

**EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL
FIRST ASIAN - PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

THEME: EDUCATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

VENUE: NARAI HOTEL, 222, SILOM ROAD,
BANGKOK, THAILAND

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Country Report
(SriLanka)

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Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union

CEYLON TAMIL TEACHERS UNION (CTTU)

Ceylon Tamil Teachers Union is an organisation of Tamil Teachers in the Government schools of Sri Lanka. There are about 187,000 Teachers in Sri Lanka, out of which about 22,000 are Tamil Teachers. 18,000 Tamil Teachers are members of our organisation. 85% of our members are serving in the North - East Province, where Sri Lankan Government is engaged in a war, since June 1990. Due to the war the Socio, Economical and Political conditions are adversely affected.

DEFENCE SPENDING AS A % OF GDP

Sri Lankan Government is spending almost 5.00% of the GDP for defence, which is much higher than of South Korea, Malaysia, China, India, Thailand, Phillipines, Indonesia, Bangladesh and even Japan. Why a small country like Sri Lanka, which is not having any boarder dispute or enimity of neighbouring countries is spending so much of the GDP? The actual reason is to suppress the minority community.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE - VOTED EXPENDITURE - 1994

Ministry	1994 Approved Estimates	
	Recurrent	Capital
Defence	17,466	2,993
Education, Higher		
Education Cultural affairs	5,635	3,608
Health & Women affairs	3,094	2,349
Food, Co - operatives & Janasaviya	4,093	414 (Rs. millions)

(Source Central Bank Report - 1993)

The above table clearly shows the main intention of the government is the destructive war. The amount allocated for destructive war is much more than that of the total money allocated for Education, Higher Education, Cultural Affairs, Health, Women affairs, Food, Co-operatives and Janasaviya. (Janasaviya is the Poverty alleviating Programme).

COST OF LIVING INDEX

The Cost of living Index, which was 203.2 in 1977 increased to 830.2 in 1989 and it was 1498.7 in December 1993. COL Index for April 1994 is 1600. This COL Index is calculated by considering the consumer prices of the basic commodities in Colombo. Annexure 1- the graph shows how the cost of living has increased over the past years, since 1974.

The COL Index, if we calculate at the rate of the consumer prices in Jaffna it will be more than 5000, because the prices of essential commodities are several times higher than that in Colombo. The prices of few items at Colombo and Jaffna are given below.

Items	Price in Colombo	Price in Jaffna.
Bread	5.50	9.00
Wheat Flour	13.00	27.00
Milk Powder (400gm)	58.00	90.00
Rice	24.00	48.00
Kerosene oil	11.80	120.00
Coconut oil	32.00	87.50
Soap	7.00	15.00

in Rupees.

WAR AND IT'S EFFECTS ON EDUCATION

The Four years of continuous war in the North and East of Sri Lanka has affected the Education in several ways. CTTU list below few

- * Several school buildings destroyed.
- * Several schools are converted into military camps and refugee camps.
- * Chalks, Black board paints, exercise books, Chemicals, lab equipments, are among the banned items which affects the teaching and learning process.
- * Due to stoppage of electricity and stoppage of fuel, in nights, students cannot study and teachers could not prepare their lessons.
- * No transport at all, due to stoppage of fuel.
- * Mal nutrition due to shortage of food items including milk foods
- * There were instances of aerial bombing, Artillary shelling and Helicopter firing on schools
 - (i) While schools were in Sessions
 - (ii) While Public Examination is held, which has ^ucaused the killing of teachers and students resulting in a severe psychological set back.
- * Examination were never conducted in time resulting in pushing back the Education of students by a calender year.

Equal opportunities are denied to Tamil Students in Education. The following items related to the process of teaching and learning are banned to be transported to North:

Chemicals, Lab equipments.

Computers, Office equipments

Stationary, Uniform materials.

Chalk, Black Board Paints.

Plastic articles like Tiffin boxes, Drink Bottles etc.

Kerosene oil, Petrol

Electricity, Batteries etc.

Apart from this the bombing incidents in schools and examination centre have resulted in a severe psychological set back among the students and teachers. The above fact clearly shows that equal opportunities are denied to the Tamil student and Teachers in North and East.

UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS AND DISCRIMINATION TO TAMIL STUDENTS

University admissions in Sri Lanka is not on merit, A scheme called standardisation is used to cut down the number of Tamil students entering the Universities. A Tamil student with high aggregate of marks is deprived of admission to the university, but a Sinhalese student with low aggregate marks is granted admission to the University. This is the main cause for the Tamil students to divert their minds towards the Arm struggle.

Last year a Tamil student with High Marks filed a case in the High court for Justice, under the denial of basic fundamental rights, and Thank God, the verdict was against the government decision and the Grant Commission was compelled to review the admission scheme and the child was admitted to the University.

This year University Grant Commission has restricted the number entering to the University of Jaffna and Eastern University. Though there are vacancies in these two universities which are Tamil medium, for reasons unknown to any body, the number of students admitted are decreased. There is a big agitation now going on demanding more students be admitted to fill the vacancies available. Now government is again re-considering their policy of admission. If a favourable reply is not given there is no other alternative for students than going to the courts or for them to join the arm struggle.

The annexure No -2 shows the cut off marks districtwise and ethnicwise.

VICTIMS OF THE WAR

More than Hundred teachers and several hundreds of students have been killed several hundreds of teachers have become handicapped.

80% of the teachers are Women. Their dual role as Teacher in the school and as a mother at home is a very serious task.

PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Environmental protection is not possible. as due to arial bombing and shelling houses are damaged or destroyed) Due shortage of fuel trees are cut for the purpose of fire wood. Air and sea water get polluted due to the frequent bomb blast by the Sri Lankan forces)

WORKERS LOST THEIR JOBS.

Six big Industries and 53 small Industries are closed due to stoppage of electricity and fuel, resulting in 12,750 workers losing their jobs.

In 1983 about 104,375 tons of fish was caught in the North . 60% of which was sent to the Southern Sri Lanka. Now as deep sea fishing is completely banned, 13,500 families have lost their employment.

Due to the stoppage of Kerosene, desel and petrol, 938 employees losing their employment directly, and also another 2695 employees in the private sector losing employment.

REFUGEES

As a result of the war , 300,000 are refugeeing in Western countries 200,000 in India , 200,000 in southern part of Sri Lanka, and another 350,000 in the Refugee camps in the North. 59,500 are either killed or declared missing.

CHILDREN

On a survey done by the Health authorities in North, during the seven months period (May - Nov 93) 905 children died due to loose motions, Malaria and septicimia. Inadequate supply of medicines is the main cause of the deaths. It should be noted that the supply of medicines and medical equipments are also restricted by the government.

The health authorities report also says, 90% of the mothers in North are suffering from malnutrition, resulting in several abortions, still born babies. Further the report reveals that only 3-5% of the babies are born with the normal average height of 50cm and reaching a height of 75 cm at the age of one year. The balance of 95-97% of the babies born have an average height of 35-40cm at birth and 42-55cm at the age of one year.

This reveals that the rate of growth of the children are affected very badly and the cause of malnutrition, lack of medical care and poor supply of medicines, milk foods etc. Due to the above reasons, babies are suffering without enough mothers milk too.

The UNICEF Report reveals that out of the 4000,000 children in Sri Lanka 800,000 children are living in Refugee camps. 35% of the Sri Lankan children are affected due to malnutrition. Due to war several thousands of children have become Orphans. Several Thousands are handicapped and leading a sorrowful life. Several Thousands of children are living and sleeping on the road side without proper care.

(a) HEALTH SERVICES

We have hospitals without adequate medical personals and medical supply. Even the Medical equipments donated as aid to the Jaffna Hospital has not been permitted, to be transported to Jaffna. There are bombing incidents ^{on} hospitals which are protected by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

(b) BANKING SERVICE

We have State banks and private banks, without liquid cash.

(c) POSTAL TELEGRAPH SERVICE

We have Post offices without stamps, money orders etc. No telephone or telegraph service. Letter posted in Colombo will reach Jaffna only after 3 months. All foreign mails are open at Colombo and again pasted after scrutiny and sent to North.

(d) TRANSPORT SERVICE

No train service or bus service. Cycling is the only mode of transport. There are few motor cycles and cars which are running in kerosene oil.

This will cost a lot. but it is used for very urgent purpose.

EXPLOITATION OF CHEAP LABOUR AND DENIAL OF BASIC TRADE UNION RIGHTS

Multi National Companies have opened up Garment Factories and exploiting the Cheap Labour in Sri Lanka. The Employees are not permitted to join the Trade Unions also. This was started with the Free Trade Zone at Katunayake, and now expanded in several areas, whereby the right to organise the Trade union is prohibited in these factories.

VIOLETION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS.

There are several instances of violations of human rights, by the state forces both in North and South of Srilanka. International Amnesty, UN Commission for Human Rights organisations have revealed several reports of violations of human rights. Arresting of People keeping them in custody for months without producing them in the courts sudden disappearance of people, Threat and assault on Journalist, unidentified murders are very common.

Recently the International Amnesty, and the UN Human Right commission have appealed to the Indian government not to send the Tamil Refugees back to SriLanka as it is not safe for them to live. This clearly shows how the humanrights charter is recognised in SriLanka.

PRIVATISATION

On the advice of the World Bank and IMF , Several state owned Industries and corporations are sold to Private companies, inspite of strong Protest by the workers and their Trade Unions.

The move to Privatise the state banks were stopped due to the strong protest made by the Ceylon Bank Employees Union.

School Development Boards were set up at each and every School, and told the Board should find finance to maintain the school. This was considered as the first step for Privatisation of schools and the Teachers Unions and the Parent Teachers unions strongly protested and as a result government has now stopped the idea of Privatising the schools.

CTTU ACTIVITIES & ACHIEVEMENTS

CTTU annual convention of was held on 8th - 9th June 1990 - just 3days before the Sri lankan Government declared war in North-East. In this Convention more 6,000 Members participated. Deputy Director General of Education from the Central Ministry of Education Mr. V. Sabanayagam ~~of~~ Deputy Secretary to the Provincial Ministry Mr. S. Chandirajah, Resident Representatives of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Mr. Arnold Whelmhórner and Dr. Reinhold Plate were Chief Guests at the Convention.

Lot of enthusiasm and encouragement was shown by the members. 65% of the officials were re elected with great Majority 35% new officials were elected in place of the officials who were retired. Some of them were elected without any contest. This clearly shows that the membership have full trust and confident in their officials.

As the war was declared , 3 days after the ^{HGM}war, due to stoppage of transoprt, mails, Telephone facilities etc. and frequent bombing and shelling, the Union functions came to a stand still. We were not in a position to contact the officials. Every day we will be getting news that some teacher or member of the Teachers family killed, or some school building is damaged or some schools are converted into army camps or converted as refugee camps. We thought that the war may be over atleast within few months time. But it is getting dragged on and on and we are ^{at} the suffering end.

As there was no sign of war coming to an end, we thought that we should start our activity atleast at slow rate. The first step we took was that we suggested that we start the schools, and gradually we succeeded in it.

Public examination was not held. We urged the Ministry and succeeded in having the 90 G. C. E A/L. and G. C. E. O/L Examinations in December 1991 and April 1992 respectively.

In May 1992, we were able to convene our National Level Executive Committee, at Colombo. When our Chief Co-ordinator Mr. Gurnam Singh visited Colombo. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung office Colombo assisted us in organising a Seminar for our Executive Committee. From that time we are able to carry out our union work to the best of our abilities, with the limited resources available.

We have had negotiations with the following on several issues and won several demands.

1. Chairman of the Education Service Board.
2. Secretary, Ministry of Education & Higher Education.
3. Governor of the North East Province.
4. State Minister for Education.
5. State Minister for Education Services

We were cordially treated. Our problems were given a patient hearing. They were sympathetic towards us. Several Promises were given. Most of the Promises given are executed. Some promises are not yet executed mainly for political and financial reasons. We are still pressing for the issues where promises are not kept. As every body knows that CTTU is an organisation which is not affiliated to any Political Party, We are able to withstand any political pressure exerted by any party in Colombo, and carry on our TU activities with lot of courage and enthusiasm.

TEACHERS SALARY

Teachers and all other Government Servants were given a salary increase of 30%, to match the terrible increase in the Cost of living. Government itself decided to give an increase of 30% shows how the Teachers and other government officers are finding it difficult to manage their day to day expenses with their monthly salary.

In terms of real wage indicies, Teachers salary continues to deteriorate even when compared to minor employees and all other non executive government employees. This information is revealed in the Central Bank Report . Page 84 of the Central Bank Report is given below.

ORGANISED SECTOR

Nominal wages for all Central Government Employees rose by 12.1 per cent in 1991, compared with an increase of 13.0 per cent in 1990.

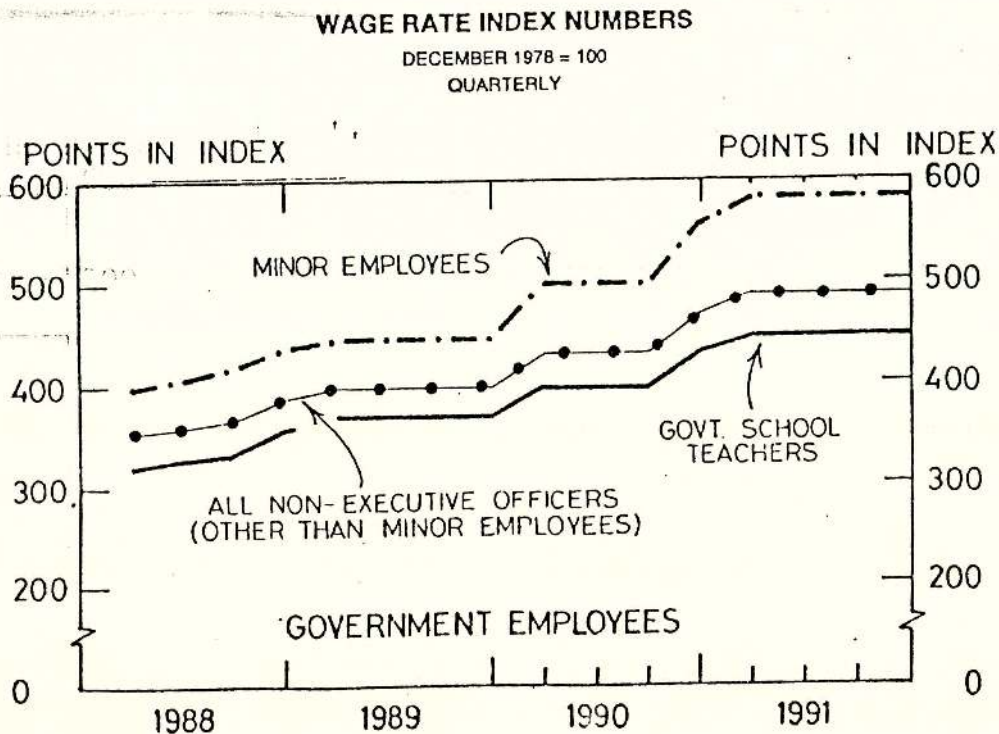
Government School Teachers' nominal wages rose by 10.0 per cent in 1991, an increase similar to that seen in 1990. Although nominal wage increase were similar in both years, the smaller rises in the overall price level implied that the real wage index for all Central Government Employees remained unchanged in 1991. This was in contrast to a decline of 7 per cent in 1990. A breakdown of this aggregate real wage index into its constituent elements revealed that Non-Executive Officers suffered a slight reduction in their real wages, whereas Minor Employees enjoyed a small increase in their real wages. Government School Teachers however continued to suffer a deterioration in their real wages, though the decrease in real wages was smaller in 1991 than in 1990.

TABLE 1.36
Wage Rate Index Numbers
(December 1978 = 100)

	1990		1991		Percentage Change 1991 over 1990	
	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index	Nominal Wage Rate Index	Real Wage Rate Index
1. Government Employees						
All Non Executives	439.6	104.3	488.2	103.3	11.1	-1.0
Minor Employees	513.5	121.8	582.3	123.3	13.4	1.2
All Central Government Employees	476.8	113.2	534.6	113.2	12.1	—
Govt. School Teachers	404.5	96.0	444.8	94.2	10.0	-1.9
2. Workers in Wages Boards & Trades						
Workers in Agriculture	517.2	122.7	577.7	122.2	11.7	-0.4
Workers in Industry & Commerce	379.5	89.9	459.6	97.1	21.1	8.0
Workers in Services	267.8	63.5	336.5	71.1	25.7	12.0
Workers in Wages Boards & Trades	453.5	107.6	518.8	109.7	14.4	2.0

Sources Department of Labour
Central Bank of Sri Lanka

The graph given below, which appears in page 85 of the central bank report clearly reveals how the Teachers real wage rate indices suffers in comparison with that of minor employees and all other non executive government employees.



Teachers Unions jointly aggitated for aRevision of salary only for Teachers in terms of real wages. Government on Principle accepted it and appointed a committee consisting of the Ministry officials and all Teachers Trade Unions officials. This committee has prepared a paper and submitted a proposal with a Title of 'Teachers Service' where there will be five grades. This paper was accepted on Principle by the Secretary of Ministry of Education and the National Education Commission. But showing the financial crisis in the country, it is not yet implimented. Teacher Trade Unions have jointly submitted to the government that the two days expenses of the government is enough to impliment the proposal. But due to political reasons, it is not implimented.

Now as the Presidential elections and the Parlimentary elections are scheduled to be held in December 1994, Ministry has invited the Teachers Unions and submitted another proposal, which unions have unanimously rejected. Anyhow, the government is trying it level best to increase the salaries of Teachers someway or other not in the interest of Teachers or in the interest of the Educational development of the country, but ^{purely in the interest of retaining their power in the next elections.} We have to await and see for few more months how much they are going to increase and how much the teaching population is going to be involved in the elections.

SOLUTION TO THE ETHNIC ISSUE

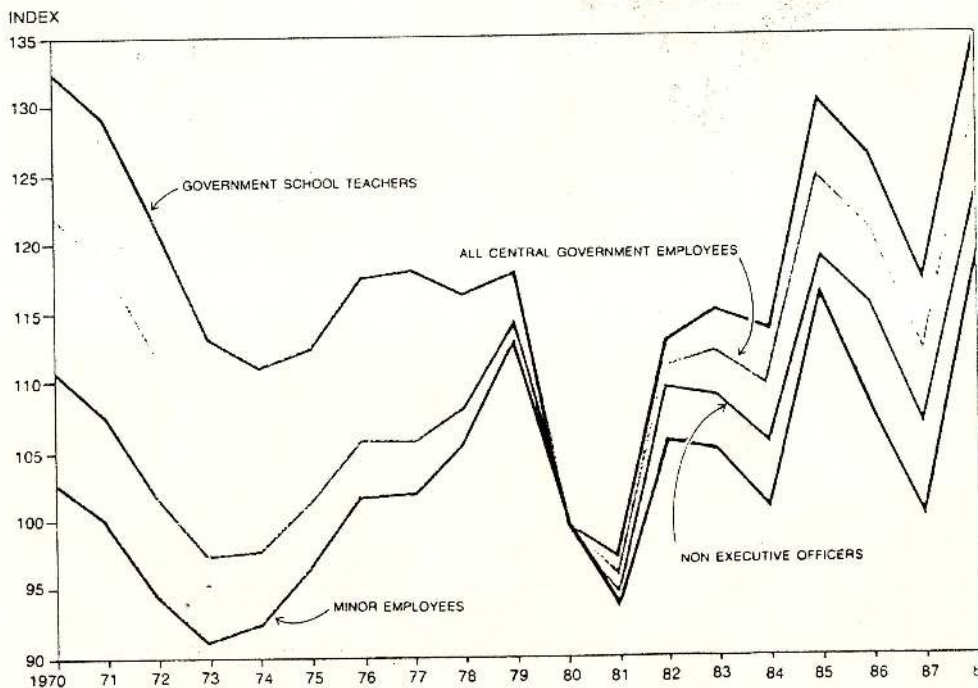
CTTU, being a Trade Union which is not affiliated to any Political Party, has reitterated on several occasions, both ^{at} on the National and International Forums that the Ethnic Problem in Sri Lanka could be solved only by dialogue with LTTE and not by means of military actions. In this forum also we reiterate the same stand. Also we appeal to all to express solidarity with us on this matter.

Real wage indices are obtained when nominal wage indices are corrected for inflation. Since a salary revision of government employees has its impact across-board, real wage trends of different categories of government employees are by and large very similar. A notable feature is however, magnitudes of changes in real wages vary significantly between categories.

Real wages of all categories of government employees were lowest in 1981 and increased thereafter to reach a peak in 1988. This peak characterised the major salary revision in the public sector in 1988. Between 1981 and 1988, the minor employee category recorded the highest increase (38%) in real wages, while gains in real wages of government school teachers were the lowest (26%). Consequently, the level of real wages of minor employees which was very low in 1970 and declined between 1970 and 1981, rose in 1988 to a level 1.3 times their wage levels in 1970. In contrast, real wages of government school teachers were 11% lower than the 1970 levels despite the salary revision in 1988. Real wages of non-executive officers increased by 30% during the 1981 - 1988 period.

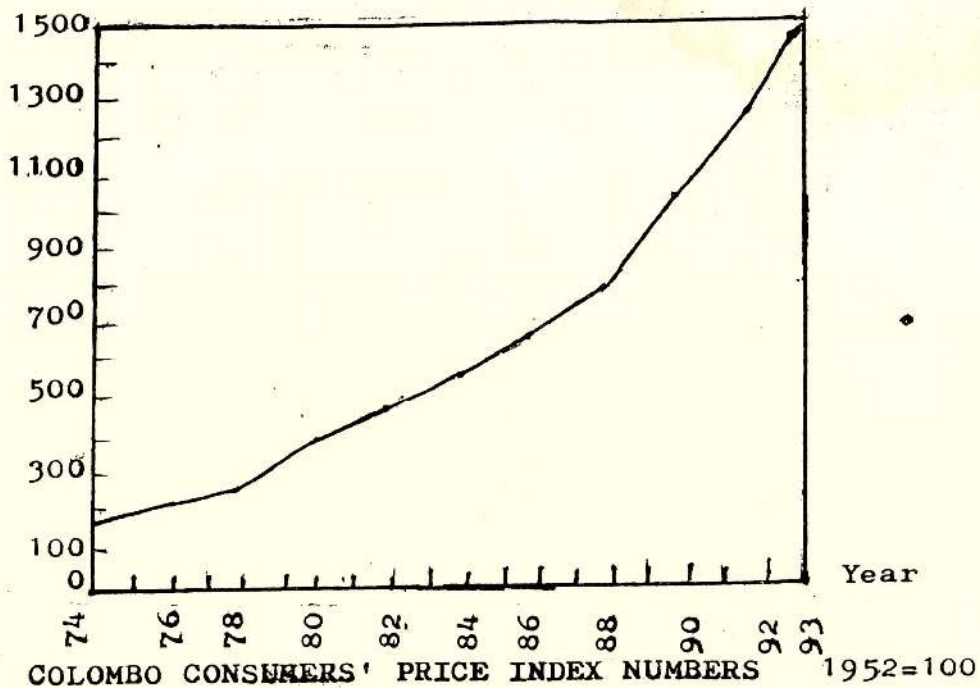
REAL WAGE INDICES OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

1980 = 100



Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka

ANNEXTURE NO.1



COLOMBO CONSUMERS' PRICE INDEX NUMBERS 1952=100

(Source -Central Bank Report.)

280 1962

Variya

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