministerial positions. However, they are yet to make a contribution at the national level while the disabilities to which the workers have been subjected, so meticulously documented by the author, still remain.

At a time when the tea plantation is faced with a major crisis in production and marketing on the one hand and growing unrest among Estate Tamil youth on the other, policy makers need to address their minds to the major issues raised by the author in this timely publication.

 ENRICHING RURAL LIFESTYLE

Why there's sound of laughter in this rustic tobacco barn....

There is laughter and light banter amongst these rural damsels who are busy sorting out tobacco leaf in a barn. It is one of the hundreds of such barns spread out in the mid and upcountry intermediate zone where the arable land remains fallow during the off season.

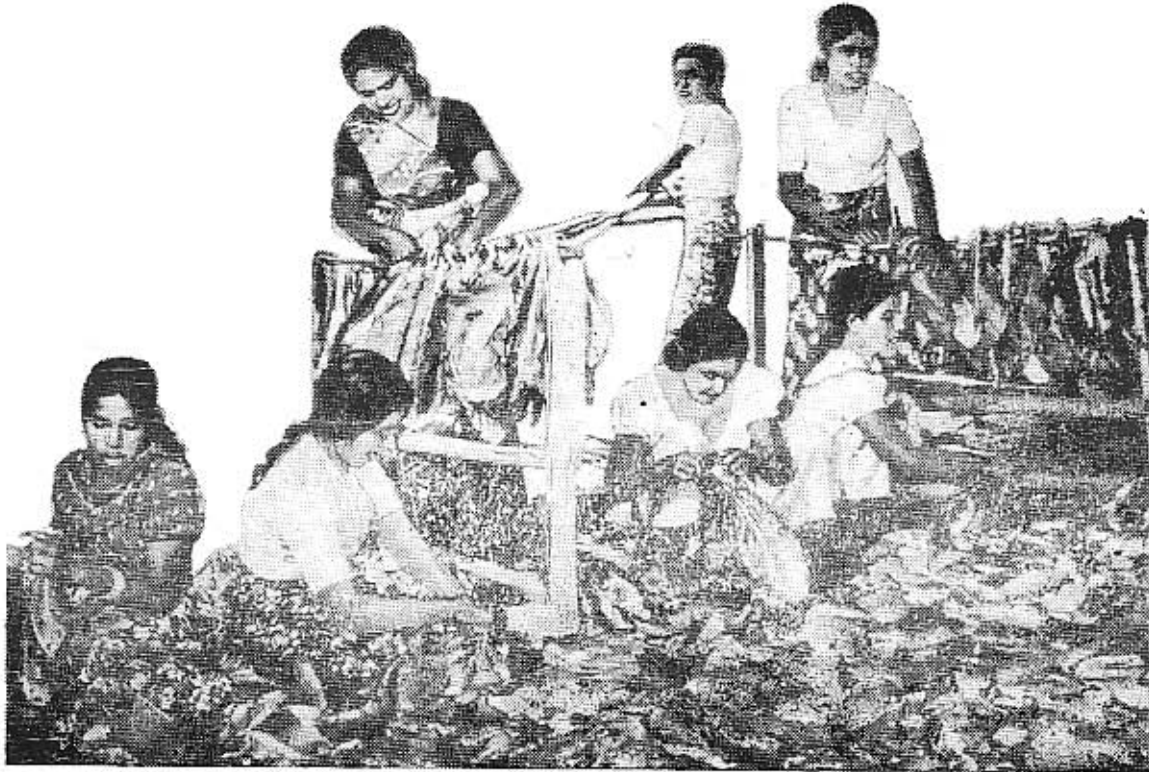
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