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MAHATMA GANDHI'S TECHNIQUE OF SATYAGRAHA AND POLITICAL CHANGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE PRAYER CAMPAIGN OF THE CEYLON WORKERS CONGRESS OF SRI LANKA IN 1986.

Ambalavanar Sivarajah

1. Introduction

After the 1977 General Elections in Sri Lanka, the Trade Union cum Political Party representing the interests of the plantation workers of Indian origin, namely, the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) joined the United National Party (UNP) Government as a Junior Partner and its leader Sowmiamurthy Thondaman was appointed a Minister. While serving as Minister of Rural Industries, Sowmiamurthy Thondaman in his capacity as the President of the CWC organized a campaign of non-violent resistance in 1986 to press the Government to grant citizenship to a section of the "stateless" persons in Sri Lanka. The Government of Sri Lanka responded favourably to the prayer campaign and passed an Act in Parliament in January 1986 to grant citizenship to 94,000 "stateless persons" in Sri Lanka.

The nature of the campaign organised by the CWC was non-violent and based on the Gandhian concept of moral resistance. Believers in moral resistance are convinced that the evil should be resisted, but only by peaceful and moral means. The motive is to convert the opponent and make him one's willing ally and friend. It is based on the idea that the moral appeal to the heart and conscience is, in the case of human beings, more effective than an appeal based on threat of bodily pain or violence.

In Sri Lankan politics, political strikes, hartals and satyagraha campaigns are usually non-violent and accepted forms of dissent. Between 1956 and 1965 several non-violent sit-down protest demonstrations were held by the supporters and opponents of the Sinhala Only Act passed by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike government in 1956. Former President of Sri Lanka J. R. Jeyawardene when serving as the Leader of the Opposition from 1970 - 1977 adopted the non-violent action or what he called *satyagriya* as a political weapon to oppose the actions of the government. For example, he organised a sit down protest demonstration at

Attanagalla when he and his party supporters were stopped by some people on his way to hold a rally in that electorate.

Although the UNP won with 5/6th majority in the 1977 General Elections and formed a government in 1977, it included CWC in order to get the support of the plantation workers and also in order to have stability in the economic front. Nevertheless, the CWC organised a prayer campaign in January 1987. This campaign offers an example of a successful application of non-violent resistance in the politics of Sri Lanka,

In this paper an attempt will be made to examine the nature of the CWC prayer campaign in the background of the Gandhian concept of *satyagraha*. This paper is directed towards finding an answer to whether the government's decision to grant citizenship was influenced purely by the prayer campaign or by the particular political situation that prevailed in the country at the time.

II. Gandhian Political Thought

In Gandhi's political teachings as in any system of political thought, one does not fail to find the two essential requirements of a political thought, namely,

(i) "reflection upon the ends of political action,

and

(ii) the means of achieving them''¹

R. N. Iyar has clearly reflected this in the following terms:

Gandhi presents us with a Problem for he had both a vision of the radical transformation of the existing social order and political system and, at the same time a concern to evolve a revolutionary technique of political action and social change...²

As we are interested in Gandhi's technique of political action it is relevant here to examine Gandhi's technique of *satyagraha*.

Gandhi's Technique of Satyagraha

Gandhi's main contribution to the philosophy of politics lies in the technique of *satyagraha* which he had evolved in the course of his experiments with truth. The literal meaning of the term *satyagraha* is "clinging to truth". The word

satya (truth) implies love and *graha* (firmness) means force. As for Gandhi, "truth being god", the term accordingly means, "the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to god and dedicates his life to him."³ The attainment of truth can only be achieved by love and non-violence. Here, non-violence serves as a weapon in the hands of a *satyagrahi*. In an ordinary sense, *satyagraha* means, resistance of evil through the force of the soul.

In a narrow sense *satyagraha* can take many forms. The prime intention of such a *satyagraha* is to convert the opponent and make him realize the righteousness of the one who undertakes the *satyagraha* by inflicting sufferings on himself. Non-cooperation is one of the many forms *satyagraha* may take. Here non-cooperation is not with the one who does evil, but with his evil deeds. Fasting is another form of *satyagraha* and it should not be undertaken for any selfish motives. On the contrary, it must be performed for a just cause.

In the political arena, *satyagraha* takes the form of civil disobedience. Gandhi became known to the world through his civil disobedience movement in South Africa and India. "It is called 'civil' because it is non-violent resistance by people who are ordinarily law abiding citizens..."⁴ Civil disobedience movements should be launched only when negotiations and the constitutional methods fail to bring a settlement with the government. They must be mass-based and conducted strictly on non-violent principles. A constructive programme must also accompany the civil disobedience movement in the form of economic assistance to the people. K. Sridharni and J. V. Bondurant have analysed in a systematic and comprehensive manner the necessary requirements for *satyagraha* and civil disobedience movements. For instance Sridharni observed that,

satyagraha, as an organized mass action presupposes that the community concerned has a grievance which practically every member of that community feels. This grievance should be of such large proportions that it could be transformed in its positive side into a "cause" rightfully claiming sacrifice and suffering from the community on its behalf"⁵

J. V. Bondurant presents the steps to be followed in a *satyagraha* campaign as follows:

- (1) Negotiations and arbitration.
- (2) Preparation of the group for direct action.
- (3) Agitation.
- (4) Issuing of an ultimatum.

- (5) Economic boycott and forms of violence.
- (6) Non - cooperation.
- (7) Civil Disobedience.
- (8) Usurping of the functions of government.
- (9) Parallel government.⁶

Bondurant explained the conflicting situation and the application of *satyagraha* in dialectical terms. The first thing for any *satyagrahi* is to understand the character and the circumstances of a conflicting situation. The immediate objective of a *satyagraha* is to create a new circumstance in which the opposing parties would find a satisfactory solution to their conflict. Bondurant argued that "this is in Hegelian terms, an aiming of at a synthesis out of the conflict of thesis and antithesis"⁷ In essence, *satyagraha* emphasizes that conflicts can be handled by peaceful means in which the opposing parties respect each others moral values to find a satisfactory solution to their conflict without recourse to violence.

Critics of Gandhian political thought have pointed out some important weaknesses in it. Firstly, the inconsistencies of Gandhi's teachings. Gandhi himself admitted this when he said,

At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment.⁸

Secondly, his ideas of decentralization on the basis of village communities have been criticised as irrelevant to a modern technological society. Finally, the major weakness of Gandhi's political thought is the narrow range of its applicability. W. H. Morris Jones, for instance, comments that "those parts of Gandhi's political philosophy which penetrate deeply do so only on the narrow front of resistance politics."⁹ In Arthur A. Koestler's view "it was a noble game which could only be played against an adversary abiding by certain rules of common decency instilled by long tradition, otherwise it could amount to mass suicide."¹⁰ Nevertheless, those scholars who have pointed out the weaknesses of Gandhian political thought have also admitted that Gandhi had developed a new weapon of political change and under certain circumstances, this weapon of *satyagraha* might be used as an effective instrument."¹¹

III. The Prayer Campaign of the Ceylon Workers

Congress of Sri Lanka in January 1986.

(a) Date, Duration and Locale

The prayer campaign was organized on 14th January 1986 by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) on behalf of the "Stateless" persons of Indian Origin in Sri Lanka, a significant proportion of whom are members of the (CWC). It commenced on that day in almost all plantations in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. It was called - off on the 18th as President J. R. Jayawardene gave an assurance to the CWC that the necessary bill granting citizenship to stateless persons will be introduced in the Parliament in due course.

(b) Objectives

(i) Background

The Political problems relating to citizenship of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka really began with the Donoughmore Commission's recommendation of universal suffrage in 1931, which provided voting rights to all British subjects including people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. However, "its origin could be traced back to the reluctance of the Sinhalese to take up the regimented life of the estates."¹² Consequently, Indians were brought to Sri Lanka by the British to work in commercial plantations from the mid - 19th century. W. H. Wriggins has observed that,

Between 1871 and 1881 during Coffee boom - 24000 new immigrants arrived each year and again, between 1891 and 1900 - when tea planting expanded very rapidly - 34000 more came annually. These migrants added 10 per cent to the total population.¹³

In addition to plantation workers there were other Indians who too, came to Sri Lanka in search of employment and business opportunities in the urban areas.

The Sinhalese, especially those of the central highlands, the Kandyan Sinhalese, opposed the recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission because they feared that enfranchisement of the Indian population might dilute their electoral strength. Further, there was the fact of economic rivalries between Indian and Sinhalese traders. As a result, the Colonial Office in 1931 proposed a compromise settlement as an interim measure.

Under this there were three ways by which the franchise could be obtained.

- (1) by the 1924 system, which enfranchised property owning British subjects (largely Europeans);
- (2) by Domicile, designed for the old established population; and
- (3) by certificates of permanent settlement for Indian settlers.¹⁴

Due to deliberate governmental restriction in registering Indians in the late 1930s the number of Indian voters declined from 225,000 in 1939 to 168,000 in 1943¹⁵. However, with the increase of constituencies in 1947, under the Soulbury Constitution, the Indian Tamils were able to elect seven of their members to Parliament. Following independence, the United National Party (UNP) enacted a series of legislative measures designed to restrict the grant of citizenship and franchise rights in 1948 and 1949: (i) the Ceylon Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948, (ii) Indian and Pakistani (Citizenship) Act No. 3 of 1949 and (iii) the Ceylon Parliamentary Election Amendment Act No. 48 of 1948. The sum effect of all these three Acts was as A. J. Wilson observed:

“ To disfranchise the overwhelming majority of Indians who had up to date possessed the right to vote, and (2) to make it extremely difficult for those Indians and Pakistanis who wished to become to qualify.¹⁶

Government spokesman in justifying these laws, argued that the Indians had no permanent interest in the country. They further insisted that the Indians not only maintained connections with their families and relatives in India but that they also periodically visited their families in India and remitted moneys to them. The Ceylon Indian Congress organised, without much success, passive resistance to these laws. Indians were called upon to boycott the registration procedures for citizenship provided under the Act. This issue became a controversial issue in the internal politics as well as a matter of continuous disputes between India and Sri Lanka.

From 1940 to 1964 the leaders of both India and Sri Lanka had attempted without success to solve the problem. However, in October 1964 the Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Sirimavo Bandaranaike met in New Delhi and signed an agreement known as Indo - Ceylon Agreement of 1964. Under the 1964 Agreement, Sri Lanka agreed to grant citizenship to 300,000 of an estimated 975,000 persons of Indian origin

in the island. India agreed to grant Indian citizenship and repatriate to India 525,000 such persons. The period of validity of the agreement being 15 years. It was agreed that the political status of the remaining 150,000 persons of Indian origin would be negotiated later. In 1974, the then Prime Minister of India and Sri Lanka met and agreed that one half of this number would be repatriated to India and the other half would be given Sri Lanka citizenship.

Due to numerous procedural problems and difficulties the Indo - Ceylon Agreement of October 1964 and the subsequent Pact of 1974 could not be implemented fully within the stipulated period which lapsed in October 1979. Only 506,000 applications were received by the Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka opting for Indian citizenship out of the expected 600,000 persons which showed a shortfall of 94,000. On the Indian side it was argued that as the above Pacts were no more valid it was not the responsibility of India to grant citizenship to the rest of the negotiated number. The following statistics show the stage of implementation of Indo - Sri Lanka Agreements as at 1986:

a. Sri Lanka

(1) Number applied for Sri Lanka citizenship	625,000
(2) Number to be granted	375,000
(3) Number granted	197,535
(Natural increase granted)	66,500
(4) Number awaiting grant on ratio of four to granted Sri Lanka citizenship when seven are granted Indian citizenship.	43,153

b. India

(1) Number applied for Indian citizenship	506,000
(2) Number to be granted citizenship	600,000
(3) Number granted	421,207
(Natural increase granted)	170,000
(4) Number repatriated	337,066
(Natural increase repatriated)	123,835
(5) Number granted Indian citizenship and still remaining in Sri Lanka.	84,141

Source: Sri Lanka, Parliamentary Debate (Hansard) Official Report, Vol. 39 No. 7, col. 349.

In discussing the 1986 *satyagraha* campaign of the CWC it would be useful to review some earlier attempts by the CWC to organize such campaigns.

The Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC), the immediate predecessor to the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) organized a *satyagraha* campaign in 1952 to oppose the implementation of the Citizenship Act enacted by the United National Party (UNP) Government in 1948 and 1949. The CIC's *satyagraha* campaign had two fronts: (i) the fast before the Prime Minister's Office by a selected band of *satyagrahis*, and (ii) sit-down *satyagraha* at the House of Representatives and in the premises of various Ministers. The purpose of this campaign was to focus attention on the plight of the stateless and voteless Indian settlers in the Island.

The *satyagraha* campaign which started on 28th April, 1952 continued for five days. On the first three days of the campaign, the police bundled the *satyagrahis* into vans and dropped them at different places. But from the fourth day onwards the *satyagraha* went on as scheduled. At the fast that took place in front of the Prime Minister's Office Thondaman and Aziz and 41 other *satyagrahis* participated. There was no interference by the police. Sit-down *satyagraha* was also continued at the House of Representatives and the Office of the Minister of Home Affairs.¹⁸ The campaign, however, did not produce the desired goal of the CIC namely, the repeal of the Citizenship Acts. Nevertheless, the CIC claimed that "direct political action of a non-violent nature has not been utilized by any political group in Ceylon on such scale,"¹⁹ in the past to indicate the grievances of the people.

In 1950, at the Tenth Annual Conference of the CIC held at Matale, it was decided that the Ceylon Indian Congress be renamed the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), with a political wing which subsequently became the successor to the Ceylon Indian Congress. This paved the way for the indigenous people also to participate in the activities of the CWC. Since the 1950s CWC has been in the forefront of all agitations launched to regain the citizenship rights of the plantation workers. As the editorial of the Congress News of the CWC observed

The CWC was, for many years, only a trade union organization and its political overtones, then tended to reflect the problems and disabilities that stemmed from disenfranchisement and statelessness of a whole community of persons of Indian origin, the majority of which were plantation workers.²⁰

The CWC, in April 1984, organized a strike demanding pay rise for the plantation workers with the support of other trade unions in the plantations. Approximately six lakhs of workers went on strike on 1st April 1984 which lasted for 10 days. It was called off by the CWC on the 10th after a settlement was reached on the pay issue between President J. R. Jayawardene and the Leader of the CWC Sowmiamurthy Thondaman. In January 1986, however, the CWC launched a non-violent prayer campaign to press the Government to grant citizenship status to the stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

ii. Immediate Objective

The immediate objective of the prayer campaign of the CWC was to make the Government to solve the problem of statelessness among the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. Its ultimate objective was to bring pressure on the Government by non-violent means to make it realise the just demand of the stateless persons in Sri Lanka.

(c) Prayer Campaign - Participants and Leadership

The membership of the CWC (CWC commands a majority of plantation workers) were the main participants in the prayer campaign. With the exception of the Democratic Workers Congress (DWC) led by Aziz and the UNP-sponsored Lanka Jatika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU), all other plantation unions supported and participated in the prayer campaign. For example, the General Secretary of the Lanka General Services Union (LGSU) Jayaratne Malliyagoda suggested that "all trade unions should meet before January 14 to explore any possibility of a sit-in-prayer by the plantation workers begins."²¹ Others such as the National Union Workers (NUW) supported the prayer campaign.

The leadership of the campaign was entirely in the hands of the Leader of the CWC assisted by his deputies M. S. Sellasamy, Annamalai and Jaya Peri Sundaram.

(d) Organization

In June 1985, Sowmiamurthy Thondaman made a statement that "if by the end of December 1985 the fundamental matters affecting the people of Indian origin in the country are not settled, I will consider my leadership and the policy followed a failure. And I will be prepared to stand down in favour of more dynamic policy..."²² Thereafter, he communicated his ideas to the estate leaders. The leaders met at district levels before attending the meeting of the National Council held on December 3, 1987. At this meeting a decla-

ration was formulated and unanimously adopted by the Council. According to this declaration it was proposed to organize a prayer campaign from *pongal* (Thai Pongal Day - 14th of January, 1985.) to *Putthandu* (Tamil New Year in April 1986) Thondaman declared that "we must live in this country, our motherland, with honour and self-respect. That is our right"²³ He further added that the "CWC-led struggle would be non-violent and peaceful. Like others, we need not take to the guns. We are followers of Mahathma Gandhi. We will follow the Gandhian way"²⁴

(e) Preparation for Action

As a preparation for the prayer campaign a meeting was arranged at Kotagala on November 18th 1985. While addressing the meeting among thousands of plantation workers Thondaman said that he and the CWC "expected President Jayawardene to solve the stateless problem by December 31." In declaration made at the National Council Meeting held on 3rd December, 1987, Thondaman briefly outlined the action to be taken by the CWC.

The entire body of plantation workers will be called upon to participate in the CWC programme. The plantation workers now want to come into their own and enjoy the same rights, privileges and benefits other communities in Sri Lanka enjoy. To achieve this it is necessary for the plantation workers to devote their time every day up to forenoon to the programme formulated by the CWC.²⁵

Thereafter the CWC President addressed a series of meetings where he proposed the three month long five hour daily prayer campaign from 7-00 a. m. till 12-00 noon in all plantation areas.

(f) Preliminary Action

As a preliminary action the Leader of the CWC Thondaman wrote to his Excellency the President reminding him of his statement about ending the problems of plantation workers of Indian origin by December 31 1985. But there was no response to this from the President. Again the Leader of the CWC sent a letter to the President on December 17, enclosing copies of the December 3 Declaration and his previous letters. There was an immediate response to the December 17 letter and the President invited Thondaman for a meeting to resolve the problem.

(g) Action

On the 14th of January 1986, the CWC commenced its Gandhian prayer cum protest campaign. Prayer meetings were held from 7-00 a. m. to 12-00

noon in almost all the estates with a demand for full day's wages for work done in the afternoons. There was no plucking of tea from 7-00 a. m. to 12-00 noon. After two days of prayer campaign throughout the length and breadth of the plantations, the campaign was called off on the 16th as President Jayawardene agreed that necessary Acts will be brought in Parliament to end the statelessness of the plantation workers.

Reaction of the Government

As a response to the CWCs Prayer campaign President Jayawardene held a meeting on 1st January 1986 with the Chairman of the State Plantation Corporation (SPC) and the Chairman of the Janatha Estate Development Board (JEDB), the two state agencies which control 70 per cent of the country's tea estates. A directive sent out thereafter to SPC and JEDB estate managements instructed them to pay only half a day's wages to any worker reporting for work at 1-00 p. m. after the prayer meeting for the day had ended. Workers who reported to work after 1-00 p. m. were to be denied work²⁶

At the same time President Jayawardene responded favourably to the pleas of the CWC to end statelessness and he invited the CWC for negotiations. After a series of negotiations, the President and the Cabinet agreed to grant citizenship to 94,000 stateless persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. The government of India, also consented to the decision.

The Bill to Provide for the grant of the status of Sri Lankan Citizen to certain stateless persons of Indian origin was presented in Parliament on 30th January 1986 and was passed on the following day.

The Opposition parties especially the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) opposed this Bill and its leader Sirimavo Bandaranaike argued that this Bill violated the earlier Pacts, e. g. Sirimavo - Shastri Pact of 1964. Also the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna leader Dinesh Gunawardene and the ex-UNP Minister Cyril Mathew opposed this Bill, However, the Opposition Parties failed in its attempt to mobilize the people against the Bill, partly due to the support of the Maha Sangha.

IV. An Evaluation of the CWC Prayer Campaign

The CWC prayer campaign was mass-based and it was a non-violent direct action. A statement adopted at the meeting of the National Council of the CWC in March 1986 explained why it decided to launch direct action by quoting the following passage of Dr. Martin Luther King:

In any non - violent campaign there are four classic steps - the collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist, negotiation, self - purification and direct action ... You may well ask, why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiations - a better path? You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed this is the very purpose of direct action. Non - violent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. ... 27

The CWC argued that this was exactly what its prayer campaign set out to do and succeeded in doing.

When we look at the prayer campaign of the CWC in the light of the Gandhian technique of *satyagraha*, it is evident that CWC fulfilled some requirements that were necessary for a *satyagraha* campaign. The plantation workers had a just cause and every member of that community felt that the problem of statelessness should be settled on a humanitarian basis. The CWC was ready to negotiate with the Government for a settlement and, in fact, it did negotiate. However, the CWC did not adequately educate the plantation workers on the Gandhian principles of non - violent resistance or conduct training classes for volunteers. Gandhi became convinced that *satyagraha* based on inner conviction was more effective than non - violence practised as a temporary policy.

A close study of Gandhi reveals that for him two very important questions of politics are obedience to law and the employment of force. According to Gandhi the State should safeguard the rights and obligations of its citizens. It must guarantee the common good for all its citizens. The question of disobedience arises in the case of State which does not fulfil the above purpose. Gandhi was of the view that in the interests of society good citizens can disobey the law in order to maintain a good State. He clearly distinguished between law and morality. The laws of the State must guide citizens on the correct moral path.

In the case of the prayer campaign of the CWC, the workers who participated in the campaign felt that they were denied the basic rights due to them. But the CWC used the non - violent campaign only as a temporary weapon. Nevertheless, it may be said that the campaign brought the necessary change or desired goal. Why? To answer this we have to look for reasons other than the prayer campaign of the CWC itself.

The following four reasons have been advanced for the success of the prayer campaign:

1. Humanitarian aspects of the problem.
2. The fear that India might interfere in Sri Lanka's internal affairs on the pretext of helping the people of Indian origin.
3. The possibility of the Tamil militants getting a foothold among the stateless persons of Indian origin.
4. Pressure of Indian Government on Sri Lanka Government.
5. The economic consequences of prayer campaign in the strategic plantation sector.

While introducing the Bill to grant citizenship to the stateless persons in the Parliament, Prime Minister R. Premadasa quoted the following section of the speech made by President J. R. Jayawardene at Gampola.

If a child without parents is handed over to me, What am I to do? Am I to put it to the sea, bury it, burn it or kill it? I have to bring up the child. There should be human feeling. So we negotiate with the Indian Government and undertook to take over half of this group of people. They would take the other half.²⁸

Further, the Prime Minister argued that these people have lived in Sri Lanka for generations and contributed their labour for the enrichment of the economy and development of the country. Therefore, it was humanistic to grant them citizenship.

Continuing his speech Prime Minister Premadasa said that "so long as the problem of persons of Indian origin remains unsolved, India may have reasons to interfere in our internal affairs on the pretext that persons of Indian origin have been affected."²⁹ On the question of statelessness the Maha Sangha too had the same views. In a statement to the All - Party Conference the Supreme Council of the Maha Sangha observed the following:

"...due to the presence of Indians in this country, India interferes in Sri Lanka's internal Affairs. In the recent past India's interference in our affairs has increased even further. This is because of the so - called Indians who have not got Sri Lankan citizenship. ... We should not have a category of persons who call themselves Indians. This can easily be achieved by sending back those who have

to be sent to India as stated in the Sirimavo - Shastri Pact and giving citizenship to the rest. Even though the numbers may be a little more, the Supreme Sangh a Council declares that the Council is not opposed to their being given citizenship in order to arrive at a solution to this problem''³⁰

Among factors which influenced the decision of the government to grant citizenship to the stateless persons was the stand taken by the Tamil militant groups on this problem. In the first round of talks at Thimpu, Bhutan, between the representatives of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil groups, the Tamil delegation insisted the four basic principles necessary for a settlement of the Tamil problem; among which granting Sri Lankan citizenship to all stateless Tamils in the island was also included.

Prime Minister R. Premadasa pointed out in Parliament that the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), a Tamil militant group has been trying to impress upon the plantation workers that their democratic organizations such as the CWC and DWC were really not looking after their interests and that the EROS was ready to fight for their rights. It was these circumstances that forced the Government to change its minds on the citizenship issue.

Speaking at the debate on the Bill, the Leader of the Opposition, Anura Bandaranaike pointed out that "granting of citizenship to 600,000 people and their natural increase was India's obligation,"³¹ and argued that this Bill renders the Kandyan peasantry impotent. Further, he maintained that the people were not consulted before granting citizenship to the stateless persons. He therefore, opposed the Bill. But on the Government's side it was pointed out that when Sirimavo Bandaranaike signed the Indo - Sri Lanka Agreement in 1964, to grant Sri Lanka citizenship for 375,000 persons of Indian origin, the SLFP did not consult the people.

According to available information, the Government of India, too, took part in the negotiations to find a solution to the problem of the stateless persons. In a statement issued by the Indian High Commission on the problem of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka it was stated that:

"Under direction from the Government of India, the High Commission of India undertook detailed negotiations with the Minister for National Security, Lalith Athulathmudali, and the Minister for Rural Industries Development, S. Thondaman, between 11th and 14th January''³²

The above statement shows that the Government of India too was actively involved in the process of negotiations to settle the stateless problem.

The decision on the part of the CWC to launch a prayer campaign and not a strike in January 1986 needs to be probed. As noted earlier, the CWC in April 1984 appealed to its members to go on strike in pursuance of a demand for a pay rise for plantation workers. However, in 1986, on the question of stateless persons it was decided to launch a prayer campaign. Why did the CWC change its strategy in these two instances? The answer to this question has to be found in the different political situations prevailing in the country in 1984 and in 1986. In 1986, the Government of Sri Lanka was engaged in a full scale war with the Tamil militants in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The situation was not so in 1984. Furthermore, the Tamil militants have adopted an armed struggle as their strategy to achieve their goal. The CWC had never approved in the past violence as a method to achieve its objectives. There was reason to believe that a full scale strike action at that time might have taken a violent turn. The CWC being a constituent party in the Government could not simply ignore this possibility. Or it could have only taken such a decision at the risk of leaving the government. The CWC, therefore, decided to resort to a non-violent and peaceful method to achieve its objective.

The above analysis clearly shows that the prayer campaign, by itself could not have brought necessary change. Several other factors among which the possible interference by India in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, possible infiltration of Tamil militants among stateless persons and human aspects of the problem influenced the decision of the Government of Sri Lanka. Most important factor, however, was the fact that in 1986, Sri Lanka was facing a civil war in the North and East and that it did not wish to open another front in the central highlands.

Thus, the evidence shows that not only the prayer campaign of the CWC but also the volatile political situation prevailing in the country at that time helped the Government at that time to pass an Act to solve the stateless problem of the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

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DROUGHT; ITS DEFINITION AND METHODOLOGY

Sellathurai Balachandiran

Introduction:

Studies have been progressing in areas most affected by drought i.e: South West and Midwest of United States, Australia, India, U. S. S. R., Brazil and the Sahel zone. These studies differ in their definition of drought and in following a methodology. These attempts have also been made in Sri Lanka recently.

"Drought" and its alternative spelling "drouth" trace their etymologies to the Anglo - Saxon "drouth" meaning "to dry". The words are characteristically associated with the undesirable aspects of being without water (Thomas H. E. 1962). Dictionaries also indicate a widespread and somewhat varied use of the word "drought".

- (a) Dry weather, especially when so long continued as to cause vegetation to wither; want of water or rain; aridity.
- (b) Dryness of the throat and mouth for want of water; thirst.
- (c) Figuratively, Scarcity of any necessity; dearth.
- (d) Dryness; also a desert (Ibid)

The Encyclopaedias describe some sort of different meaning and definition to each other. The Encyclopaedia Britannica suggest that: "Drought or drouth, lack or insufficiency of rain for an extended period that causes a considerable hydrologic (water) imbalance and consequently water shortages, crop damage, steam-flow reduction and depletion of ground water and soil moisture. It occurs when evaporation and transpiration (the movement of water in the soil through plants into the air.) exceed precipitation for a considerable period.

The encyclopaedia Americana indicates that:-

"Drought, drouth, is a deficiency of water in the ground, streams, lakes and reservoirs resulting from a prolonged deficiency of rain and snowmelt Drought is essentially an imbalance of the hydrological cycle Thus drought can simply come from a deficiency in precipitation over a period of time, or it may be caused by excessive evaporation

and transpiration". The Australian Encyclopaedia states somewhat different aspect from the above definitions. It describes that:

"Prolonged periods of dry weather occurring at more or less regular intervals and sometimes covering large parts of the Continent..... Drought is a relative term and definitions vary widely through out the world. The listing of drought is therefore, rather subjective, often depending on the observer and the type of the country or primary Pursuit. Low rainfall, stock losses, water and feed shortages, stock movements, bushfires and dust storms have all been taken into account when classifying drought as severe".

These definitions in Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias have not been taken into account when analyzing drought by the various investigators in the various climatic regions. The criterion for the Southwest and Texas droughts is different from New England drought. Also the definitions for Australian droughts could vary from the definitions which describe the drought events in Sri Lanka or India.

I. O. Problem of Defining Drought

According to Harding (1970) comparatively little attention has been paid to the study of drought and drought hazards. This is more or less true in comparison with other meteorological and climatological phenomena and also it could be said that it is one of the fields which needs more attention. Very recently, however Palmer and Denny (1971) have published a bibliography of drought in which the investigations, carried out in various countries in various languages) have been included. The problems of defining drought have been discussed in different ways by a number of authors.

It is true that the "various investigations have been with different aims and approaches, have derived and used different definitions based on quite different criteria" (Harding 1970). Before considering these works in detail, it can be said that drought has been considered as a hydrological, meteorological, agricultural or economic feature in which:

"Meteorological drought has been defined as a prolonged and abnormal moisture deficiency" (Palmer 1965, Donald J. Fieldhouse and Palmer 1965).

or:

"Drought is a meteorological phenomenon and occurs during a period when precipitation is less than the long term average and when this deficiency is great enough and continues long enough to hurt mankind" (Thomas H. E. 1962)

According to Yevjevich (1967) "the engineer views drought as a set of variables affecting rainfall, run-off and water storage in its many forms. The Geophysists view of drought may be climatological, general meteorological, hydrological, limnological, glaciological or concerned with aspects of soil physics. The economist views drought from an entirely different point of view, in terms of the areas of human activity affected. In his eyes there are agricultural droughts, water supply droughts, and droughts involving fish, wildlife and range management, to name only a few. The Agriculturist has another point of view, closely tied to the water needs of various crops..... (for each crop); the concept of drought changes during the growing season, mainly by climatic variations, growth state, and the ways in which the crops are cultivated".

According to Fieldhouse and Palmer (1965) drought calculations on a purely agricultural basis, must take account of the kind of crop, its stages of growth and rooting depths as well as the characteristics of the soil and the various meteorological factors that daily affect moisture supply and demand.

From an ecological point of view "drought is an extended period of dryness that is a period moisture deficiency below the normal for the area".

1. 1. Usages in Meteorological Institutions :

Most of these definitions are based on a particular duration of a time without precipitation. The best known definition in this way is probably that, formerly used by the British Meteorological Office in which an:

"Absolute drought defined as a period of at least 15 consecutive days to none of which is credited 0.01 inch of rain or more"

A "partial drought defined as a period of at least 29 consecutive days, to none of which the mean daily rainfall does not exceed 0.01 inch of rain"

And a "dry spell defined as a period of at least 15 consecutive days, to none of which is credited 0.04 inches of rain". (Subrahmanyam V. P. 1967)

In a SriLankan context these are the definitions used to find out the absolute and partial droughts and dry spells. (Reports on the Colombo Observatory)

The United States Weather Bureau defined drought as a period of 30 days or more with deficient rainfall and not in excess of a quarter of an inch in any 24 hours. The American Meteorological Society defines drought as a prolonged and abnormal moisture deficiency (Palmer 1965). In Australia 70 percent of

the Australian rainfall never exceeds evaporation in any month of the year.

Only a few of the classical investigators, such as Cole (1933) and Blumenstock (1942) have followed the above type of definitions. As far as the meteorological offices are concerned; this method is followed in many countries. "Because of the difficulty of similarly keeping water accounts for extensive areas, drought is usually defined as a period of consecutive days without rainfall" (Thomas H. E. 1962)

1. 2. Deficiency from the Normal as Drought Definitions.

In previous studies of drought in the United States by the Geological Survey it has been customary to identify the area of drought on the basis of meteorological records (Ibid). For Australian conditions Foley (1957) describes:

"A period of rainfall deficiency extending over months or years can be stated as drought".

Gibbs and Maher (1967) pointed out that:

"rainfall is the best single indicator of drought"

Heathcote (1969) also suggested:

"For Australian conditions, however, rainfall seems to be sufficient"

On the deficiency in precipitation as a drought definition Heyt J. C. (1938) writes:

"although deficiency in precipitation, is the prime cause of drought, it is not possible to set for any region an exact limit of the total annual precipitation above which a drought does not exist and below which a drought may prevail. In general however, in the humid and semiarid states there are no serious drought effects unless the annual precipitation is as low as 85 percent of the mean that is, unless there is an annual deficiency of 15 percent or more. This limit is used in the present report as a measure of a drought year and may serve in many drought studies". (as quoted by Thomas H. E. 1962).

Baldwin - Wiseman (1934) did valuable drought studies in Queensland by using a definition in terms of deficiency of normal rainfall. In this research he pointed out that:

"Symons suggested many years ago that a deficiency of 50 percent or more from the mean rainfall of three or more consecutive

months should be described as an "engineers drought" and the author has adhered to this convention throughout the analysis of the Queensland record....."

Foley (1957) identified droughts in terms of residual mass curve (cumulated residual curve or deficiency mass curve) and in his words "residual mass" or a "cumulated residual" graph is that which shows up at once a succession of deficient or excess months or years of rainfall both in regard to duration and amount of deficiency or excess. In this respect it may be said to be superior for the purpose in hand to any other method of graphing rainfall. In this study residuals have been expressed in units of thousands of the annual rainfall.

In 1935, Bates also stated that drought occurs when the annual precipitation is 75 percent of the normal or when the monthly precipitation is 60 percent of the normal. (Quoted by Subrahmanyam V. P., 1967)

Thomas H. E. (1962) also follows the deficiency in the average precipitation (long term) as a drought definition when he was discussing the drought and the effects in the Southwest United States.

Summarizing droughts definitions he found that the term "drought" has been commonly applied, rather inconsistently, to three major forms of dryness.

- (a) A natural condition caused by less than average precipitation over a certain period of time.
- (b) A natural condition where the average precipitation is low.
- (c) Nature's failure to fulfil the or to meet the developed requirement of man.

From these Thomas (1962) selected form (a) as "drought" as a meteorologic phenomenon and occurs during a period when precipitation is less than the long term average and when this deficiency is great enough and continues long enough to hurt mankind. Drought is thus measured in terms of the duration and magnitude of the departure from the average climate in the area under consideration.

Troxell (1957) also used precipitation deficiency to find out wet and dry period even though his approach was different. Huff and Changnon (1963) discussed the severity of droughts from the length of the period of monthly precipitation deficiency below normal. Severity indices were obtained from frequency diagrams

on log - probability paper between the percentage of normal precipitation and recurrence interval (quoted by Subrahmanyam V. P. 1967). In India Ramdas (1950) considered drought as an occasion when the actual rainfall for a week was half of the normal or less. Departure from normal or seasonal rainfall (June to September) was used to assess the frequency and intensity of droughts by Banerji and Chabra (1963). In Sri Lanka the assessment of drought was carried out by following the same method (Balachandiran 1975). Agricultural drought over Gangetic West Bengale was analysed by following this method too (Swadesh Mishna) 1983

1. 3. Definition by Hydrologic Accounting Technique

When defining drought Palmer (1965) said that the water balance or hydrologic accounting technique to climatic analysis allows one to compute a reasonably realistic picture of the time distribution of moisture excesses and deficiencies.

The foremost among these water balance techniques is that of Thornthwaite (1948) and according to him 'in permanent drought, precipitation is never sufficient to meet the needs expressed by the potential evapotranspiration'' (Encyclopaedia Britannica 1963 quoted by Thomas F, S. 1966.)

On the basis of the well known Thornthwaite, (1948) and Thornthwaite and Mather (1955) water balance concept, some investigators tried to classify droughts in India. The aridity index (the ratio of the annual water deficiency to the total annual water need expressed as a percentage) is considered to be a very useful parameter for drought studies (Subrahmanyam 1967), Subramanyam & Subramaniam 1964., Subrahmanyam and Sastri (1969). According to this scheme droughts and their severity are determined by the departure of the aridity index from normal classified by using the standard deviation (σ) as a unit and categorization of droughts has been done by assuming various arbitrary limits of standard deviation. Subramanyam and Sastri (1969) used "Median" on the basis that they think that the Median is a better and more realistic average than the simple arithmetic mean which was used by Subrahmanyam and Subramaniam, (1964) to show the normal.

TABLE 1

Scheme of Drought Classification:

(Subramanyam & Sastri 1969).

Departure of Aridity Index

from the median	Drought Intensity
$< \frac{1}{2} \sigma$	Moderate
$\frac{1}{2} \sigma$ to σ	Large
σ to 2σ	Severe
$> 2 \sigma$	Disastrous

In India various research workers such as Choudhury, Ramastry and Rentalag (1977), George and Ramasastry (1972 & 1975) used the water balance Technique (Aridity Index). Further Jutta Dikshit (1983), followed the aridity index method when explaining drought in Maharashtra, Subramaniam A. R. and M. Venkateswara Rao, (1983) followed the same method in the Rayala seema region (Deccan). When explaining the Kharif agricultural drought in India the particular method had been employed by Appa Rao G. and G. S. Vijayaraghavan (1983). In the same way study of agricultural drought over India was also made by Appa Rao (1982).

By using the potential evapotranspiration computed from Thornthwaite's formula by means of the Palmer-Havens Diagram (Palmer and Heaxens 1958) Palmer analyzed the meteorological drought by stating the main concept that "the amount of precipitation required for the near-normal operation of the established economy of an area during some stated period as dependent on the average climate of the area and on the prevailing meteorological conditions both during and preceding the month or period in question (Palmer 1965). He therefore, regards soil moisture as an index of accounting based on Thornthwaite's method (Thornthwaite 1948 & Thornthwaite and Mather 1955) and taking into account the amount of moisture required for normal weather during each month, in the area in question, deviations from this normal weather are expressed in terms of a numerical index. In this index positive values indicate wetter than normal conditions. In table 02 the positive classes are not given.

TABLE 2

Negative Classes which Represents the Degree of Drought Severity (Palmer and Fieldhouse 1965)

Positive Classes are Omitted,

— 0.05	to	— 0.99	Incipient Drought
— 1.00	to	— 1.99	Mild ..
— 2.00	to	— 2.99	Moderate ..
— 3.00	to	— 3.99	Severe ..
		— 4.00	Extreme ..

Many drought investigators have followed Palamer's technique in their studies. For the whole of India (Excluding Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Konkan and Coastal Mysore where very high run-off prevails) the spectral analysis of drought (index) by means of Palmer's technique has been performed (Rao et al 1973). Incidence of drought in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Mysore (South Indian States) has also been analyzed by means of the same technique (George et al 1972). On the basis of Palmer's approach Vaiksnovas et al (1973) analysed Tennessee drought and Weedfall disussed droughts in west Virginia, (1969)

1.4 Definition by Moisture Status index

Palmer's drought index has been added to by a new index called the Moisture Status Index which is introduced as a measure of the wetness or dryness of place at a given time by Shear and Stella (1973). They made an assessment of drought intensity by this index in Kentucky and Tennessee. According to them parrelleling Palmer's definition, drought is defined as an interval of time during which the actual moisture status of a given place falls short of the mean moisture status of that place, So the magnitude of drought is a function of both the duration and intensity of the monthly moisture deficiency.

TABLE 3

Categories of Drought (Shear and Stella 1973)

Moisture Status Class	Drought Index
Above Normal	— 1-00
Near Normal	— 0.99 to 0,99
Mild Drought	— 1.00 to — 1.99
Moderate Drought	— 2.00 to — 2.99
Severe Drought	— 3.00 to — 3.99
Extreme Drought	— 4.00

1.5 Soil Moisture Based Definition

Soil moisture has been regarded as the most important variable in defining drought. Especially in humid zones, several scientists define drought on the basis of the deficiencies in soil moisture as stated earlier i. e: water balance approaches. It was pointed out by Thornthwaite (1963) that drought is most accurately described as a condition in which the amount of water needed for transpiration and direct evaporation exceeds the amount available in the soil.....
..... the effect of a shortage of rainfall depends on whether soil is moist or dry at the beginning of the period. Furthermore he says that drought does not begin when rain ceases but rather only when plant roots can no longer obtain soil moisture. In relation to the same aspect, Shantz (1927) had already pointed out that drought in its proper sense is related to soil moisture and that it begins when the available soil moisture is diminished
(Quoted by Thomas H. E. 1962)

As far as soil moisture itself is concerned Rodda (1965) has analyzed droughts in South East England, giving more importance to soil moisture rather than to hydrologic accounting techniques by forming a soil moisture index. In his own words:

“ Nevertheless there is a real difficulty in obtaining a wholly satisfactory definition of the drought phenomenon not only because drought has a variety of meanings, but for the reason that effectiveness of precipitation is a seasonal feature. A further consideration is that the effects of lack of rain can be greatly modified by conditions existing in the soil due to the previous rainfall. Indeed soil moisture content provides perhaps the best single drought criterion”.

Though Rodda's scheme also is based on hydrologic accounting techniques, it is different from them in some degree because it gives priority to the Penman method (1949) of calculating potential evapotranspiration and also give priority to soil moisture to derive the drought index.

Important studies on drought in the Soviet Union revealed the recognition that the unbalanced state between the available soil moisture and the water needs of plants is a specific feature of drought and the greater this imbalance is the more severe is the drought (Subrahmanyam 1967)

1.6 Statistical Runs as Definition

In this definition, the term drought in a hydrological sense is defined as the deficiency in water supply on the earth surface or the deficiency in precipitation, effective precipitation, run off or in accumulated water in various storage capacities (Yevjevich 1967). Strictly, he says basically a hydrologic drought means a deficit of water supply in time and area or both.

In a search for objective definition for drought he describes that runs as statistical properties of sequences, both in time and area, represent the best basic concepts for an objective definition of droughts. The runs of the sequences of a stochastic variable (or combination of stochastic and deterministic components making a composite sequence) may be defined in various ways.

In Australia, following Brooks and Carruthers (1953), Body (1966) has calculated the number of occasions when runs of monthly rainfall have been less than or equal to the medium value i. e. probability - 0.5, 0.3, 0.1 etc, (quoted by Mather 1967), Persistence ratio and its confidence limit in terms of runs is also discussed by Body (1966). Runs of dry spells were also studied to identify drought by Banerji and Chabra (1963).

1.7 Rainfall Deciles as Drought Indicators

In Australia, Gibbs and Mather (1967) describe drought in terms of the rainfall deciles for the period of 1885 - 1965. They defined drought as the following: "if the minimum water need for a given period of time is met by rainfall of a given amount "X", drought may be said to occur whenever the rainfall during that time interval is less than "X", and severity of drought linked to the amount by which rainfall falls short of requirement",

They suggest that by selecting the decile method, if rainfall amounts are not normally distributed, rainfall occurrence is best described by quoting the limits a certain proportion of the occurrences, and it is possible to indicate that a certain percentage of values fall below a stated limit. This method of describing distribution is to state limits of each ten percent (or decile) of the distribution. Thus the first decile is that rainfall amount which is not exceeded by the lowest 10% of totals, the second decile is the amount not exceeded by 20% totals and so on. The decile ranges are the ranges of values between deciles, thus the first decile range is that below the first decile, the eighth decile range between deciles seven and eight and so on.

TABLE 4

Decile Ranges		Decile Range
Very much above "average"	— highest 10%	10
Much above average	— next highest 10%	9
Above average	— next highest 10%	8
Slightly above average	— next highest 10%	7
Average	— middle 10%	5 & 6
Slightly below average	— next lowest 10%	4
Below average	— next lowest 10%	3
Much below average	— next lowest 10%	2
Very much below average	— lowest 10%	1

There were more studies carried out by using the decile method at Mysore state (Surya narayana et al 1971); and at Bihar State (George c. j, and Kalyanasundaram 1969) in India. The same method also had been followed in analysing drought in Sri Lanka (Domros 1978)

1.8 Want of water Concept

Thomas H. E. (1962) quoted this approach stating clearly that:

"In connection with present day activities of a highly organized civilisation, it is increasingly difficult to define and delineate drought on the basis of a study of meteorological and hydrological conditions alone! (Hoyt W. G. 1942)

Thomas H. E. also suggests that the water needs for established human activities are an essential criterion for drought condition. Troxell (1957) followed Hoyt's view, in determining the severity of drought. It has been necessary to study both the meteorological and hydrological factors as well as the water requirements of the inhabitants. The severity of the drought is then represented by the combination of these three factors.

According to Troxe ;

" to the city dweller as well as to the Agriculturist, a drought exists whenever he is required to reduce his water uses....."

The frequency of a drought will depend largely on the amount of water requirement. If the reservoirs are large in terms of the water requirement then many a period of deficient precipitation may pass without any curtailment of the water requirements and the drought may go unnoticed as a meteorological phenomenon"

He goes on to say that a period of different precipitation is recognized as a drought where reservoirs are small.

2.0 Conclusion on the Definitions

In addition, drought has been studied in relation to atmospheric circulation by Namias (1972) in the United States and Brazil and by Ramage (1968), Ramasamy (1972) in monsoon areas in India. The shift of global circulation systems and the prevalence of droughts were discussed by Lamb (1974) and Winstanley (1973). Charney (1974) discussed a biogeophysical feedback mechanism which tends to produce changes in plant cover and rainfall. "Two integrations of a global general circulation model, differing only in the prescribed surface albedo resulting from a decrease in plant cover causes a decrease in rainfall" (Charney et al 1975). Thus "this tendency could initiate or perpetuate a drought".

Landsberg came to a conclusion that drought could not be designated as an event beyond expectation (1975). Further, a study on the precipitation fluctuations in Monsoon Asia during the last 100 years shows that these fluctuations were paralleled with the Southern Oscillation (Hakkarinen I. M. and Landsberg 1981).

Mooley stated that droughts are random series in China and there have been no increase in drought frequency (1981). He applied the Poisson distribution for the analysis. In Soviet Union, Rauner pointed out that the drought sequences are a random process of a stationary type (1977). From the theoretical surveys revealed one conclusion could be suggested which is in agreement with Carr (1966). He pointed that "some considerations found to be common in most definitions of drought are:

- I Rainfall.....The meteorologic parameter most used to determine when drought is in progress.
- II Duration and magnitude of rainfall deficiency - the key to soil moisture deficiency which is in turn the key to the severity of agricultural drought.
- III Purpose of the technical paper report or study strongly influences the definition of drought given by the author; chooses an existing definition or coins a new one which best suits his needs at the time"

Thus it is easy to come to a universally agreed conclusion "drought, by its very nature, is difficult to define, because clearly the definition must vary for

different purpose. There can be therefore no universally agreed definition of drought (Maher 1967). As described in the Australian Encyclopaedia, the severity of drought is rather subjective often depending on the observer and type of the country. So it should be pointed out here that "generally accepted definition is drought is the "point of view" of the investigator (Tannehill (1948).

To the meteorologist drought is a rainless situation (Subramanyam V. P. 1967) for an extended period during which some precipitation should have been normally received depending upon the climatological location of the place and time. If one is not interested in agro - climatology or dynamical climatology this definition should be accepted.

Such a rainless situation is, generally not enough to describe the drought. Thus as pointed out earlier, the definition which Thomas H. E. (1962) described could be used. According to him:

"drought is a meteorologic phenomenon and occurs during a period when precipitation is less than the long-term average, and when this deficiency is great enough to hurt mankind"

At the same time there is no reason to reject the definitions of Thornthwaite or Palmer, in fact they are very suitable to study drought effects in various places. In other words the discussion of drought in terms of agro - climatology should use water balance or soil moisture based definitions of drought, As done by Thomas H. E. who studied the effects of drought in the South western United States.

3.0 Assessment of drought in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has experienced droughts several times. Sometimes these occur in the South west and central massif regions and sometimes they occur in the North, central, and East regions of the country. Occasionally these events cover all the regions. The studies which dealt with drought in Sri Lanka are very few.

The Southwest monsoon drought of 1929 over Sri Lanka, was discussed by Jameson (1931). He also assesses the liability to drought at Colombo (1932). Until 1956, there were no further studies of drought. In 1956 Farmer (1956) analyzed the incident of rainless months. In 1970 by employing Thornthwaite's water balance technique, water needs and irrigation facilities in the dry zone of Sri Lanka have been assessed (Sri Nanda 1970). Balachandiran (1975) made an assessment of drought in Sri Lanka by following the method of departure from the normal. The categories of drought were also defined in the same way as follows:

Table 3

Categories of drought

- A. Slight drought 76% to 89% of the normal
- B. Moderate drought 51%-75% of the normal
- C. Severe drought 26%-50% of the normal
- D. Extreme drought 25% of the normal
- E. Far extreme drought No rain at all.

Defining magnitude in terms of the percentage to the normal of particular area is in agreement with the approach of Thomas H.E. (1962) though slight changes have been made in the classification used here. Normally 11% variation from the normal is treated as drought free. In particular the first three divisions i. e. A, B & C have followed the categories of Banerji and Chabra (1963) while the other two divisions (C & D) have been created, because it seemed necessary for a finer identification of drought in a Sri Lankan context.

For this, the monthly rainfall data for 30 stations throughout Sri Lanka for the period of 23 years (1948 - 70) were utilized. In this study the persistence tests showed that two thirds of observed droughts were free from persistence effects and chi-square tests showed observed and expected drought in close agreement (Balachandiran 1975).

Domros (1978) studied aridity and drought in Sri Lanka. For aridity investigations he used an 'aridity' index developed by De Martonne Laur (1936/1952). For drought investigations he used the index developed by Gibbs and Maher in 1967. The rainfall figures from 1931 to 1960 were used in this study, "It can be seen from this that drought can be called a typical although irregular and spatially limited phenomenon in the monsoon climate of Sri Lanka (Domros 1978)".

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WAGE STRUCTURE OF PLANTATION WORKERS AND THE 1984 APRIL STRIKE

M. Sinnathamby

Trade Union Movement in the Plantations

Plantation Workers have formed the core of the working class, constituting almost one-fifth of the work-force in the country. However, the rise of the trade union movement in this sector came very much later than in the urban sector of Sri Lanka. There were, of course, a number of reasons for this. The plantation worker was not a free agent able to sell his labour in a competitive labour market. He was tied in varying degrees of duress to the estates and his mobility was thus limited. His wages were low and were not paid regularly; protests were silenced by blows and personal restraint (de Silva 1962 : 247). Government had no obligation to intervene in these matters as the Indian labour in Sri Lanka, unlike the indentured labour taken to some of the other Colonies, was considered to be voluntary. The first ever Labour Legislation, the Contract for Hire and Service Ordinance No. 5 of 1841, was brought into bind the worker to his contract, and offences such as 'bolting', failure to complete the allotted task, or impertinence to the employer were made punishable with imprisonment. In short, the worker's condition more or less bordered on medieval serfdom. Some of these began to change only after intervention by the Indian Government in the early twenties. All these formed major obstacles to the formation of trade unions, even though they were undoubtedly the most exploited group.

Unionisation in the plantations, after it began, developed in isolation from the very active urban movement that had existed since the late nineteenth century. It was not that the leaders of urban labour were unaware of the grievances of these workers but they made no attempt to unionise them or to link the urban and plantation workers in joint action mainly because they considered these workers to be a transient element within the Sri Lankan society with no permanent interest in the country. (Jayawardena 1972 : 332).

The first ever concern on behalf of these workers was expressed by Ponnampalam Arunachalam, a Member of the Legislative Council. Between 1913 - 1922, he carried on a campaign in the Council against poor wages and working conditions on the plantations. This was followed by the move to promote trade unionism in the plantations by Natesa Aiyar, a journalist and Council Member.

By this time, the plantation workers, too, had become receptive to unionisation. Their enfranchisement in 1931, improvement in the plantation educational system, the success of the urban trade union struggles (in Colombo) and the rise of the Left Movement all contributed to this. Natesa Aiyar founded the All Ceylon Estate Labour Federation in 1931 with its Head Office in Hatton, a plantation town, and later a branch in Kandy (Jayawardena 1972: 237). From its very inception the Federation had to face serious opposition from various quarters. The planters went all out to smash the emerging trade union movement. The entry of union leaders into the estates was prohibited and they were also refused permission to hold meetings in town areas. This coupled with the Economic Depression brought a natural death to union activities in the plantations by the end of 1933.

Around this time, the Trotskyites formed the All Ceylon Estate Workers' Federation but failed to draw in the plantation workers because of the stern and repressive measures adopted by the planters against those who joined the union. But they continued their efforts fully utilising the discontent among these workers and even called for the expulsion of the White planters in 1937 - 38. The arrest and internment of these leaders following the declaration of the Second World War put an end to the movement.

The Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union formed in 1940 may be said to be the beginning of a continuous trade union movement in the plantations. After Sri Lanka gained Independence the above union changed its name to the Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) in 1950. A split in the CWC in 1956 led to the formation of the Democratic Workers' Congress (DWC). Today the most powerful union in the plantations is the CWC, followed by the Union of the ruling United National Party - the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union (LJEWU). During the past 15 years, the party in power has used its powers of political patronage to build strong unions in state sector enterprises. The strength of the LJEWU is partly due to this. The trade union movement in the plantations today is characterised by the existence of fifteen to twenty different unions - large and small - and since these unions are aligned, fully or partially to one or the other of the major political parties in the country, the ideological and other differences prevailing among these parties spill over into the trade union movement, too. The differences among the unions have become so sharp that they view each other as rivals in the field rather than as comrades fighting for a common cause. While weakening the trade union movement this also has helped the management to keep workers in subordination.

Table I : STRIKES SINCE 1948

(Annual Averages For Selected Periods)

Period	Private Sector			Plantation Sector		
	Number of Strikes	Number of Workers involved	Number of man - days lost	Number of Strikes	Number of workers involved	Number of man - days lost
1948 — 55	77	14,865	61,935	436	1,296,343	2,239,263
1956 — 64	174	76,907	736,862	1,302	685,499	3,254,276
1965 — 69	48	11,796	183,188	813	408,926	3,142,999
1970 — 71	54	11,984	100,386	1,025	414,471	2,232,336
1977 — 83	141	32,062	216,306	1,192	556,047	1,959,640

Source: Department of Labour

Strikes in the Plantations

The weak organisation of the trade unions, however, has not prevented them from engaging in various types of trade union agitation, including work stoppage. Table 1 reveals that strikes have been more frequent in the plantations than in other sectors. Most of these strikes according to trade unions arise from the non-co-operative and intransigent attitudes of estate managements to negotiate even on relatively minor issues. Often the non-issue of food stuffs and non-payment of wage advances have been the major causes for strikes. Assaults on estate workers by the management is claimed to be another reason that causes strikes (CWC, Report of Activities for 1979 - 81).

This paper is an attempt to analyse one of the plantation strikes that took place in April 1984. It also highlights some of the outstanding issues in the wage system of plantation workers and the various discrimination and disparities that existed at the time of the strike which, in fact, made the strike inevitable. The outcome of the strike and some implications of the outcome are also discussed.

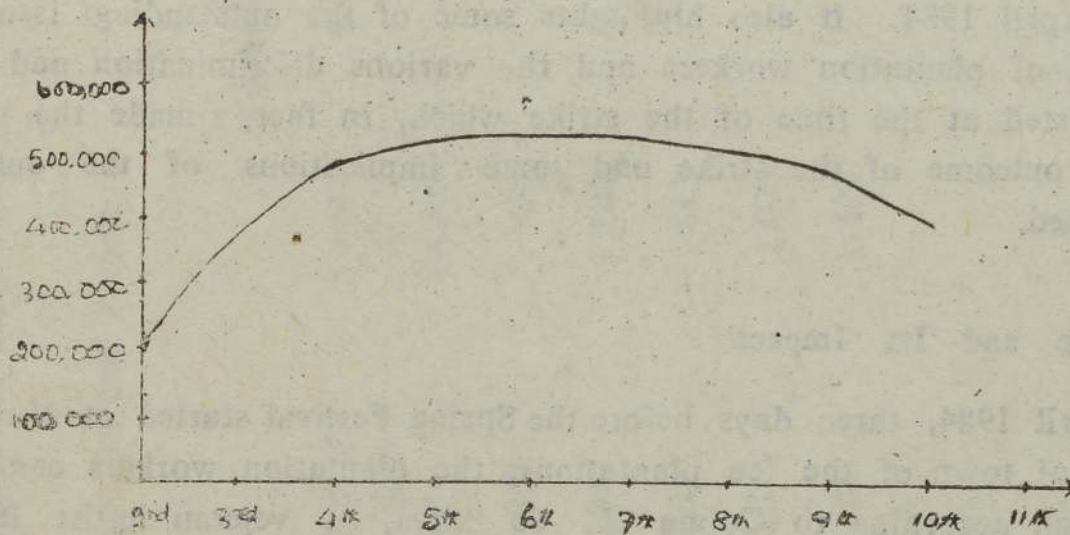
The April Strike and Its Impact

On 2nd April 1984, three days before the Spring Festival started at Nuwara-Eliya, the central town of the tea plantations, the plantation workers came out on a strike which according to Colvin R. de Silva, a veteran leftist leader, "could undoubtedly be called the biggest strike in the history of trade unions in Sri Lanka" (Ceylon Daily News, April 9, 1984). The strike lasted for nine days until the 10th of April thereby causing serious damage to the tea industry and trade. The majority of the tea plantation workers and a large section of the rubber workers were involved in strike action. There was controversy, however, over the actual number involved in the strike.

The CWC, the strongest union in the plantation sector which led fourteen other unions (trade unions represented in the Joint Committee of Plantation Trade Unions) in this historic struggle, claimed that over six hundred thousand workers struck work. The LJEWU contradicted the CWC statement by saying that "not even 75,000 workers were out" (CDN, April 3, 1984). The LJEWU position was that most of the estates were working despite the strike. This position was described by the striking unions as "a figment of LJEWU imagination" and they maintained that many of the LJEWU workers too joined the strike despite the black-legging by the union. The unofficial participation of the LJEWU members in the strike was a fact, their President, the Minister

of Lands and Mahaweli Development, himself admitted when he made the call that "we, therefore, ask any of our members who were cajoled or coerced or misled to join the strike to immediately return to work" (CDN April 4, 1984). The first report of the Government controlled newspaper establishment, the Lake House, estimated that "at least half the work force was out" (CDN April 3, 1984). It is our estimation, considering all sources, that between four and five hundred thousand workers were involved in the strike. Due to the last minute hesitation of the CWC, whether to go ahead with the strike or to postpone it, the strike started with some hesitation and took at least two days to take-off. Then for five days it went on its own momentum. However, the numbers slightly dwindled in the last two days as shown in the diagram below:

FIGURE I



The April strike was effective not only because of the numbers involved but also because of its economic implications. The tea industry was the most affected by the strike. Sri Lanka has for a long time depended largely on tea exports for its foreign currency earnings. It brings to the country almost 40 per cent of her foreign exchange earnings. In 1983, for instance, export earnings from tea accounted for Rs. 8,295 million or 33 per cent of total export earnings (Central Bank, Annual Report, 1983: pp 11). Moreover, the tea auctions in Colombo during the weeks preceding the strike had been fetching very high prices and the industry was booming. Therefore, government sources cautioned the unions that "this was not a time to strike". However, the reply of the CWC Secretary, Sellasamy, was "what better time to strike on a pay question than when produce prices are high".

It was initially speculated that the country would lose Rs. 60 million a day as a result of the strike. However, later the figure was estimated to be a moderate Rs. 30 million (CDN, April 12, 1984). The total 'strike loss' for the two corporations was estimated at Rs. 840 million (Rs. 288 million produc-

tion loss plus Rs. 552 million due to wage increases). If the loss due to coarse plucking and consequently quality loss after the strike ended are added, the total losses would amount to over Rs. 1,000 million (Sundararaj 1984). In the Sri Lankan tea industry the April flush is considered to be the peak harvest. The broker agencies in Colombo estimated the total tea production for April to be around 18 million kilos (CDN, April 12, 1984), which was fairly higher than the normal monthly average. To produce 1 pound of made tea it is necessary to pluck 4 pounds of green leaves. Plucking rounds are completed on a weekly cycle and therefore the flush that is not plucked is lost for ever. When the strike continued, day by day the tea business circle in Colombo became nervous of the situation even to the point of exerting pressure on the Government to settle the strike. Overseas buyers also expressed their concern about the ready availability of Sri Lanka tea over the next few weeks. There was no doubt that a continuous plantation strike could have seriously damaged the whole economy. In view of this, the Finance Ministry officials too pointed out that an early settlement was desirable since tea was enjoying boom prices.

The strike was most effective in the High and Medium grown tea estates especially in the Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Kandy Districts. These were also the areas where the CWC commands a considerable following. In 'Low Grown' estates, where the LJEWU was strong the strike had to be conducted under pressure and intimidation. In many tea and rubber estates in the Sabaragamuwa and Southern Provinces there had been pressures of an intimidatory nature compelling the workers to return to work. For instance, there were threats that the monthly rations of the workers would be withheld, cash advances reduced and that the festival loan for New Year would not be granted (The Island, April 1984). A number of estate-level trade union activists were also locked up in police stations on complaints made by estate superintendents. Some of the threats were also of a communal nature since the large majority of the strikers belonged to the Tamil minority of Indian origin. The effective use of the LJEWU for strike-breaking from within the ranks of the plantation workers, however, was frustrated as it could have easily turned into communal rioting which simply could not be risked. The striking unions were in a position to withstand all pressures and intimidation and to win their demands entirely on the strength of their superior bargaining power.

The Issue at Stake

The issue of wages was central to the plantation strike. The strike, in fact, was led by a cabinet Minister, Mr. S. Thondaman, who perhaps had no political

objectives. Thondaman strictly refrained from making any statement during the strike. However, Sellasamy, the Secretary, stressed that the "strike was not anti-government" (CDN, April 4, 1984). This was quickly vouched for by Dr. Colvin R. de Silva, who said that "the struggle was entirely a trade union action on straight-forward economic questions".

The confrontation between the plantation unions and the management on the wage issue was a longstanding one. The immediate grievance of the plantation workers, however, was that wage increases granted between 1980 and 1983 to workers in other sectors, in view of the rising inflation, had not been extended to them, thereby discriminating against them. In order to understand these acts of discrimination in their proper setting, it is necessary to look at the wage system and the wage structure in the plantation industries.

The wage structure was straight-forward and simple and, therefore, it was easy for the bureaucrats to administer. All the workers—pluckers, weeders and even factory workers—were considered to be in one category and thus were paid a flat rate, though an extra payment was added to the wages of some of these categories (See Appendix 1). One exception was made in the case of women, who were paid a lower rate - around 25 per cent less - compared to men and the principle of 'equal wage for equal work' was thus negated (See Table 2).

TABLE 2

Male — Female Wage Rates — Plantation Sector
(Wage Rates / Per Diem / Rs. Cts.)

Year / Month	Tea Estates		Rubber Estates	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1978 July	9.30	7.14	12.79	13.06
1979 July	11.60	9.30	15.21	13.06
1980 July	14.00	11.70	17.75	15.59
1981 July	16.12	13.77	17.87	15.67
1982 July	16.30	13.89	18.05	15.79
1983 July	16.87	14.27	18.62	16.17

Source: Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation,

The daily wage system was the norm in the estates since colonial times though payments were made at the end of the month. (They were, in fact, paid during the early part of the following month). Under the daily wage system there was no guarantee of uninterrupted work. The number of days of work

offered per month varies very widely. It fluctuates from season to season and year to year as shown in Table 3 and it also varies from estate to estate, largely depending on the whims and fancies of the Superintendents.

TABLE 3

Number of Working Days

Year	/	Month	Tea Estates		Rubber Estates	
			Males	Females	Males	Females
1977		March	19.5	20.1	15.6	16.1
1978		September	20.3	18.3	16.2	14.6
		March	20.2	19.6	22.1	21.0
1979		September	18.5	18.0	19.6	18.6
		March	19.2	20.1	22.5	19.4
1980		September	19.0	17.2	13.5	14.8
		March	19.3	20.3	23.6	21.1
1981		September	20.0	17.2	23.6	21.1
		March	15.0	16.2	24.2	19.2
		September	18.5	17.5	22.9	18.1

Source: Statistical Abstracts, Department of Census and Statistics, 1979 and 1982.

The Tea Master Plan Study from a survey conducted found that the average number of days of work offered in April 1978 varied from 16.4 to 21.9 in four high elevation estates, 17.0 and 19.3 in five mid - elevation estates and 13.2 to 15.0 in three low - elevation estates (CIDA 1978, 21). The peak activity periods in tea cultivation are April to June and October to January while in rubber cultivation it is December and January, February being the lean month for rubber cultivation. Because of this, earnings varied a great deal from month to month.

Further, the whole wage structure and the work schedules are so bureaucratic that they deny basic human rights and fair living conditions to these workers. The work schedule hardly allows women workers to attend to their duties as working mothers. Kurian estimated that with her labour at home as well as her job outside the home, the woman worker on the estate works for more than 12 hours a day during the flush season (Rachael Kurian, 1982 : 63). Even during the normal season a woman worker's day begins at 7-00 a. m. and concludes

at 6-00 p. m.⁽¹⁾ Thus, the two main outstanding wage issues were equal pay for women workers and a monthly wage for all.

The wages in the plantation were determined and reviewed from time to time by the Wages Boards established by Parliamentary Enactment in 1941. The Wage Boards were tripartite bodies representing the employers, the employees and the government. Employers and the employees had equal representation in it. Thus, the Government representatives exercised the decisive vote in any controversial issue. Before nationalisation of the plantations, the government representatives, more often than not, voted with the trade union representatives on wage issues. However, after nationalisation both the employers and the government represented one and the same interest. Thus, a formidable force was created within the Wage Board System that obviously worked to the disadvantage of the workers.

Before the Second World War, the wages of plantation workers consisted of a single component, the basic wage. Due to the unprecedented rise in prices of consumer goods in 1944 wage indexation principle was introduced. The allowance paid in order to compensate for the increase in the Cost of Living was known as the Special Allowance. The purpose of this was to maintain the stability of the real value of the basic wages in the face of rising inflation. Thus, the wages came to comprise of two components, a basic wage and a cost of living allowance. In March 1972, a third component called the Price - Wage Supplement (PWS) was introduced for rubber workers and the same was extended to tea workers in 1975. Since the prices of plantation products were subject to a high degree of fluctuation, it was argued that the basic wages could not be increased beyond certain levels. It was, however, admitted that there should be an element in the plantation wage structure which links wages to product prices and the PWS was the result of it. PWS was to be based on the selling price of these commodities and was to be paid on a sliding scale. According to the original agreement, 10 cents was payable on every increasing slab of 25 cents over and above the Net Sale Average (NSA) price of Rs. 2-50 per Kg. for tea workers and similarly 10 cents was payable to rubber workers for every increasing slab of 5 cents in the price of RSS 1, over and above Rs. 1-75 per Kg. The sliding scale for tea was linked to the NSA price for all Mid - grown teas at the Colombo auctions.

¹ Not surprisingly, trade unions in the plantations are now demanding a six hour working day for women.

This agreement worked for a few years. However, when there was a price boom in the latter half of the seventies for the two main plantation products, the PWS was frozen, for tea workers at the 1975 level of 30 cents per day (when the price of tea was Rs. 6-60 per Kg.) and for rubber workers at Rs. 2-65 (at the price of Rs. 9-15 per Kg. in 1979). As a result of this freezing both tea and rubber workers lost a great deal in terms of higher PWS on higher product prices. In 1983, for instance, tea workers would have received Rs. 13-80 per day as PWS when the price of tea was Rs. 40-00 per Kg. but this was denied to them. Thus, one of the grievances of the trade unions was the freezing of the PWS.

Beginning from 1967, a variety of allowances were introduced from time to time into the wage system either when the currency was devalued or when new budgetary measures that affected the cost of living were introduced. The wages of plantation workers were thus calculated by the addition of the value of a number of allowances to their basic wage. The daily wage in 1982, for instance, consisted of the following allowances added to the basic minimum wages: Special Allowance (i. e. Cost of Living Allowance), Plantation Workers, Additional Special Allowance (PWASA), Private Sector Special Allowance (PSSA), Private Sector Additional Special Allowance (PSASA) and Budgetary Relief Allowance (BRAs) I and II. Supplementary Allowances were introduced in 1979 (See Appendix II for details). In 1982, the wages of plantation workers were consolidated and after the consolidation the wages came to be comprised of three components: a basic wage, allowances and the PWS. The basic wages that stood at Rs 4-51 and Rs. 2-65 respectively for tea and rubber workers (men) were brought up to Rs. 16-12 and Rs. 13-77 by the addition of the various allowances and the PWS as shown below:

Consolidation of Wages — Estate not less than

100 acres in extent

	Basic	Special Allowance	Statutory Allowance under 72 to 81 Acts	Price Wages Supplement	TOTAL
Male	4.41	6.16	5.15	0.30	16.12
Female	4.32	4.20	4.95	0.30	13.77
Children	4.07	4.13	4.17	0.30	13.21

At the time of the strike the wages stood as follows:

Plantation Wages — March 1984

	Male	Female	Children
Tea	18 . 28	18 . 16	14 . 93
Rubber	20 . 18	17 . 21	17 . 63

Wage Discrimination against Plantation Workers

Since 1980 several wage increases were granted to Government and Corporation employees. The increases amounting to Rs. 361 was made up as follows:

	Rs. Cts.
Cost of Living Allowance (2) paid in January 1980 at C. O. L. point 360	— 70 - 00
Cost of Living Allowance paid in 1981 at C. O. L. point 391 (31 points x Rs. 2 - 00)	— 62 - 00
Salary Commission increase (1 - 1 - 1982)	— 45 - 00
Cost of Living Allowance paid in August 1983 at C. O. L. index 483 (92 points x Rs. 2 - 00).	— 184 - 00

Of this amount, only Rs. 45 - 00 had been extended to the plantation workers when a Rs. 2 - 00 increase was allowed in basic wages in January 1982. So, it was claimed that it was really "not a demand for wage increase but a demand that government's own wage standards be observed" (CDN, April 9, 1986).

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2. C. O. L. Allowance is calculated at Rs. 2 - 00 per point increase in the C. O. L. index but the increase is not paid every month as the index rises. The amount is revised periodically according to increase in the C. O. L. index.

Discrimination arose primarily from the fact that the plantation workers were paid the Cost of Living Allowance on a different basis than the others. They were paid a Cost of Living Allowance of 3 cents per day for every 1.8 point increase in the cost of Living Index, a rate determined as early as 1944. Assuming that the worker in the plantation sector gets 26 days work per month this will only work out to 43 cents per point increase while other workers were entitled to Rs. 2-00 for every point increase. For instance, Government farm workers whose basic wages were Rs. 18-50 in January 1983, received a Cost of Living Allowance of Rs. 24-00 per day.

Plantation trade unions having noted this discrimination began to agitate for the payment of the same rate of allowance to their members as well. It was argued that while the pattern of wage structure may vary for the various categories of workers, i. e. unskilled, skilled, semi-skilled, technical, clerical and so on, there is no justifiable reason to discriminate in the payment of the Cost of Living Allowance. In February 1983, the Wage Board after rejecting a demand from the trade union representatives for the payment of 11 cents for a point increase in the Cost of Living Index, passed a motion on a compromise formula, for the payment of 6 cents. This decision was gazetted but the Board never met again to ratify it and consequently it was never implemented. This was one of the major grievances of the unions that eventually led to the 1984 April strike.

Trade Union Negotiations

Trade Unions claimed that they had time and again drawn the attention of the Plantation Corporations as well as the government to the plight of their members in the face of rapidly escalating consumer prices.⁽³⁾ Table 4 shows that although money earnings increased from Rs. 132-00 to Rs. 282-00 between 1977 and 1983 real earnings began to decline sharply after 1979. The temporary rise in real wages in 1982 was due to the consolidation of wages and the increase of Rs. 2-00 in the basic wage effected in that year. According to trade

(3) On 23-11-1983, the conference of the plantation trade unions wrote to the Hon'ble President and the Government asking for a wage increase.

TABLE 4

Average Monthly Earnings of Tea Estate Workers

Year	Monthly Earnings Rs. Cts.	COL index - All Items (1952 = 100)	Real Earnings Rs. Cts.
1975	100 - 45	198.3	50 - 65
1976	99 - 85	200.7	49 - 75
1977	132 - 11	203.2	65 - 01
1978	166 - 95	227.8	73 - 29
1979	218 - 90	252.3	86 - 76
1980	239 - 42	318.2	75 - 24
1981	229 - 63	375.4	61 - 17
1982	285 - 79	417.1	68 - 51

Source: Statistical Abstracts, Department of Census and Statistics.

union sources. they made several representations and also held discussions with the management since the beginning of 1982 to obtain a reasonable wage increase for their membership but these efforts met with failure owing to the intransigent attitude of the management and the government. This is clear from a statement made by one of the trade union leaders just before the strike "... we argued, agitated and did everything from within the government" to improve the conditions of the plantation workers. But "when this was found impossible we did not hesitate to call a strike, which is the ultimate weapon available to the workers....." (S. Thondaman). A week prior to the scheduled date of the strike, government came forward to implement the proposal for a wage increase made in January 1984 by the Janatha Estates Development Board (JEDB), one of the two Plantation Corporations. This proposal had been made by the (JEDB), in consultation with Messrs. Ernest & Whinney, Management Consultants. The offer made was as follows;

	Male	Female	Children
Tea	20.51	20.51	17.10
Rubber	20.76	20.76	17.10
Coconut	17.90	17.90	14.90

The resulting wage increases would have been as follows:

	Male	Female	Children
Tea	2.73	5.30	2.45
Rubber	2.73	3.65	2.57
Coconut	1.99	4.31	1.88

It is evident from the above that this wage increase also included the equalisation of male and female wages. In addition, six day's work per week was also promised. By offering these, it seems, that the government expected to avoid direct negotiations with the trade unions and perhaps also hoped that the unions would abandon their threat to strike. But the unions were not prepared to accept this offer since the proposed wage increases fell far below their minimum expectations. The failure, deliberate or otherwise, on the part of the government to directly negotiate with the unions could have been a supplementary reason for their refusal to accept it. The unions demanded the removal of all anomalies and disparities that existed between the wages of plantation workers and those in other sectors. The removal of these anomalies and disparities meant an increase of the daily wages to over Rs. 35-00.

Just before the strike was scheduled to take place, the government announced a further increase of Rupee 1-00 in the wages that had already been announced. This too, was rejected by the unions, partly because this offer was made after negotiating with the only union that did not take part in the strike, namely the LJEWU. Again it seems that the government tried its best to prevent the strike and at the same time avoid negotiating with the unions. But no sooner did the government realise that it was futile to attempt to stop the strike, it came forward to negotiate with the unions. Negotiations began under the chairmanship of the Minister of Plantation Industries and the following compromise formula was worked out at these discussions for the unions to call-off the strike. Immediate implementation of:

- (i) the Wage Board decision of February 1983 to pay 6 cents per day for every point increase in the Cost of Living Index;
- (ii) the defreezing of the PWS and the grant of the supplement in the manner suggested by the Consultants, Messrs. Ernest & Whinney. That is the payment of Rs. 2-70 for tea workers as at prices prevailing in January 1984 and thereafter operating on the sliding scale. In the case of rubber workers the existing collecting agreement to continue; and

- (iii) the setting - up of a tripartite committee to examine the wages and related matters and for this committee to report within a specified period of time.

Perhaps at this stage the government believed that the strike would fizzle out and therefore instead of implementing the compromise formula, it called upon the workers to return to work unconditionally. However, the unexpected success of the strike, the mounting losses to the economy (at the time when the industry was booming) and the disturbing developments in the troubled areas of the North of the Island forced the government to alter its stand of no discussions till the strike was called - off. In the ensuing negotiations a settlement was arrived at to pay Rs. 2 - 00 as an interim increase over and above what the government had already offered. In addition, it was promised that the Presidential Sub - Committee that was to be set - up would be required to submit its report by the end of May. The strike was called - off on the tenth of April 1988, after nine days.

Outcome of the Strike

Government tried various tactics to prevent the strike from taking place and to break it after it started. The ruling party even resorted to the use of its own trade union arm for this purpose. However, it could not use open strike - breaking methods because it could have been easily turned into communal rioting by interested parties since the overwhelming majority of the striking workers were Tamils. Frustrated by these circumstances, the government found no alternative but to negotiate with the strikers, which it did. The strike resulted in the following gains to the workers :

(i) An interim wage increase

- male wages went up from Rs. 18-28 per day to Rs. 23 - 78, 22% increase;
- female wages went up from Rs. 15 - 26 per day to Rs. 23 - 78, a 56% increase.

The new wage rate according to the SLSPC was made up as follows: (4)

	Rs.	Cts
		(5)
Consolidated wage	—	12 - 46
Special Allowance (C. O. L. Allowance)	—	8 - 47
Price - Wage Supplement	—	2 - 85
TOTAL	—	23 - 78

This wage increase also included as can be seen, the equalisation of male and female wages.

(ii) Six days work per week for all registered workers. This was based on the principles of Section 6 of Estate Labour (Indian) Ordinance which specified that "where wages are payable at a daily rate, the monthly wages shall be computed according to the number of days on which the labourer was able and willing to work and actually demanded employment, whether the employer was or was not able to provide him with work".

(iii) The setting up of a Presidential Sub - Committee to inquire into wages and related matters of plantation workers.

The Sub - Committee that was set - up in accordance with this, after many sittings, reached agreement on the following,

(i) The interim wage of Rs. 23 - 78 was to be retained as the irreducible minimum wage and that the C. O. L. Allowance and the PWS should be added to this.

(ii) The C. O. L. Allowance was to be paid at 3 cents per point increase in the C. O. L. index with arrears for the period 01-04-1984 to 31-03-1985 during which wages remained unvaried at Rs. 23-78 per day.

(iii) No agreement had yet been reached on the PWS.

4. Circular No. 255, SLSPC dated 26th April 1984.

5. This consisted of the following:

	Rs.	Cts.
Basic wage	4	51
Consolidated Special Allowance	5	15
PWS (Frozen)	—	30
Supplementary Allowance	2	50

Implementation of the Agreement.

The increased wage of Rs. 23-78 per day was paid from the beginning of April 1984, but since the Sub-Committee set-up to report on wages and related matters took a long time to make its recommendations, the payment of COL Allowance and the PWS was delayed. The Committee after prolonged discussions agreed to make the interim wage of Rs. 23-78 the irreducible minimum wage and further negotiations took place on the rate of payment for COL Allowance and the PWS. It took almost one year to reach agreement on the former and arrears were paid in October 1985. Further discussions on the PWS were going on at the time of writing this paper.

The overkilo (6) and overtime rates had been increased in November 1983 and at the time these were increased the plantation corporations informed the estate superintendents that in view of the substantial increases in these rates, they should exercise the greatest care in fixing the variable norms. After the wage increases were granted in April 1984, it was alleged by trade unions that the superintendents raised the norms to such a high level that pluckers were finding it difficult to pluck any extra kilos which made the increased overkilo payments meaningless (See The Sun, May 8, 1984). It was also alleged that many estates failed to give six days of work per week as agreed. These caused some difficulties in implementing the agreement. But, on the whole, the agreement has been implemented in good faith.

Conclusions

The April 1984 strike of the plantation workers that involved a large segment of these workers was politically and economically a significant event in the history of working class struggle in Sri Lanka. Its political significance derives from the fact that the unions concerned were able to stage a successful strike in an environment that was hostile to trade union activity. The government has been pursuing a belligerent policy and attitude towards trade unions. The economic strategy of the post-1977 government which is crucially dependent on foreign capital flows for its survival necessitated the containment of trade union agitation so as to project to prospective overseas investors a facade of industrial peace and harmony in the country. This was loudly manifested in the ruthless suppression of the General Strike of July 1980., when over 40,000

(6) Tea pluckers are required to pluck a daily norm (or standard poundage) of a given quantity for a day's wage. Anything in excess of that norm is "overkilo" and is paid at a basic rate.

striking workers (official estimate) were sacked from their posts. Unofficial estimates put the number of workers sacked at around 70 to 75 thousand in the public sector and between 10 - 15 thousand in the private sector (Fernando 1983 :18). Furthermore, the government also had enacted the Essential Public Services Act in the same year. Under this act, the President was empowered to declare certain services such as public corporations, local authorities, co-operative societies, health services, water, electricity, transport, post and so on as essential service - provided that he was satisfied that these were likely to be impeded or interrupted and that their maintenance was essential for the life of the community. The Act also provided for severe penalties for offenders. These naturally led to a general lull in trade union activities in the country. For instance, the private sector in the post-1977 period experienced the lowest incidence of strikes since 1948. The number of man-days lost as shown in Table I was also minimal compared to the previous periods. In such an environment the April strike of the plantation workers came as a surprise and that too from a completely unexpected quarter. The strike took place despite the fact that the two major unions in the plantations, the CWC and the LIEWU were led by two senior Cabinet Ministers, though one of them did not support the strike. The strike, therefore, created an embarrassing situation for the Government.

The social and economic importance of the strike arises from the fact that it was staged by a section of the the working class that was long considered to be docile and submissive. These workers brought from South India to work in the plantations of Sri Lanka have through the years suffered all the evils of private enterprise and the fate of displaced labour anywhere. They were not only deprived of a decent living but also stripped of their civic rights after the country gained independence. In recent years, and particularly after nationalisation of plantations, they also became the target of physical violence whose frequency and intensity have tended to increase since the change of government in 1977. They have silently suffered all these except for engaging occasionally in trade union struggle and that too mostly on petty issues. In April 1984, they came out on strike demanding a wage increase that was equivalent to what had already been granted since 1980 to other workers in the country but denied to them. Despite various attempts by the government from inside and outside their own ranks to break the strike by threats and intimidation they went ahead with the strike until the government came down from its stand of "no discussion till the strike was called-off" (CDN, April 9, 1984). This clearly demonstrated the determination of these workers to win their demands and to face any challenge whatever quarter it came from. This perhaps marks a new phase in their struggle.

The strike itself was supported by all trade unions in the Plantation sector, irrespective of their political affiliations and ideological sympathies. The strike was led by the CWC. The other unions quickly responded to the strike call made by the CWC, the major exception being the LJEWU. It is interesting to note, however, that the LJEWU was one of the first unions to welcome the decision taken by the CWC to go on strike and that they even had suggested a token strike only to withdraw from strike action two days before the strike commenced (CDN, March 30, 1984.)

The strike was a great success for the unions that were involved in it and particularly to the CWC which led the strike. The CWC, it is claimed was able to substantially increase its membership after the strike and in the wake of the success of the strike many Sinhala workers too enrolled themselves as members of the CWC. The CWC the largest, oldest and perhaps the most stable union in the plantations has been an exclusively Tamil organization. The present trend where Sinhala workers too are joining the CWC is particularly welcome in the context of the current ethnic tension in the country. There is no doubt that it is only the trade union movement that can cut across ethnic and religious barriers and unite all workers for a common struggle to improve their living and working conditions.

With the wage increase granted to the workers, the monthly union membership subscription too was raised more than three-fold from Rs. 3-00 to Rs. 10-00. This has markedly improved the financial resources of the unions and thereby widened the scope of their activities. The ultimate benefit to the workers would, however, depend on how the unions utilise these increased resources.

The strike became a success not only because of the timing, the efficient organization, astute leadership and unity among the unions involved but also because of some extraneous factors. Firstly, CWC the union that led the strike had extended its unqualified support to the government since its leader joined the government as a Member of the Cabinet in 1977 and this support had helped the government to counter charges made against it to the effect that the Tamils had no role in running the government. The government just could not risk losing this support by not coming to a compromise with the striking unions. Secondly, the deteriorating ethnic situation in the North of the Island and the fear that the strike could be turned into communal rioting against Tamils may also have urged the government to accommodate the unions. Lastly, the realization that some of the foreign aid donors on whom the government was

so heavily dependent for financial support for its major economic ventures, would not have supported hardline measures against the plantation workers who had earned a fair amount of sympathy from them, could be yet another reason that influenced the government. But whatever the reasons for this may be, the success of the strike did certainly have significant implications for working class struggles in the country.

The strike demonstrated that the plantation workers could not anymore be considered docile and submissive as in the past. This was yet again proved at the beginning of 1986 when they threatened to go on prayer sessions for half a day in the mornings for a period of three months, what was in effect a strike, if their major grievance - the citizenship issue - was not settled immediately. With the grant of citizenship to them, they will be drawn into the mainstream of national life and, therefore, it is inevitable that they play a major role in future working class struggles in the country. Plantation workers are the real proletariat of the country who have nothing but their chains to lose and the urban working class cannot simply afford to ignore them anymore.

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APPENDIX I

Extra Rates Payable to Sundry Workers

Rs. Cts.

Pruners

Cycle of less than 2 years	0 . 70
Cycle of 2 years and less than 3 years	1 . 05
Cycle of 3 years and less than 4 years	1 . 40
Cycle of 4 years or more.	1 . 75

Sprayers

Hand and Knaysack Sprayers	1 . 05
Motor Sprayers.	1 . 40

Sweepers

Sweepers 3 . 50

Factory Workers

Rolling Room. 0 . 35

Drier Workers. 1 . 05

Spreading and Withering. 0 . 35

Sifting Room 0 . 70

(Source: Circular No. 230 to Superintendents, November 1983.)

APPENDIX II

Allowances to Plantation Workers from 1967.

1. Interim Devaluation Allowance (IDA)

1-12-1967

30 cents / day.

M

F

C

2. Plantation Workers

Additional Special

Allowance (PWASA)

18 cents

12 cents

1-11-1972.

per day

per day

3. Private Sector Special

Allowance (PSSA)

10 per cent of wage or Rs. 20-00

1-10-1973

whichever was less

4. Private Sector Additional

Special Allowance (PSASA)

10 per cent of wage or Rs. 25-00

1-12-1975.

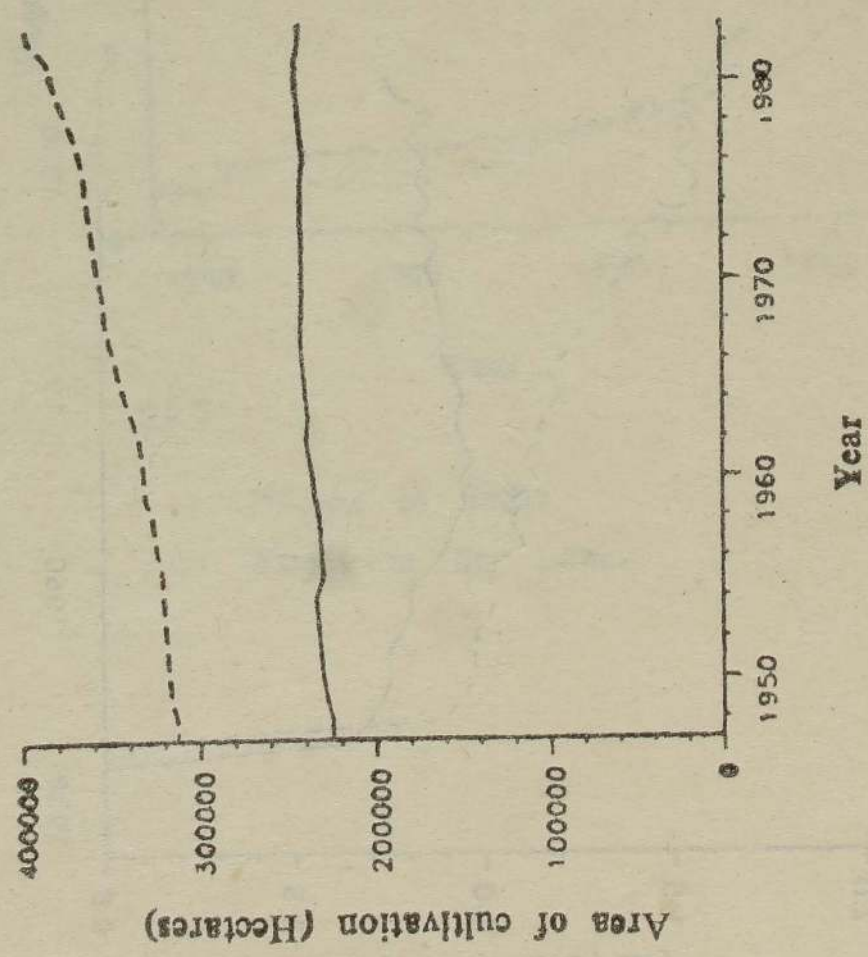
whichever was less but frozen at
January 1975 levels.

5. Budgetary Relief Allowance
(BRA - I) 1-12-1977. 25 per cent of wage or Rs. 50-00
whichever was less.
6. Budgetary Relief Allowance
(BRA - II). 6 per cent of wage or Rs. 15-00
whichever was less.
7. Supplementary Allowance
(SA) 1-9-1979. Rs. 2-50 per day or Rs. 55-00
per month whichever was less.



APPENDIX 3 Figures

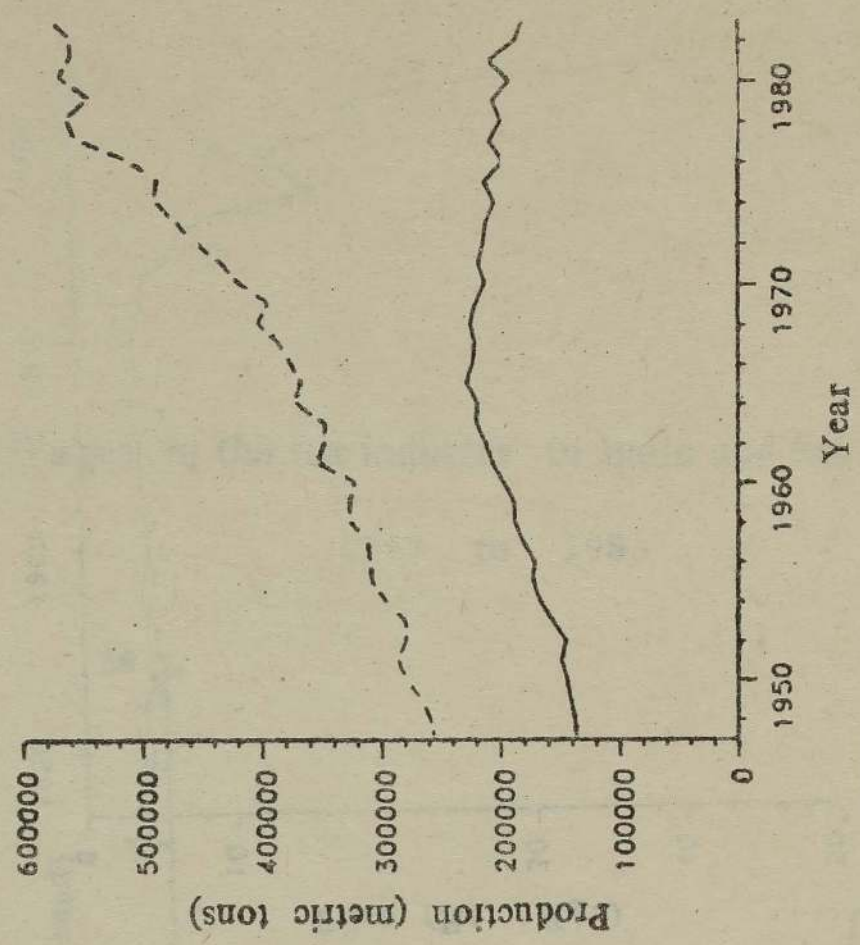
Area of tea cultivation in India and Sri Lanka
1947 to 1983



KEY

- Area of tea cultivation in India
- _____ Area of tea cultivation in Sri Lanka

Tea production in India and Sri Lanka
1947 to 1983.

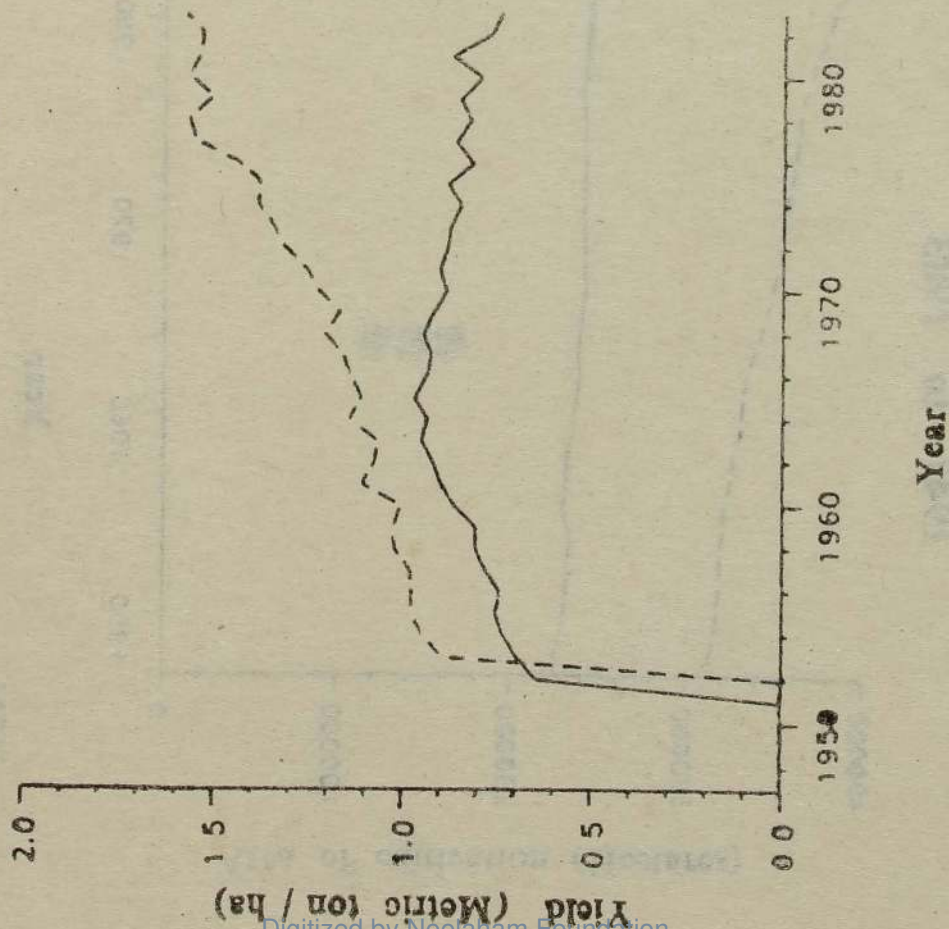


KEY

- Tea production in India
- _____ Tea production in Sri Lanka

Yield of tea in India and Sri Lanka

1947 to 1983

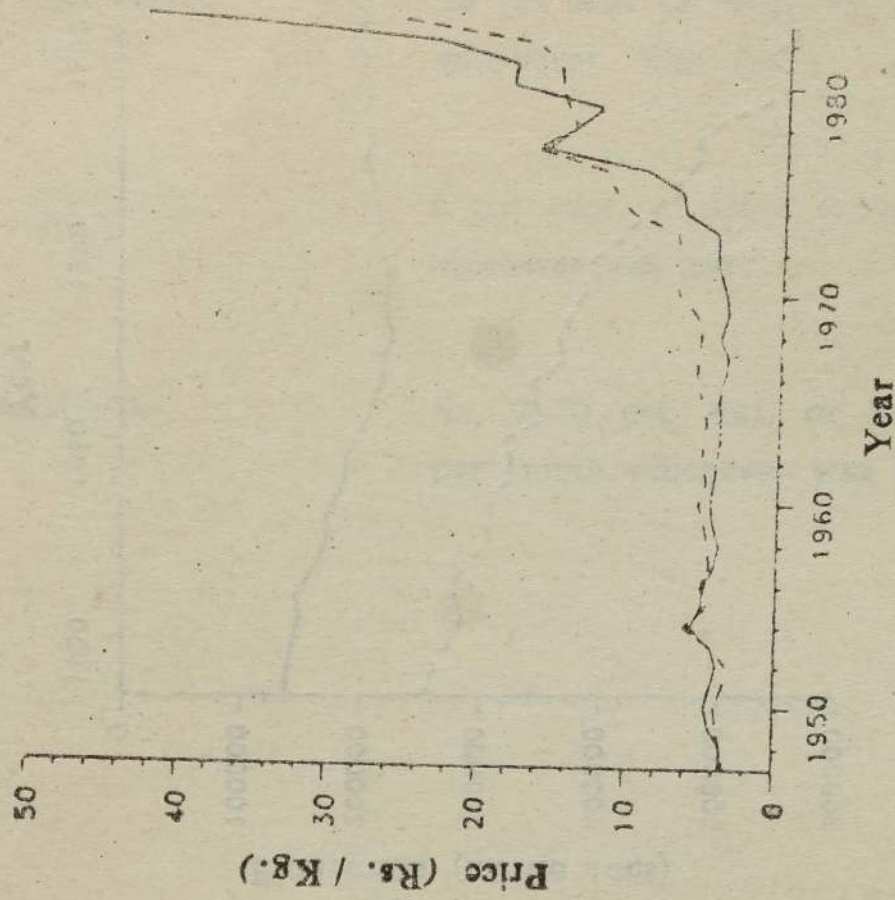


KEY

- - - Yield of tea in India
- Yield of tea in Sri Lanka

Price of tea in India and Sri Lanka

1947 to 1983

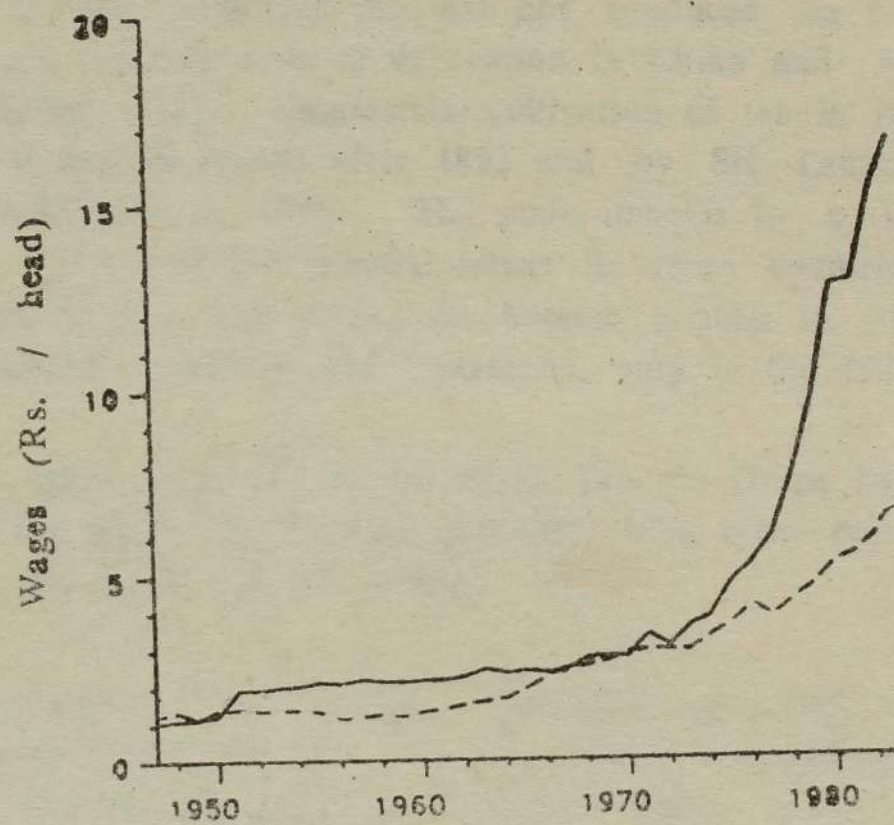


KEY

- - - Price of tea in India
- Price of tea in Sri Lanka

Wages in the tea industry in India and Sri Lanka

1947 to 1983



Year

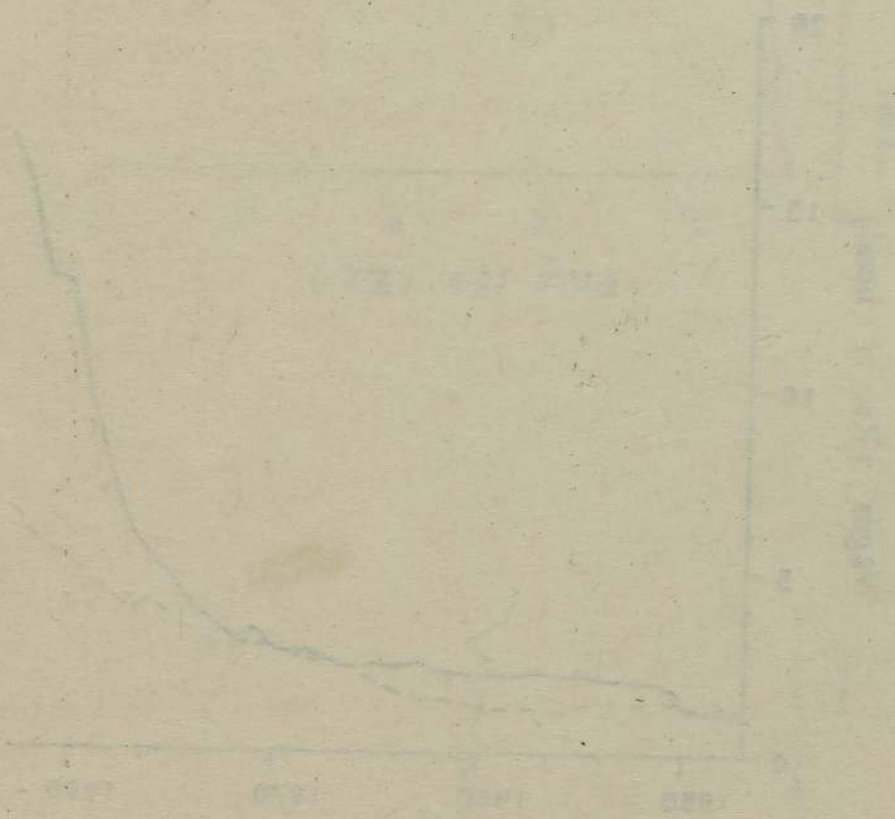
KEY

--- Wages in India

— Wages in Sri Lanka

Wages in the cotton industry in India and Sri Lanka

1947 to 1953



Year

KEY

Wages in India

Wages in Sri Lanka

SUPPLY RESPONSE FUNCTION OF TEA

FOR INDIA AND SRI LANKA

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

R. Sudharshan Canagarajah*

Introduction.

Tea is a perennial crop widely cultivated in developing countries especially in South Asia and Africa. Although tea was not produced on a large scale until the 19th century, it had been in cultivation in China and Japan before the 17th century (Sarkar, 1972). Commercial cultivation of tea in large and intensive estates was started in Assam after 1852 and by Sri Lanka and Java after 1860 (Chung and Upkong, 1981). The main impetus to a tea industry came from Britain, which was the colonial power in these countries and the main world consumer of tea. The cultivation became popular in African countries, especially in Kenya, Tanzania and Nyasaland, only in the 1920s.

There are three main kinds of tea (a) Black Tea (b) Green Tea (c) Ooolong Tea. Commercially Black Tea is more important than other two types, and its major producers are India and Sri Lanka.

The developing countries, which produce about 88% of world tea, are to a large extent dependent on the commodity for their foreign exchange earnings. In 1984 the total value of world tea exports was \$2860.1 million, of which \$2530.6 million came from the developing countries of the world (FAO Trade Year Book, 1986). However, it is important to note that tea constitutes only 1% by value of the primary commodities imported into the industrial countries. Although initially tea received high prices and constituted major part of exchange revenue for developing countries, today it has become one of the cheapest drinks in the world and has thus become by itself an inadequate source of foreign exchange revenue for developing countries.

* I have enjoyed many helpful discussions about this paper with Dr. William Peterson and Mr. Andrew MacKay. Any remaining errors are of course my own responsibility.

Nevertheless, in India, Sri Lanka and China tea accounts for a high proportion of national income, employment and foreign exchange earnings. In Sri Lanka in mid 1970's tea contributed about 20% of national income and accounted for 65% of foreign exchange earnings, although it accounts today only for about 35% of foreign exchange earnings. Although in India tea is cultivated in only 0.5% of cultivation land, it accrues the largest source of export revenue among the crops accounting for about 10%.

In the world tea industry India and Sri Lanka are the two most important participants, as it can be observed from the summary of the latest tea statistics given in Table 1 with respect to these countries.

Table 1: Statistics of Tea Production in India and Sri Lanka, 1984.

	India	Sri Lanka
Export Volume (% of World Total)	20 . 06	18 . 9
Production (% of World Total)	29 . 4	9 . 5
Cultivated Area (% of World Total)	16 . 7	10 . 01
Yield (kg. / ha.)	157 . 3	84 . 9
Area Expansion between 1981 and 1985, percent	8 . 46	2 . 04

Source. Food and Agriculture Organisation Trade Yearbook, 1985
Food and Agriculture Organisation Production Yearbook, 1985.

In India and Sri Lanka, unlike Africa, tea is cultivated in large estates. The labour was recruited on contractual basis either from other parts of the country as in India or from neighbouring countries as was the case in Sri Lanka, depending on relative labour costs. Although tea has generally been cultivated on a monoculture basis, recently in Sri Lanka they have started inter-plantation of rubber in tea estates.

In Sri Lanka more than 90% of the tea is sold at local auctions, whereas in India 53% is sold directly and 15% through local auctions, (Chung and Upkong, 1981). Thus London, which was originally the centre for tea auctions has diminished in importance. The increased importance of local auctions have limited the scope for re-exporting and blending which were carried out by the multinationals.

Another important development in the world tea industry has been the increasing importance of Kenyan tea and diminishing share of Indian and Sri Lankan tea. This has been mainly due to the extensive expansion of acreage in African countries which is not possible in the case of Sri Lanka or India. Thus earlier econometric studies show the significant area response functions for India and Sri Lanka, while those of African countries show the contrary.

These similarities and differences between India and Sri Lanka, along with the change in the relative position of both countries in terms of production trade and consumption makes it of interest to compare and analyse the nature and importance of the factors responsible for changes in the levels of supply.

Factors affecting the supply response of tea

The term supply 'response function' was used by W. W. Cochrane to denote changes in the long run supply caused by changes in all the relevant variables; thus it is differentiated from the 'supply function' which summarizes the changes in the limited number of factors in the short run. Supply response functions can be differentiated on the basis of the nature of changes in a limited number of factors in the short run. Supply response functions can be distinguished on the basis of the nature of the crop under cultivation. They are: (1) Annual crops - cultivated annually which yields without much delay, generally within that year and for that year only. (2) Perennial crops - yielding only after a lag which is called the gestation period of the crop during which time the crop matures. The latter group are thus characterised by an investment decision with yields only after a delay but continuously.

Tea falls into the second group as it is a perennial crop having long gestation periods and yields accruing over a long span of time. Hence like other perennial crops, supply of tea too, will rely on expectations of future prices and yield conditions; thus initial decisions are made on the basis of such expectations.

The tea age - yield profile gives an insight into the nature of the crop and expectation formations. Tea takes about three to eight years to mature and begins to produce a yield, in the period which we refer to as the gestation period. This period can and usually will, differ among regions of the same country or even between various countries. Tea tree reaches the peak yield between 13 to 15 years, and continues a high yield without much fluctuations for another 70 - 80 years, after which it starts declining steadily and slowly. During which time the producer may uproot and replant or accept the lower yields when prices are very high and profitable.

This age - yield profile plays an important role in understanding the age specificity that significantly affects the supply function. They are

1. Tea supply can be increased through the expansion of the area under cultivation, which is an investment decision and will cause changes in the levels of supply only in the long run.

2. Short run increases in the level of supply due to intensive plucking and fertiliser application resulting in increased yield.

Expansion of tea acreage depends crucially on the availability of land and availability of funds for investment both of which may possibly have high opportunity costs. This is so since tea is a perennial crop and since land could be also used in the production of other perennial export crops which may be profitable. Hence a long term of expansion of the area under cultivation depends on the relative profitability of tea with regard to other perennial crops such as coffee, rubber and cocoa all of which more or less compete for the same limited resources. Therefore the major way of dealing with the shortage of land and other factors is to carry out extensive and well planned replantation which again could be reduced to the minimum due to relative attractiveness of tea vis - a - vis other similar crops.

In the short run tea production can be increased mainly in two ways.

1. coarse plucking - 5 leaves and a bud are plucked instead of the usual 2 leaves and a bud. It should be, however, noted that tea quality decreases although yield and total supply increases.

- (2) fertiliser application - It has been observed that through application of 1 kg. of Ammonium Sulphate yield can be increased varying by 5 to 8 kgs./ha. However the increasing cost of fertiliser makes it an unattractive way of increasing yield in developing countries. Fertiliser application also makes it possible to shorten the gestation period. (Chung and Upkong, 1981).

However it can be seen from the above reasoning that the limits of possible expansion of acreage to increase supply can be overcome by increasing the yield in the short run.

Climatic conditions and soil fertility are also relevant for better yield results. Tea crops need much rain and sunlight and should be grown in areas where there is no frost (G. K. Sarkar, 1972). The fertility consideration makes

highlands of about 3000 - 5000 feet above sea level preferable to flat land. The difficulty in formulating a rational quantitative measure restricts the extensive analysis of weather conditions in the supply response functions. Although recently some studies have been including weather indices in supply response functions it has not resulted in any satisfactory or significant result.

Technological factors, too, play an important role in determining supply response of tea. The tea industry did not undergo much technological change after these countries gained independence from Britain partly due to fear of nationalisation of foreign investors and also due to scarcity of trained personnel. But very recently there has been much progress in the extensive research undertaken in tea industry which brought forth high yielding seeds thus providing a viable and efficient way of increasing yield. Also there has been substantial progress in areas of manuring, weed control, pruning, shade management, soil and moisture conservation, and control of pests and disease. All these factors gave higher yields than before. However, due to the variations over time and between countries in the use of such measures, and difficulties in obtaining an appropriate quantitative index, these factors are generally only captured by the introduction of the time trend as a dependent variable.

The most important factor that affects supply response function is the price factor, and in the case of perennial crops the expectation of price by producers is of particular importance, as the gestation period and other factors place restrictions in increasing supply in a short span of time. As mentioned above supply can be increased within a year or two by coarse plucking and fertiliser application. Maintaining the marginal land, the land which is declining in yield is also a possible way of increasing production. Although intuitively one would expect the long run price elasticity of supply to be higher than that at short period, it is lower in countries which have exploited existing cultivable land. Although land reforms and nationalisation were initially seen as positive ways of increasing supply through increased yield, it has resulted in adverse effects through reducing the attractiveness of tea industry investments. It can be observed that African countries attracted more investments due to absence of such fear which was an important inhibiting force in Asian countries.

The above analysis shows that supply response function is affected by both price and non-price factors and both are equally important. However due to measurement and quantifying difficulties and modelling constraints, non-price factors have been mostly assumed to be of not great significance.

A survey of supply response models

Supply response models have been formulated to study the responsiveness of supply to changes in prices and other factors. In the case of agricultural crops, unlike industrial production, supply response behaves in a peculiar manner due to the inherent constraints that limit supply response of crops. The models developed hitherto have been based on Marc Nerlove's partial adjustment model and deviate in some aspects of the specific consideration.

Askari and Cummings observe three basic areas in which the models of supply response have been different from Marc Nerlove's basic model (1958).

They are

- (1) elementary modification of Nerlove or Nerlove - Addison model.
- (2) certain modifications in the already existing variables and inclusion of variables related to the specific study concerned.
- (3) modifications to deal with perennial crops and livestock which were not considered by Marc Nerlove.

The prototype Nerlove model is best suited and has been essentially applied to studies relating to annual crops, and as such the category of perennial crops fall outside the basic model. Also it is important to remember that Nerlove applied his original model to the study of supply response shown by farmers in the U. S. for Maize, Cotton and Wheat (Nerlove, 1958). This fact clearly calls for modification and extension of Nerlove's model and, or, formulations of new models to the study of perennials and livestock. Therefore to understand the existing models of supply response it is essential that we begin with Nerlove's basic model.

The Nerlove "partial adjustment model" essentially has three equations. He explains changes in output as changes brought about mainly through price variations.

- (1) An adaptive expectations price mechanism.

$$\left(P_t^e - P_{t-1}^e \right) = \beta \left(P_t - P_{t-1}^e \right) \quad (1.1)$$

(2) A partial adjustment process for output Q_t towards a desired output (Q_t^D)

$$Q_t - Q_{t-1} = Y(Q_t^D - Q_{t-1}) \quad (1.2)$$

Where Q_t and Q_{t-1} refer to actual current and past output. (3) An equation relating desired output to expected price and other relevant exogeneous variables represented by Z_t .

$$Q_t^D = a_0 + a_1 P_t^e + a_2 Z_t + u_t \quad (1.3)$$

As the expected values cannot be formulated directly most of the subsequent work used the reduced form of the above model which can be stated as

$$Q_t = a_0 \beta Y + a_1 \beta Y P_{t-1} + [(1 - \beta) + (1 - Y)] Q_{t-1} - [(1 - \beta)(1 - Y)] Q_{t-2} + a_2 Y Z_t + a_2 (1 - \beta) Y Z_{t-1} + V_t \quad (1.4)$$

$$\text{where } V_t = Y(U_t - (1 - \beta) U_{t-1})$$

The values of the parameters are obtained by either the maximum likelihood estimation or the least square estimation technique. It is important to note that Nerlove when applying his original model was unable to distinguish the coefficient of price expectation (β) from the coefficient of area adjustment (Y) as the identification problem in the output equation could not be overcome by inclusion of a suitable variable, as in the reduced form model (1.4) stated above (Askari and Cummings 1976).

Nerlove originally used the following three methods to formulate the price expectations in his model which is important in understanding the later developments of the model.

(a) $\beta = 1$. i.e. the crude cobweb expectation where last years actual price is considered to be the expected price of the present period ($P_t^e = P_{t-1}$)

(b) calculations carried out without restrictions on β and mainly identifying the correct value through iterative procedure.

(c) P_t^e is a weighted average of past two years prices, using the form

$$P_t^e = \alpha P_{t-1} + (1 - \alpha) P_{t-2} \quad (\text{Askari and Cummings, 1976}).$$

Nerlove along with Addison developed the method of identifying short run and long run elasticities through his original model, and also used a time trend (T) to capture changes in factors intangible and taking overtime (Nerlove and Addison, 1958)

Later studies have found the price formulation in the Nerlove model to be more general and have used specific and realistic price formulations by taking price received by farmers rather than the market price which was used by Nerlove; some have used consumer price index, price of inputs or price of other competitive crops to deflate the normal prices. However it should be stated that these later developments are also not free of criticism and further modifications.

Other than the modifications concerned with price factors, there have been other, more fundamental changes in the basic model. Some went on to use average ratio of the crop concerned to its substitute as a dependent variable in the output equation and some others (eg: Fisher, 1962) used changes in output in the expectation formation of prices, i.e.

$$P_t^e - P_{t-1}^e = \beta (P_{t-1} - P_{t-1}^e) + \delta (Q_t^e - Q_{t-1}) \quad (1.5)$$

where Q_t^e is expected output and Q_{t-1} is actual output.

Another important defect in Nerlove's model was exclusion of consideration of yield as an important variable. Thus some later studies included yield as a factor in all three of the basic equations where expected yield (Y_t^e) was defined as

$$Y_t^e - Y_{t-1}^e = \beta (Y_{t-1}^e - Y_{t-1}) \quad (1.6)$$

(Askari and Cummings, 1976).

Some researchers went on to show that through use of pesticides and fertiliser supply may affect output through yield rather than acreage and thus reduce acreage elasticity. Thus we see that within three decades the modifications and extensions that have taken place in the basic Nerlovian model have changed in depth and focus of analysis of supply response functions.

With regard to the limitations in the structure of the models and availability of descriptive statistical information there has been an important area of concern in the perennial crops. The long gestation periods in the case of perennial crops lay much emphasis on the correct formation of future expectations and thus makes the cultivation an investment decision on which returns can be expected only after the maturity. This is why the capital theory becomes of considerable relevance to perennial crops. Also the already existing stock of trees and their age profile will not only affect the total output but also future yields. Thus the supply response analysis has to consider the significance of past events cumulatively as they will continue to affect future cultivation plans, techniques and investment decisions of the producers. Another important difference with regard to the annual crops is that perennial crops have long gestation periods and thus one cannot assume that planted and harvested (mature) area to be identical.

Askari and Cummings have identified two specific problems with regard to the supply response analysis of perennials.

1. If a study has to be done over n years, one needs data for several years before the output data which is actually analysed.
2. The time length of the study: although it is preferable to study the response function over a long period of time in order to understand the features properly, the structural changes taking place over time will inhibit proper analysis of short period responses. For instance, it is doubtful that the expectation co-efficient remains constant as other factors change with time.

Merril Bateman (1968) dynamised the static Nerlovian model by including the expectation of streams of income spread over the life of the tree instead of price expectation of the crop in the supply response function. Thus he assumed that planters make their decisions in regard to maximisation of present discounted value of future streams of net return, defined as discounted gross net revenue minus discounted net costs, i. e. $\left(\begin{matrix} R - C \\ t \quad t \end{matrix} \right)$. Bateman used multiplica-

tive and additive formulation and found the latter to be more appropriate than the former to the study of supply response of cocoa. Behrman included the expected price of the crop and of its principal alternative in his model (1968). Kenneth, D. Fredrick has observed that despite falling prices acreage rose mainly due to non-price factors. (Askari and Cummings, 1976).

Wickens and Greenfield (1973) in a study with regard to coffee criticised the use of Nerlove model for the study of the perennial crops saying that the distinction between harvesting and investment decisions are blurred. They suggested 3 equations to overcome the difficulties with regard to the study of perennial crops. They are:

$$(1) \text{ Investment functions: } I_t = a_0 + a_1 I_{t-1} + a_2 P_t$$

$$(2) \text{ Harvesting Function: } Q_t = b_0 + b_1 Q_t^p + \sum_{i=0}^m b_i P_{t-1}^2 + b_{m+1} Q_{t-1}$$

$$(3) \text{ Vintage Production function: } Q_t^p = \sum_i \delta_i I_{t-1} \text{ where } I \text{ represents invest-}$$

ment, P the price, Q_t the actual output, Q_t^p the potential output, and δ_i the average yield of a tree of age i .

But due to data limitations the use of Wickens and Greenfield (W.G.) model has been not possible in many studies. French and Matthews (1971) model too has contributed much insight by taking into account the old plants and removals, a moving average price expectation and price to wage ratio as his dependent variables. Peter Ady used a capital stock adjustment model which gave better results than Bateman and Behrman's analysis.

Chung and Upkong (1981) use yield response and nature area response functions separately in the study of tea and also see whether it is possible to capture the significance of these variables when these functions are reduced to a single aggregate supply response analysis. Although this model seems simplistic, it generalizes the main aspects of the supply response models of perennial crops and as such defined as a pragmatic approach to supply response analysis.

Other than the above developments in the formal structure of the model there has been advancements in statistical data availability which has been and is still continuing to be an important area of deficiency in the empirical analysis of supply response functions.

Recently Hartley, Nerlove and Peters (1984) used data obtained by a survey conducted for the study concerned and attained a landmark in the study of supply response of perennials. They modified the W. G. model by including a replanting equation and forming a new planting equation which corresponds to the investment equation of the W. G. model. The age - yield data and age distribution of the total stock of trees allowed them to calculate potential output than using the reduced form as in earlier models.

The limitation of data and the non specificity of the supply response model to different crops in the econometric analysis of supply response functions of the perennial crops seem to be a drawback which has to be overcome to carry out more useful and insightful studies in this area.

The general model

As stated earlier the basis of supply response models of perennial crops has been Nerlove's partial adjustment model, in spite of the various limitations in using an annual crop model for the study of perennial crops. Thus I too formulate the general model for the present study on the same basis, but with various modifications to overcome major limitations, as follows.

(1) $A_{t-g}^d = f(P_{t-g}^e)$ defines the area desired at time t as a function of expected prices at time t both decisions being made at time $t-g$, where g refers to the gestation period.

(2) $A_t - A_{t-1} = \lambda \left(A_{t-g}^d - A_{t-1} \right)$ $0 < \lambda < 1$ defines that the difference between the actual area cultivated in current and past year as a constant fraction λ of the difference between area desired at time t and area actually cultivated at time $t-1$.

(3) $P_t^e - P_{t-1}^e = \delta \left(P_{t-1} - P_{t-1}^e \right)$ $0 < \delta < 1$ i. e. the difference between current and last year's expected price is a constant fraction (δ) of the difference between actual and expected prices of last year. If $\delta = 1$ then this fraction reduces to a particularly naive adaptive expectations structure, as was used by Nerlove, where $P_t^e = P_{t-1}$. This is similar to the Cobweb Phenomenon.

mena which is quite popular in agricultural analysis, especially in the case of the annual crops.

The aggregate supply function can be formulated as

$$(1) \quad Q_t^s = f_1 \left(a_{it}, y_{it} \right) = \left[a_{it} \times y_{it} \right]_{i=0}^m \quad \text{But due to data limitations the average}$$

yield (\bar{y}) is multiplied by the mature area, rather than yield of each age category being multiplied by the number of "bushes" in the particular age group.

On the basis of the age - yield profile of tea bushes and previous empirical investigations we see that yield and acreage cultivated depends on lagged values of the dependent variable and on the past prices. This can be stated in general terms as

$$\bar{y} = f_2 \left(\phi_1(L) P_{t-i} \right) \quad \text{and} \quad Q_t^s = f_3 \left(A_t, \phi_2(L) P_{t-i} \right)$$

On the basis of Chung and Upkong I too intend to estimate the mature area response, yield response and aggregate supply response functions separately for each country independently and then analyse the difference in the significance of these functions.

The three equations will be of the form:

$$A_t = f_4 \left(A_{t-1}, P_t^e, T \right)$$

$$Y_t = f_5 \left(Y_{t-1}, \phi_1(L) P_{t-i}, CL_t, T \right)$$

$$Q_t^s = f_6 \left(Q_{t-1}^s, \phi_2(L) P_{t-i}, CL_t, T \right)$$

As the significance of these variables differ between countries the specifications finally used in the actual estimations differ from the general rules laid down above. The climatic factor (CL_t) denoted in the above functions could not be used due to absence of proper quantitative data on such measure. However it is observed that unless otherwise it is adverse to the extent of affecting tea supply climatic considerations are of minor importance to the study of tea supply response functions. Also it should be noted that any adverse climatic conditions would tend to affect the future levels of output and will be a persistent factor determining future levels of supply.

The price variables which are of major importance were also used on the basis of the different nature of price expectations formations that may prevail in each of these countries. Different techniques have been used to derive the expected prices which may differ in appropriateness between countries. Although initially naive adaptive expectations, other expectation mechanisms were tried due to their failure to capture the significance of the price factor. On the basis of French and Matthews (1971) I used a moving average price expectation formation defined over a period of three years, i. e.

$$P_t^e = (1/m) \sum_{i=1}^m P_{t-i}, \text{ where } m = 3, \text{ I regressed the residual of the present}$$

period on lagged residual values to see whether it has a significant co-efficient in which case to conclude that there is an adaptive expectation structure. I intend to see whether the price formation satisfies one of Muth's rationality conditions of insignificant coefficient on lagged error in the price expectation.

Another more general mechanism used with regard to price expectations is based on Baritelle and Price (1974) defining the expected price to be the predicted value of price when present period price is regressed on past period prices. I used last three years, i.e.

$$P_t^\wedge = a_0 P_{t-1} + a_1 P_{t-2} + a_2 P_{t-3} + e_t$$

Again the error randomness test was carried out.

Also a variation of the above price mechanism was tried, The predicted price and the moving average price were regressed separately on lagged predicted price and the difference in the past actual and expected prices.

i. e.

$$P_t^e = f \left(P_{t-1}, \left(P_{t-1} - P_{t-1}^\wedge \right) \right) \text{ The prediction of this regression was}$$

used in line with the adaptive expectations defined in equation 3. The lagged predicted price and the difference in the past actual and expected price were included as two separate factors to see which of them had higher significance with respect to the function considered.

The time factor was included in the equations to capture the technological advancements and implications of research and innovation. Both linear and exponential time trends were investigated.

The model was applied under two different specifications.

(1) loglog specification (multiplicative model)

(2) linear specification (additive model)

The estimations were carried initially under OLS techniques. However, whenever necessity arose maximum likelihood method under Cochrane - Orcutt procedure was used. The significance of the above models was seen to differ between the countries concerned.

The data

The data for this study has been mainly obtained from publications of international organisations which provide statistics of both countries almost under similar definitions. Hence one of the important obstacles of carrying out a comparative study between countries with different measurements has been almost overcome. Whenever the data was not found or not given for a certain period under consideration the local country statistical sources were consulted.

Data was collected for the period 1947 - 1983 on acreage cultivated, production, money wages, money prices at local auctions, consumer price index, and real wage index. Data on acreage, production and local auction prices were obtained from Annual Bulletin of Statistics of International Tea Committee. Data on money wages, consumer price index and real wage index were obtained from Year Book of Labour Statistics and other local sources. The main local sources were Statistical Abstracts of India and Annual Reports and Reviews of the Economy of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

Due to the use of lagged variables the number of degrees of freedom was substantially reduced and on an acreage 30 observations were only considered. Figures 1 - 4 compare the acreage, production, yield and money prices of both these countries (See Appendix 3 - Figures)

In the case of India cost of living index of agricultural workers and real wage indices obtained from Year Book of Labour Statistics was used to deflate the average money price of tea observed at Calcutta auctions. To derive mature area, cultivated area was lagged 6 years and yield was calculated by dividing production by aforementioned lagged area. As it has been observed in earlier

studies (P. Ramanujam, 1986) due to its shorter average gestation period, a lag of 5 years was used for Sri Lanka.

The fact that only 0.92% in India and 2% in Sri Lanka of tea trees are less than 9 years does not grossly misappropriate the definition of mature area used in this study. In the case of Sri Lanka a dummy variable was used for the year 1983 in order to capture any possible effect of communal riots. These were believed to have been detrimental to the whole economy and especially to the tea industry as the Indian Tamil population were severely affected. The dummy defined as DI was given a value of zero for the period 1947-1982 and 1 for 1983.

In the case of consumer price index and real wage index 1970 was used as base year for both countries in order to maintain regularity of the data to facilitate comparative study.

Appendices 1 and 2 contain the data used in this study.

Rational formulation of prices

As mentioned in section 4, different price expectation structures were used to capture the significance of the price factor in the above equations. Prices were either deflated by consumer price index or the real wage index. Initially the present price was regressed on past three period prices and the predicted value \hat{P}_t was used as the expected price. Then the current price residuals

$(e_t = P_t - \hat{P}_t)$ was regressed on the lagged residuals $(e_{t-1} = P_{t-1} - \hat{P}_{t-1})$ in the following form:

$$e_t = P_1 + P_2 e_{t-1} + W_t$$

$H_0 : P_2 = 0$ was tested to see whether there is any basis to conclude that people make systematic errors. If $P_2 = 0$ then it was inferred that present

error is not related with past error and thus this formulation of prices was considered to fulfil Muth's rationality condition (see Muth, 1961; Ghosh et. al., 1982).

Table 2: Rational formulation of prices

	Intercept	e_{t-1}	R^2	DW
SRI LANKA				
CPI	0.00013 (0.047)	0.332 (1.43)	0.0338	1.62
RW	-0.00046 (-0.11)	-0.0069 (-0.22)	-0.0326	1.39
INDIA				
CPI	-0.0014 (-0.50)	0.326 (1.88)	0.0806	2.06
RW	-0.0004 (-0.103)	0.0067 (0.0029)	-0.0357	1.70

Dependent Variable = e_t

CPI = Consumer Price Index

RW = Real Wage Index

As can be observed from table 2 when prices were deflated by the cost of living index p was significantly different from zero for both India and Sri Lanka, possibly indicating the presence of a naive adaptive price mechanism. However, when prices were deflated by the real wage index not only did p_2 become insignificant, the constant too became insignificant. This indicated the latter price formation to be more rational than the former one.

Further, the moving average structure did not show any indication of rational price formulation. Here both e_{t-1} and intercept had significant coefficients.

Thus the regressed price deflated by the real wage index (ECW) was finally used in the present study.

Adaptive expectation of prices

Here I used the price predicted from the regression to formulate an adaptive structure which has been used extensively in earlier studies of agricultural crops. As table 3 shows I used a real wage deflated price in a linear specification and a consumer price index deflated price in log specification. The results derived were interesting with respect to the relationship they displayed. In the case of Sri Lanka the linear specification showed same coefficient

for P_{t-1}^e and $\left(P_{t-1} - P_{t-1}^e \right)$ namely 1.22. The coefficient of

these two variables were very significant indicating the existence of an adaptive structure within the price system. The adaptive expectation coefficient was 1.22 for Sri Lanka and .953 for India. In the case of India also the function displayed similar characteristics. Both equations passed the Durbin's h test indicating the absence of autocorrelation.

The log specification too showed similar characteristics. Of course the R value was high in the linear specification. The appropriateness of adaptive structure was seen by the adaptive expectation coefficient value of .6518 for Sri Lanka and .607 for India.

Thus the price predicted through this two stage prediction was used along with the single stage predicted price $\left(P_t^e \right)$ discussed earlier. Mostly the real wage deflated two stage predicted price (ECW) was used due to the validity of its use.

Yield response functions

I used an equation $Y_t = f \left(Y_{t-1}, P_t, T \right)$ in both log and linear specification with variations on the price factor. As table 4 shows initially I used ECW as the price factor along with a linear time trend. In the case of

India all the factors were of significance in the logarithmic specification, especially showing t ratio of 1.83 for the price factor, whereas for Sri Lanka the same function could not capture the main effects and was not significant even at .10 level. Also in the case of Sri Lanka the linear time trend showed a

Table 3: Adaptive Expectations of prices

	Intercept	$P_{t-1}^e \left(P_{t-1} - P_{t-1}^e \right)$	$\frac{-2}{R}$	SEE	LLF	Durbin
INDIA						
Log.	0.046	0.480	0.607	0.9835	180.8	-2.19
CPI	(34.4)	(31.1)	(33.9)			
lin.	0.0019	1.06	0.953	0.9977	167.7	-1.48
RW	(2.33)	(125)	(3.42)			
SRI LANKA						
log	0.0296	0.580	0.652	0.9764	185.4	0.29
CPI	(23.3)	(29.4)	(28.9)			
lin.	-0.0051	1.22	1.22	0.9984	197.2	0.05
RW	(-10.3)	(147)	(95.1)			

- Dependent Variable = P_t
- log. = Log Specification
 - lin. = Linear Specification
 - SEE = Standard Error of the Estimate
 - LLF = Log of the Likelihood Function
 - Durbin h = Durbin's Statistic

Negative and significant coefficient which may be possibly due to the effects it purports to capture a time trend which is non-linear in reality. The highly significant time trend in the case of India capture the higher applications of fertiliser and other mechanisation techniques which were introduced to boost production levels, as the acreage expansion was ruled out in the case of India. Both in the case of India and Sri Lanka the single stage price expectation $\left(\frac{P}{t}\right)$ was used and found to be significant. For instance in the case of India

it was as shown below.

	Intercept	Y t - 1	ECW t	T	DI	⁻² R	SEE	LLF	Durbin h	Stability Test F
INDIA										
log.	-0.140 (-1.16)	0.479 (2.36)	0.0712 (1.83)	0.123 (2.33)	—	0.9644	0.03239	56.42	2.04	3.80
lin.	0.574 (4.03)	0.212 (1.06)	0.785 (2.50)	0.0145 (3.75)	—	0.9725	0.03559	59.64	2.00	1.14
SRI LANKA										
log	0.1917 (2.01)	0.969 (18.8)	0.0283 (1.07)	-0.0367 (-4.05)	-0.126 (-3.99)	0.8751	0.0289	70.41	0.24	6.26
lin.	0.065 (1.39)	0.961 (17.1)	0.222 (1.06)	-0.0018 (-2.99)	-0.10 (-3.59)	0.8658	0.0247	70.17	0.22	7.61

Dependent Variable = Y

Stability Test F = Chow's Test Statistic - F (4, 22) under Null Hypothesis for India; F (5, 20) for Sri Lanka.

Table 4 : Yield response functions

$$\ln Y_t = -0.141 + 0.459 \ln Y_{t-1} + 0.075 \ln \frac{P^e}{t} + 0.127 \ln T$$

(-1.19)
(2.32)
(2.02)
(2.43)

⁻²
R = 0.9653 SEE = 0.032 LLF = 56.78 Chow Test F = 3.41

In the Sri Lankan case none of the yield equations passed Chow's stability test, in contrast to the case of India where most of the equations could be considered stable. However the ratio of the price difference captured the price significance of .10 level as shown below although it did not pass the stability test.

$$\ln Y_t = -0.115 + 0.9704 \ln Y_{t-1} + 0.032 \left(\ln P_{t-1} - \ln P_{t-1}^{\circ} \right) - 0.037 \ln T - 0.013 DI$$

(-3.41)
(19.7)
(1.27)
(-4.15)
(-3.91)

$$\bar{R}^2 = 0.8769 \text{ SEE} = 0.028 \text{ LLF} = 70.66 = \text{Durbin h} = 0.344 \text{ Chow Test } F = 6.5$$

In general the low significance of the price factor in Sri Lanka could be attributed to the intensive export diversification measures adopted recently.

As can be seen from the table both for India and Sri Lanka the linear specification showed significant coefficients. Especially in the case of India price factor has become significant at .05 level.

Area response functions

This function was defined as $A_t = f(A_{t-1}, P_{t-7}, T)$ and was

applied under log and linear specifications with variations on the price factor. In the case of India two stage predicted price (ECW), and for Sri Lanka single stage predicted price $\left(P_t \right)$ were used respectively. The price factor was lagged

seven years in the case of India and six years in the case of Sri Lanka to take into account the delay in production due to the gestation period. As shown in the table the price factor was not significant even at .25 level as one would expect in Sri Lanka and India where there is not much possibility of acreage expansion. Here too as in the yield response function the price factor gained higher significance when estimated under the linear specification. The time trend was not significant in the case of Sri Lanka under both specifications, although in the Indian case it was significant at .05 level in the linear specification. For both countries this function passed the stability tests under both specifications, except in Sri Lankan case where the matrix conversion of the second subset failed under log specification. Also the lagged dependent variable had a high level of significance for both countries mostly not less than .05.

Interestingly in the case of Sri Lanka when an exponential time trend was used under log specification the results were as shown below,

Table 3 area response functions

$$\ln A_t = 2.43 + 0.805 \ln A_{t-1} + 0.0045 \ln P_{t-6}^e + 0.00031 T - 0.0042 DI$$

(1.46) (6.01) (0.744) (1.00) (-0.59)

-2

R = 0.9005 SEE = 0.0060 LLF = -266.7 Durbin h = 0.385 Chow Test F = 1.44

	Intercept	A t - 1	ECW t - 7	T	DI	R ⁻²	SEE	LLF	Durbin	Stability
INDIA										
log.	-0.352 (-0.41)	1.02 (14.5)	0.00072 (0.67)	-0.0013 (-0.13)	—	0.9933	0.00509	-265.2	-0.76	2.56
lin.	91177 (2.04)	0.693 (4.60)	47637 (2.40)	688.6 (2.09)	—	0.9940	1702	-263.6	-0.87	1.12
SRI LANKA										
log.	4.31 (1.42)	0.648 (2.61)	0.0014 (0.24)	0.0122 (1.22)	-0.0036 (-0.61)	0.9087	0.0052	-265.4	1.95	n. a.
lin.	0.448 (1.47)	0.798 (5.97)	32194 (1.00)	80.83 (1.11)	1207 (0.70)	0.9032	1407	-295.9	0.42	1.23

Dependent Variable = A_t

Chow statistic distributed as F (4, 22) under Null Hypothesis for India; F (5, 20) for Sri Lanka.

The price factor becoming significant at least at .25 level is a remarkable result. Also the dummy variable being not significant as in the case of yield and aggregate supply functions indicates its irrelevance to the area functions and suggests that the effect of communal riots on output has been mainly through yield.

Aggregate supply response

This function as noted earlier is basically a combination of the area response and yield response functions. Also the fact that area expansion is scarcely feasible makes the yield function the important component of the aggregate supply equation. Thus the current period price expectation becomes important than higher order lagged prices which were used in the area response function.

Although the table displays $Q_t^s = f(Q_{t-1}^s, P_t, T)$, If also tried

$$Q_t^s = f(Y_{t-1}, A_{t-1}, P_t, T)$$

to see which of the lagged factor causes the

significant changes in the supply equation. Yield was found to have high and significant coefficient as can be seen in the following equation for Sri Lanka.

$$\ln Q_t^s = 10.01 + 0.833 \ln Y_{t-1} + 0.188 \ln A_{t-1} + 0.077 \ln P_t^e - 0.0076 \ln T - 0.051 D1$$

(0.746) (7.86) (0.17) (1.82) (0.17) (-1.05)

$R^2 = 0.8019$ $SEE = .0439$ $LLF = -322.2$ $Durbin h = -4.3$

As shown in the table the lagged dependent variable was mostly significant at .05 level even when tried with different price formulations.

Table 6: Aggregate supply response functions

	Intercept	Q_{t-1}^s	P_t	T	D1	R^2	SEE	LLF	Durbin	Stability
INDIA										
log.	2.24 (1.57)	0.815 (6.92)	0.0643 (0.731)	0.103 (1.37)	—	0.9767	0.0343	-327.3	-1.57	3.67
lin.	114160 (3.23)	0.431 (2.26)	24840 (2.03)	4934 (3.13)	—	0.9813	13130	-324.9	2.00	1.37
SRI LANKA										
log.	0.527 (0.988)	0.974 (19.8)	0.0026 (1.08)	-0.040 (-3.91)	-0.119 (4.15)	0.9154	0.0262	-310.3	0.55	6.92
lin.	13630 (1.37)	0.975 (18.5)	56081 (1.18)	-471.3 (-2.97)	-25913 (-3.97)	0.9095	5253	-310.3	0.03	3.94

Dependent Variable = Q_t

Chow Statistic distributed F (4, 22) under Null Hypothesis for India; F (5, 20) for Sri Lanka.

Another fact that is evident from the table is the increased significance of the price factor under linear specification both for India and Sri Lanka. The time trend too is positive and significant at least at .10 level in the case of India denoting the importance of technological developments and fertiliser application in the aggregate supply functions, as one would expect the production to increase through higher productivity per acreage given that area expansion is very much limited. However, the fact that Sri Lanka having significant, negative time trend may possibly indicate misspecification of trend factor. However, as the following equation shows

$$\ln Q_t^s = 12.46 + 0.80 \ln Y_{t-1} + 0.0476 \ln P_{t-6} + 0.0012 T - 0.064 D1$$

(90.1) (7.20) (0.89) (0.97) (-1.16)

$$\bar{R}^2 = 0.7997 \quad \text{SEE} = 0.0442 \quad \text{LLF} = -322.98$$

an exponential time trend shows a positive coefficient with only .25 level of significance, although it failed the stability test.

In the case of India under linear specification the consumer price index deflated two stage predicted price (APC) showed higher level of significance of lagged supply as shown below.

$$Q_t^s = 16437 + 0.4261 Q_{t-1}^s + 804500 \text{ APC}_t + 0.7167 T$$

(0.544) (2.44) (2.24) (3.09)

$$\bar{R}^2 = 0.9819 \quad \text{SEE} = 1244 \quad \text{LLF} = -324.4 \quad \text{Durbin } h = -1.01 \quad \text{Chow Test } F = 2.28$$

This function also has a higher, likelihood function which probably indicates it to be a better specification, although not a substantial improvement.

Also the fact that all equations in the case of Sri Lanka yield a negative and significant dummy variable justifies the hypotheses that tea production probably were affected by the communal riots in 1983. Also the linear specification passed the stability which again is a substantial improvement with regard to the Sri Lankan case. In the case of Sri Lanka the lagged and current dependent variable are very highly correlated unlike in India.

Dummy variables - multiplicative and additive

It is believed that the intermittent political disturbances and communal riots in Sri Lanka since 1977 have had an important effect on the economy and especially in the tea industry as most of the plantation workers are almost always affected. Although a multiplicative dummy was introduced to the period 1977 - 83 for the lagged dependent variable, except for the aggregate supply function in all the other equations it was not significant, thus rejecting the hypothesis, that civil disturbances gave rise to a change in the significance of the coefficients. The dummy variable was significant only at .25 level as can be seen in the equation below.

$$\ln Q_t^s = 12.38 + 0.921 \ln Y_{t-1} + 0.0143 \ln \left(\frac{Y D 1}{t-1} \right) + 0.024 \text{ ECP}_t + 0.0199 \ln T$$

(107.0) (15.0) (1.37) (0.60) (1.31)

$$\bar{R}^2 = 0.8848 \quad \text{SEE} = 0.0306 \quad \text{LLF} = -314.7 \quad \text{Durbin } h = 0.937$$

Thus as shown in the previous tables additive dummy was used for the year 1983 and was found to be highly significant variable as expected.

Tests of stability

The sample of 30 observations was subdivided into two to carry out the Chow Test for the stability of coefficients in the equations. The functions for India almost always passed the test for stability, unlike in Sri Lanka where it frequently failed. The absence of serious disruptions in the tea production of India seem to account for more stable results, than in the case of Sri Lanka where the relationships seem to be disrupted by communal disharmony and change in focus of economic policies.

However, as was observed earlier the nature of data along with the specification seem to give more stable results for India, unlike Sri Lanka where except for area response functions almost all the other functions showed signs of instability.

Test of specification

The RESET test for misspecification of the functional form was carried out on the equations which displayed a high level of significance and passed the stability tests in the previous sections. It is also claimed that tests of this nature should also identify omitted variables to the extent that these are correlated with the additional variables. It is, however, very important to note that it is not totally correct to conclude that nonlinearity or misspecification are absent on the basis of the RESET test alone (Spanos, 1986)

Table 7 RESET test results for India

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables	t values		F test	Wald Test χ^2
		2 y t	3 y t		
(log specification)					
Y t	Y t-1' ECW t'	3.5	-2.6	6.90	13.8
A t	A t-1' ECW t-7'	0.67	-0.66	1.83	3.77
Q t	Q t-1' ECW t'	3.74	-3.72	9.17	18.35
Q t	Q t-1' P t' T	3.69	-3.67	8.78	17.57
A t	A t-1' P t' T	0.916	-0.910	2.60	5.20

(Linear Specification)

Y _t	Y _{t-1'}	P _{t'}	T	2.576	-2.57	3.35	6.70
Y _t	Y _{t-1'}	ECW _{t'}	T	2.82	-2.84	4.05	8.10
A _t	A _{t-1'}	ECW _{t-7}	T	1.28	-1.26	1.80	3.61
A _t	A _{t-1'}	P _{t'}	T	2.10	-1.16	4.00	8.00

F Statistic distributed as F (2, 24)

Wald statistic distributed as chi - squared with 2 degrees of freedom

The log specification was initially tested using wage index deflated prices. As initially prescribed by Ramsey (1969), higher order values of the predicted value of the dependent variable (y^2 and y^3 say) were included in the equation and the significance of the new coefficients was jointly tested using an F test. Other, more specific tests of nonlinearity using cross products and higher order values of the independent variables were not carried out.

Table 8 RESET Results for Sri Lanka

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	t values		F test	Wald Test
		2	3		
		y _t	y _t		X
(log specification) Y _t	Y _{t-1'} ECW _{t'} T, D1	0.65	0.70	0.295	0.591
A _t	A _{t-1'} ECW _{t-6'} T, D1	0.41	-0.41	3.41	6.82
A _t	A _{t-1'} P _{t'} T, D1	0.54	-0.54	0.696	1.39
Q _t	Q _{t-1} ECW _{t'} T, D1	0.086	-0.088	0.55	1.09
Q _t	Q _{t-1'} P _{t'} T, D1	0.138	-0.141	0.497	0.995
Q _t	Y _{t-1'} A _{t-1'} P _{t'} T, D1	-0.439	0.431	2.07	4.14

As the table indicates almost all the variations of the three response functions did not have significant coefficients for either y^2 or y^3 . These equations also passed the Wald test at the 0.05 level of significance. Although these equations did not pass the stability test as observed earlier, it is interesting to note that they appear to be adequately specified; it is possible that the relations are inherently unstable.

In the case of India, except for the area response functions, the functions neither passed the F test nor the Wald test. When the additive model was tried the yield and area response functions passed both the F and Wald tests at the 0.05 level.

Conclusion

The advancement in modelling perennial crops in econometric analysis along with increased availability of reliable and appropriate data with respect to many crops from most of the international organisations and local statistical sources has brought in a renewed interest in the field of supply response functions of perennial crops. The fact that most of the developing countries rely very largely on primary commodities or perennial crops and the inelastic nature of the demand and supply functions has made it of interest to investigate both types of functions to study the means of optimally exploiting the benefits that could be derived in order to meet the growing need for scarce foreign exchange resources. This issue is particularly pressing as both countries have suffered from the reduced world demand for tea due to the introduction of many artificial beverages. In the present study I have tried to analyse the difference in the structure of tea production and other supply considerations in two of the most important tea producers of the world.

The functional form used in this supply response study is very general and not specific to the countries concerned in most respects. The unavailability of model-specific data with respect to these countries has greatly limited the specificity of the model to the countries concerned. In instances where data was unobtainable it was necessary to estimate the values of the appropriate variables, validity.

The model used in this study differs in some specific characteristics from earlier studies. The real wage indices have been used to deflate the prices instead of cost of living index or prices of substitutes which have been used in earlier studies. Also a specific kind of two stage expected price has been used as the price factor which proves to be significant as observed in the equations.

Also both log and linear specifications have been applied to the same data with identical equations to consider the merits of each specification.

All the tests to see the robustness of the model were not carried out which makes the comparisons made of lesser usefulness. This could, however, be done in an extensive study. The data limitation could be overcome by using a model-specific survey to obtain the data to carry out a more robust study as undertaken by, for example, Hortly, Nerlove and Peters (1984).

On the whole the analysis presented here has raised some interesting issues with respect to the price expectations mechanism, the appropriate deflator and the comparative features of the study, despite the limitations of the model. More advanced research needs to be carried out to analyse further the various interesting aspects observed in the comparative study carried out in this paper.

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Appendix I Data on India

Year	Area	Production	Price	CPI	Real Wage Index
1947	312126.3	254268.4	3.17	33.00	101.50
1948	312515.6	257779.6	3.46	36.10	102.90
1949	315645.8	265154.1	3.70	37.20	85.00
1950	316868.0	278212.6	3.90	37.70	104.30
1951	317914.5	285398.9	3.37	38.90	101.00
1952	318641.0	278670.7	3.04	38.50	99.90
1953	319476.0	278776.9	4.19	39.70	98.70
1954	320236.0	295505.3	6.13	37.70	103.50
1955	320586.0	307703.8	4.50	35.70	105.00
1956	323283.0	308719.4	5.00	39.30	81.70
1957	325355.0	310802.7	4.43	41.20	80.90
1958	326495.0	325225.6	4.61	43.20	82.10
1959	330818.0	325955.4	4.87	45.20	73.40
1960	331280.0	321077.5	5.27	46.00	81.30
1961	332525.0	354397.0	4.76	47.60	84.20
1962	334036.0	346736.0	5.08	52.80	88.90
1963	337814.0	346413.0	4.98	54.30	91.20
1964	341762.0	372486.0	4.82	61.50	81.20
1965	345256.0	366374.0	5.27	67.40	89.80
1966	347653.0	375983.0	5.50	74.60	93.60
1967	351065.0	384759.0	5.52	84.50	87.50
1968	353359.0	402489.0	5.30	87.00	83.30
1969	354133.0	393588.0	5.56	95.10	95.50
1970	356516.0	418517.0	6.86	100.00	100.00
1971	358675.0	433322.0	7.25	103.30	103.00
1972	360126.0	455996.0	6.99	109.80	97.50
1973	361663.0	471952.0	7.05	128.30	87.50
1974	363303.0	489475.0	10.24	165.20	78.00
1975	364275.0	487137.0	11.35	174.50	66.00
1976	366276.0	511817.0	12.08	160.90	79.40
1977	369184.0	556267.0	16.77	173.90	85.00
1978	373747.0	563846.0	14.02	178.80	82.20
1979	378447.0	543776.0	14.69	190.20	89.10
1980	381891.0	569550.0	15.08	212.00	95.30
1981	384292.0	559583.0	15.25	239.70	85.80
1982	394999.0	560732.0	16.82	258.20	86.90
1983	397123.0	581484.0	26.15	289.20	96.80

Sources:

Annual Bulletin of Statistics, International Tea Committee.

Yearbook of Labour Statistics International Labour Organisation.

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Area = Area Cultivated with Tea, ha.

Production = Output of tea, tonnes.

Price = Average price of tea at Calcutta Auctions, average for the year,
Indian Rs. / kg.

CPI = Consumer Price Index, 1970 = 100.

Real Wage Index, 1970 = 100.

Appendix 2 Data for Sri Lanka

Year	Area	Production	Price	CPI	Real Wage Index
1947	224224.9	135409.5	3.52	61.00	60.40
1948	224634.1	136890.0	3.42	66.30	59.40
1949	227901.9	140413.5	4.25	67.30	54.20
1950	229640.4	143432.6	4.55	69.30	63.20
1951	230983.6	147997.6	4.19	72.40	95.80
1952	231961.0	143717.1	3.81	71.70	96.20
1953	232877.0	155597.6	4.21	73.20	97.70
1954	233562.0	166349.5	5.64	73.20	99.70
1955	229192.0	172370.9	4.93	72.50	105.70
1956	230452.0	170359.2	4.76	72.30	103.50
1957	230903.0	180427.6	4.10	74.20	106.70
1958	231766.0	187403.9	3.81	75.80	101.10
1959	234577.0	187392.6	4.30	76.00	100.40
1960	235455.0	197180.6	4.43	74.80	104.40
1961	237713.0	206488.3	4.25	75.70	104.10
1962	239217.0	211849.7	4.10	76.80	106.00
1963	237702.0	219797.6	3.88	78.70	109.00
1964	239569.0	218513.1	3.90	81.20	104.30
1965	240508.0	328235.8	4.03	81.40	105.80
1966	241373.0	222312.3	3.62	81.30	104.10
1967	242331.0	220741.6	3.48	83.10	105.80
1968	241769.0	224802.6	4.03	87.90	113.40
1969	241401.0	219639.0	3.55	94.40	106.40
1970	241799.0	212210.0	3.73	100.00	100.00
1971	241667.0	217773.0	4.14	102.70	120.10
1972	241858.0	213475.0	4.39	109.20	100.30
1973	242302.0	211271.0	4.34	119.70	109.20
1974	242191.0	204038.0	6.64	134.40	103.20
1975	241877.0	213679.0	6.84	143.50	120.00
1976	240578.0	196666.0	9.21	145.20	131.50
1977	242012.0	208572.0	16.05	147.00	148.50
1978	242903.0	198981.0	14.09	164.80	168.50
1979	244099.0	206417.0	12.19	182.60	192.90
1980	244715.0	191375.0	18.33	230.20	202.00
1981	244919.0	210148.0	18.10	271.60	172.10
1982	242141.0	186631.0	23.43	301.10	185.60
1983	242130.0	179960.0	43.24	343.10	177.40

Sources:

Annual Bulletin of Statistics International Tea Committee.

Yearbook of Labour Statistics, International Labour Organisation.

Annual Reports, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 1950 - 85.

Area = Area Cultivated with Tea, ha.

Production = Output of Tea, tonnes.

Price = Average price of tea at Colombo Auctions, average for year,

Sri Lankan Rs. /kg.

CPI = Consumer Price Index, 1970 = 100.

Real Wage Index, 1970 = 100.

A STUDY OF GYPSIES OF SRI LANKA (1)

E. Balasundaram

0. 1. Introduction

This paper describes and analyses the cultural and economic changes of Telugu speaking Gypsies of Aligambai village in Sri Lanka. In this country Ethnological Survey was started in 1937. Before this, in 1835, the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch) was inaugurated, which was the pioneer of the Ethnological Studies in Sri Lanka. This country has been very fortunate as far as ethnology is concerned. This has been due to the preservation of Veddas, who are one of the oldest ethnic groups in the world. Well known scholars have been paying attention to studies relating to the Veddas. But it is very unfortunate that no serious attention has been paid to the study of Gypsies of Sri Lanka. ²

1. 1. The Origin of Sri Lankan Gypsies

The term 'Gypsy' used in this paper refers to a group of seminomadic people living in Sri Lanka. These people are referred to as *Kuravar* by the Tamils, and '*Ahikuntigaya*' ³ by the Sinhalese. The word *Kuravar*, is of Dravidian origin; it means hill country people. *Kurinchy*⁴ a classical Tamil word means hill country. The word *Kuravar* is derived from *Kurinchy*. There is no doubt that they are of Indian origin; their language clearly indicates it; They are a Telugu speaking gypsy community. An appreciable section of the population speaks Tamil as a second language.

Their physical appearances prove their identities, that they belong to Dravidian origin. But they are very particular in maintaining the Telugu identity. The gypsies who move with Tamils speak Tamil, and the gypsies who move with Sinhalese try to speak Sinhala.

Gypsies are known by many names, but none of them reveals their country of origin. The English word 'Gypsy' is derived from "Egyptian"..... In fact their history and spoken language can be traced back to India, where in all probability, they originated. When or why they left India is unknown, but it is probable that they left on several occasions and for different reasons. ⁵

The advent of the Indian gypsies in various parts of Europe is said to have synchronised with the time at when 'Timur' the great 'Tattar' chieftain invaded Hindustan and offered the conquered the option between the Koran and death. It has been concluded therefore that the gypsies in Europe consisted

originally of Hindustanee tribes who fled from the persecution of their Muslim conquerers and took up a wandering life. ⁶

It is not definitely known when the gypsies first crossed over to Sri Lanka, there being hardly any reference to them in the literature of this country. However the traditional lore of the gypsies points back to the second century A. D. as the time of the earliest band of gypsies to Sri Lanka. ⁷ The theory that the Sri Lankan gypsies migrated to Sri Lanka during the British rule continues to remain as a mere supposition unsupported by proof. ⁸ I leave this problem to Ethnologists and Anthropologists to establish the period of their arrival in this country.

2. 1 Description of Aligambai Village:

The Aligambai village is located in Akkaraipattu ⁹. Assistant Government Agent's Division in the Amparai District of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. It is about 20. k. m from Akkaraipattu town. On the western side of the village meadows, paddy lands, canals and shrubby lands are found scattered. The village name Aligambai seems to be of Sinhalese origin. Ali — elephant; Gambai — a place where it is tied. In the neighbouring villages there are Sinhalese settlements.

Fifty years ago Aligambai was a jungle where the wild animals freely moved. The nomadic Gypsies — the *Kuravar*, who wander about without any fixed abode, prefer to camp in this jungle, and they subsisted on hunting and food gathering. While they were hunting the animals, they also engaged in cattle farming. Then they found enough pasture and water facilities, and permanently settled in this place. Gradually they cleaned the jungle and started *chena* cultivation (shifting cultivation).

2. 2 Their huts and houses

Nearly fifty years ago their encampments were widely scattered with squat structures. Their huts were made of strips of talipot palm leaf or Ilukku grass (*Imperata cylindrica* var). These materials were sewn together and stretched over an arched stick framework. Inside the huts one can see a medley of things, such as roles of old talipot leaves, snake baskets piled one above the other, long low bed made of sticks, mats, cooking vessels, bottles and tins with things kerosene lamp and bundles of old cloths. By the side of their huts they kept their cattle and dogs. Cleanliness and health care were not known to them. Two or three decades later they started to build their huts using coconut cadjans which they bought from the neighbouring villages on barter basis. Their herbal commodities and other things like honey and dried meat were exchanged.

A new era of the Aligambai gypsies was dawn in the late 1960's with the establishment of a Roman Catholic Church at this village. When Rev. Father Cook was a priest of the Roman Catholic at Akkaraipattu, he was eager to uplift the gypsies by establishing a permanent settlement at Aligambai. The Father made frequent visits to the settlement and gave valuable advice to them for their development. At the beginning there were about 25 - 30 families. The author was told that, the nomadic gypsies from other places, who knew of this settlement, also came there and permanently settled. Now there are 150 families (about 600 people) living there. Rev. Father, Cook, succeeded in converting them to Roman Catholic Religion. By his effort, a Church has been built at Aligambi and the Church services are conducted in Tamil.

The Catholic Mission tried its best and approached the Government authorities and got plots of land for them. The land was distributed among the families. Then under the Government housing scheme, houses were built with basic amenities and given to them ¹⁰. These houses consist of two rooms with a kitchen and verandha. A lavatory unit and a well were also provided. More than 100 families live in the Government housing scheme. The Gypsy families who came to the village late from other areas could not get these houses; therefore they still live in huts.

3. 1 Leader of the Gypsies

The social structure of the Gypsies is a self-contained community, conforming to a patriarchal system of social behaviour. They select themselves a leader who is the elderly person with the controlling ability. The leader is called as "Vithanai" (Village Headman) or "Thalaivar" (leader). At present the leader's name is Mr. Rangam (50 years) and his wife is Erramma. The leadership is not hereditary. He is elected by common consent and can hold office only as long as his conduct merits it. If he is found guilty of an offence against the tribes or shows partiality towards anyone in his judgements brought to him, he will be replaced by another person.

The establishment and maintenance of law and order and the settlement of disputes between individuals are the main functions of the leader. Further he functions as the physician, the marriage registrar and priest of the whole community. The word of the leader is law and whenever laws are violated the leader after consultation with his "council" can inflict a fine on the delinquent.

3. 2 Judicial system

The Gypsies of Sri Lanka, never go to the judicial court; infact, legislation is unknown to them. The Gypsies very often quarrel among themselves and

it is a Gypsies tradition that they settle their disputes among themselves. They have their own leader, Court and Council to administer justice. They maintain the tribal integrity by a code of stern discipline and rigorous judicial system.

Vithanai (Village Head man) is the judge for their court. When he receives a complaint, immediately he fixes the date for the inquiry and informs the council and all the heads of the families, to gather at a particular place and time. All members of the council respect his order and assemble in time at the particular place. In front of the Judicial Council the Vithanai inquires into the case. The inquiry takes one or two days. The council members who were present there can voice their own opinion. Judgements of the majority will be considered as the final verdict. The fine may be in the form of money or things like arrack or slappings. Generally this type of judicial inquiry is termed as "Keelk Koodu" (Primary Court).

If Vithanai finds it difficult to conduct the inquiry and deliver the verdict he refers the case to the 'Melk Koodu' (High Court). For this high court inquiry, Vithanai invites other leaders of the gypsies who live in other gypsy villages. At a common place the particular case will be inquired and verdict will be given. If the high court fails to give proper judgement, nowadays the affected party seeks justice from the Sri Lankan judicial system. Fine will be collected from the offender and they buy arrack for the money and all members of the community drink and enjoy. If an offender is unable to pay the fine immediately, sufficient time is allowed for him to settle it. After the case they forget their enmity and ill will and become friendly. It shows their inclination towards collective life.

3. 2. 1 Judicial Council

The council generally consists of the aged and the influential section of the community. The chief is expected to possess talents, knowledge, discipline, pious good manners and experience in giving judgement and acceptable to all members of the community. The chief man is Vithanai. The following three categories of personal generally comprise the tribunal council: Vithanai (Judge) Vedikkaran (Leader of the hunters), Sevakan (Fiscal). The Sevakan's duty is to collect fine from the offenders.

4. 1 Occupations Agriculture:

The economy of Amparai and Batticaloa districts is predominantly agricultural. The chief crop cultivated is rice and this is cropped twice a year. Aligambai Kuravar (gypsies) are employed as agricultural labourers by Moor cultivators of the Amparai district. Weeding, repairing the field boundary, keeping watch over

the field against wild animals and encroachers and threshing paddy are the types of work for which their services are needed by the Moor farmers. ¹¹

This was the situation which prevailed in the early Seventies. But agricultural activities of the gypsies are now far developed. The Government and Catholic Mission volunteered to help the gypsies in their development. The Government has given to each gypsy family one or two acre of paddy lands. Twice a year (according to the monsoon) they cultivate their paddy lands. These two seasons are called as 'Perum Pogam' and 'Ciru Pogam'. ¹²

The neighbouring paddy fields belong to Tamils and Muslims. Whatever agricultural technology these communities use, the gypsies also adopt in their agricultural process. The Government and the Mission are very helpful to them. Gypsies were given tractors for their agricultural purposes. The way of preparing the land for cultivation before sowing, application of the VI and NPK fertilizers to the land, selecting good variety of seeds (nowadays they are sowing No. 94.1 variety of paddy), Application of Uriya and TD fertilizer for the crops in time are in practice. In these agricultural processes the gypsies now adopt new methods of agricultural technology. These prove that their economy and the way of life have changed and it is in a developing process.

4. 2 Hunting

Hunting was one of the main occupations of the Aligambai gypsies in the early years of their settlements. They were using large javelins with which they spear wild animals like deer, wild boar or porcupine, brought to the hunting place by their mongrels in the course of an exciting chase. Sometimes the gypsies go to hunt iguana carrying axes and spears. But at present they give more attention to agriculture and very rarely go for hunting. With the progress in civilization and increase in the population a good portion of the forest area has been cut down and cleared for the cultivation of crops and habitation. So the area for hunting is nowadays very much restricted. The Government forest officials and the society for the preservation of wild life often checked their advances in certain licensed and prohibited jungle areas. ¹³

Though these types of restrictions are in force the gypsies go hunting in keeping with their tribal customs. The weapons they carry are spear, battle-knife, and a type of axe called "manda". Each Gypsy takes with him three or four wild dogs. The wild dogs give chase to a quarry, and encircle it so that it may not escape. The Gypsy aims and throw the spear at the animal. They kill the animals for flesh, the excess flesh is distributed among the neighbouring huts. During the hunting expedition if they catch animals alive they keep them in their huts or houses as their pet.

4. 3 Snake Charming:

Snake - charming is one of the occupations of the Sri Lankan Gypsies. The snake charmers profess to be able to catch cobras in the jungle when they please, and to tame them in a few days through their knowledge of cobra language. ¹⁴ Mostly they achieve this by playing "Makudy" the instrument made of 'Nadankai' (gourd), bambo, and paste made from certain herbal roots. They use the root of 'Nagathali' (Martynia diandra) and 'erukku' (Calotropis gigantea) as antidotes for snake poison. Erukku is said to be a deadly poison, but forms an ingredient in several folk medicines. It is believed that when these two herbs are carried on the person, no cobra will attack their possessor.

But, every male gypsy is not capable of piping a cobra out of its lair; the feat requires special skill and great patience. The snake charmers indulge in their jobs for their livelihood. When they go to a village, they carry their cloth bag which contain their baskets with the cobra within and his pipe-gourd.

One decade ago the snake charmers were very frequently seen in the villages. They go to each and every house and exhibit the snake playing. Some people like to see it, some do not want it. Whether people like it or not they give them cloths, rice or money as a present and give them something having regard to their abject poverty. At present most of the snake charmers have given up snake charming as one of their occupations and are engaged in occupations which give them steady income throughout the year.

4. 4 Activities of Gypsy Women

Gypsy women go to the neighbouring villages with their children carrying them in the cloth tied on their backs. They sell their goods like honey, herbs and other items which were collected in forest. They used to read palms, but their ability to read the palm is merely a pretension to earn money. But nowadays very rarely the womenfolk go to the neighbouring villages; because they have work at home and agricultural activities where menfolk are engaged.

4. 5 Gypsies and their Remedies

Tribal and village people believe in folk medicine because it fits in with their culture and way of thinking. Folk medicines are basically prepared from fauna and flora. Siddhars and Yogies lived in forests and experimented with natural products and found folk remedies for various ailments. Gypsies who lived in forest, also by experience, found remedies for various illness and evil sprits.

Whenever the snake charmers pay a visit to the neighbouring villages they bring various remedies especially for snake bite and other ailments. They sell these remedies for money or exchange for consumer goods. In a field study undertaken by the author in this area, he was informed by people belonging to various walks of life that the gypsies' remedies were efficacious and they were still using some of those remedies. It is worthy to list some of their remedies here.

Remedies:

Ailments & Results

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Root of <i>Martynia diandra</i>
(Nagatali ver) | (a) An antidote for the snake bite
(b) Helps the pregnant woman in healthy child delivery |
| 2. Seed of <i>Martynia diandra</i>
(Nagatali vitai) | (a) Prevents the snake from biting |
| 3. Venom - stone
(Visak kal) | (a) It sucks out the snake venom from the body. |
| 4. Species of <i>calotropis</i>
(Vellerukku) | (a) When a person possesses it, no snake will harm him. |
| 5. Tail of wild cat
(Pulukunavi val) | (a) It prevents bad dream and devil attacks |
| 6. Indian Screw Tree - <i>Helesteresisora</i>
(Valampuri Palam) | (a) It is an antidote against the Evil Eye.
(b) It cures stomach - ache of the children |
| 7. Leopard tooth & Bear claw
(Pulip pal + Karadi Nagam) | (a) Prevent them alevolent effect of the Evil Eye. |

5. 1 Education

With the arrival of the Catholic Mission in the Gypsy village Aligambai, a small school was built in 1964. Now classes are conducted from Grade I to Grade VIII by two teachers. There are one hundred students studying in this School. Scholarships are awarded to six students by the Mission to study at Ramakrishna Mission Maha Vidyalaya in Akkaraipattu town. Younger generation of the gypsies is now literate.

6. 1 Rituals and ceremonies : Puberty Rituals

Female puberty ceremonies appear ubiquitous in South Asia where they are found in a variety of social context.¹⁵ In Sri Lanka the ceremonies that are

held when a girl menstruates for the first time are almost similar among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. But these rites differ according to the socio - cultural patterns and the economic conditions. In the recent past scholars like Nur-Yalman (1963, Leach (1970), and Winslow (1980) have given more scholarly attention to study the puberty rites of Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhalese. But the author has noticed that rituals and beliefs connected with puberty ceremony of Gypsy girls are very peculiar, curious, novel and structured.

Van Genep, in his book 'The Rites of Passage' has divided the human life process into three stages as separation, transition, and reintegration. The Gypsy girls' puberty rites fall under the separation category. Leach (1970 : 825) defines this structure as 'maturation through separation'.

When a gypsy girl menstruates for the first time, as it is considered taboo, her parents build a small hut with coconut cadjans and keep the girl in seclusion in that hut for seven days. During these days she will be given cooked rice, with green grain, potatoes, dhal and brinjal curries. Day and night protection is given by parents. On the fifth day there will be a small bathing ceremony. Her female relatives bring water in earthen pots from their homes and pour it on her head. After bath, saffron paste will be applied on the girl's body. Then the girl wears new cloth, and she will be allowed to enter the main house for that moment alone. At that time the ceremony of waving lighted camphor and lighted wick will take place. Her relatives give her presents according to their financial position. Then the common feast follows. Liquor is also served to all guests. The guests get together and sing and dance and enjoy the day. On the same day evening, the old hut will be removed, and a new hut erected. The girl has to stay for two more days in this hut. On the seventh day the girl will take the ceremonial bath and she will enter the main home. After cleaning the pollution of the hut and the house, the puberty ceremony is concluded.

6. 2 Marriage ceremonies

Generally gypsy weddings are arranged by the parents. According to the old custom their marriages were arranged when the children were quite young. The promise of betrothal is uttered loudly before the members of the tribes; after which the bridegroom's father in token thereof distributes arrack to those present, who are regarded as witnesses. If the marriage does not take place, the party at fault is fined. At present proposed and love marriages take place: But parental negotiation is needed in both.

If the bride's parents agree to the proposal, the bridegroom party give bottle of arrack as gift. Sunday is chosen and on this day both the bride's

and bridegroom's parties pool their resources and entertain relatives and well-wishers at a liquor party. The betrothal is thus made public.¹⁶ For the marriage ceremony a small "pandal" (tent) will be erected with green decoration. Before they were converted to Catholic religion, the wedding ceremonies were conducted by their Hindu priest, who was the old and wise man among them. He recites the verses invoking blessing on the newly married couple. In the early days Lord Muruga's idol was placed in front of the bridegroom, he worshipped the Lord Muruga and proceeds to bride's home. Now all these practices are abandoned. It is noted that as the Aligambai gypsies are Catholics their weddings take place at the church.

6. 2. 1 Wedding entertainments.

They prepare nuptial feast with fresh meat of the wild animals. Prior to attending the happy nuptial event, the gypsies take arrack. At the wedding also they enjoy by partaking of alcohol. They sing and dance. They beat the "Tappu" a kind of drum made of monkey skin and play with sticks held with the fingers of both hands. Women sing love songs in Telugu language. In front of the wedding house gypsies dance with drum beat. The groom too joins in the dance. The orchestra of the Tappu and guord pipe will make music. Gypsy women also are served liquor at the wedding and they also sing and dance with their male friends.

6. 2. 2 Dowry System

In the early days dowry was given to the bridegroom by bride's father. Ratten basket with a performing cobra in it, a gourd pipe to charm it, a javelin for him to hunt with and a country mongrel were given as dowry by the bride's father. Bride's mother gave her daughter kitchen utensils. But this old tradition has been abandoned. Now the groom has to give dowry (the Bride price).¹⁷ to the bride's parents. The groom has to give nominal dowry of Rs. 7-50 in recognition of bride's mother's duties towards her daughter for giving birth, feeding in her childhood days and bringing her up. In addition the father of the bride is also given dowry of Rs. 40/ for the obligations fulfilled by him for his daughter. Then a new saree will be given to the bride by the groom.

6. 3 Child Birth

There are birth rituals and taboos observed by the gypsies. The old women who attend to the delivery of the child, known "Maruttovicchi" (Midwife) does all the help to the pregnant mother. The midwife calculates the delivery day. They belief that if the juice of the green herbs is smeared on the head of the

pregnant woman normal delivery take place without any danger. If the midwife finds any abnormal condition in delivery, the pregnant woman is taken to the Akkaraipattu Town hospital.

For eight days, the midwife looks after the mother and the child. On the eighth day there will be a bathing ceremony. Mother and the child will be given hot water bath. On the same day the midwife also takes ceremonial bath and goes off from her duties. That day she will be given presents and arrack also. As it is taboo 31 days, mother and father will not go to the church. On the 30th day the baby's head will be shaven. Sometimes to fulfil a vow they take the child to the church and get the head shaved there.

7. 1 Funeral Rites

Funeral rites are conducted according to the Catholic traditions. The mode of disposal of dead bodies of gypsies is by burial at the common burial ground. The corpse is carried on a stretcher turned out of wooden branches. Women do not accompany the corpse to the burial ground. On the twelfth day the final death rites will be held and cooked foods will be offered as oblation food to the departed soul.

8. 1 Worship

In Aligambai there are one hundred and fifty gypsy families and six hundred inhabitants. Most of them were converted to the Catholic religion. There is a church for them. Every Sunday all Catholic gypsies go to the church. There will be a special service for them. Among the gypsies the old generation still have faith in Hindu Gods. Because of this situation they have been allowed to celebrate nine days of the year for their Hindu Gods. The gypsy folks have their tutelary deities like Lord Muruga, Valli and Theivanai. For these deities, they have small statues made of wood, stone or copper. For these nine days they offer special oblation to their Gods and adore them. They cook milk rice and sing and dance. There are two Hindu families with eight members in this village. As they do not have a Hindu temple they worship their Gods at their own homes.

9. 1 Language

The gypsies speak Telugu only in their homes. Whenever they communicate with Tamils and Muslims they speak in Tamil. Their children learn to speak Tamil at school. During the field work of the author he has recorded some of

the folk songs of the gypsies, and has also copied down some of their words (Telugu). They may be of interest to Linguists for future research.

abbadu	—	father	pal	—	rupee
a : lu	—	wife	pa : mu	—	snake
a : vu	—	cow	pandi	—	pig
i :	—	give	padda :	—	language
kunda : n	—	pot	po : ta	—	go
katti	—	knife	ra : ja :	—	king
k : ki	—	crow	sa : kku	—	gunny bag
kukka	—	dog	se : stram	—	prediction
kucur	—	sit	ta : ta	—	grand father
ku : du	—	cooked rice	tae : nkay	—	coconut
ley	—	get up	tamuda	—	younger brother
mamma :	—	mother	vaja :	—	herbs
ma : ni	—	tree	vandi	—	bullock cart
nenta	—	come	uppu :	—	salt
ni : lu	—	water	u : ru	—	village
nu : ru	—	hundred	u : rpil	—	squirrel

10.0 Conclusion

The Gypsy settlement of Aligambai village now has developed into one of the agricultural villages. The arrival of the Catholic Mission in the village was the turning point in the developing process of the village. Within two decades a rapid cultural transformation took place there. Their hereditary Hindu religious practices and beliefs have been abandoned and they adopted Catholic theological beliefs and practices. Ceremonies from birth to death are changed according to the Catholic tradition. Healing rituals do not take place; in place of these they depend on western medicine which is available at the nearest town free of charge. They have adopted a new style of clothing / dressing and ornaments as used in neighbouring villages.

Their pattern of life has changed to suit the new economic development. The government and various charitable organizations have been helping them in their development activities. School and church are their cultural centres. Now their children are literate. It is remarkable that Aligambai gypsies are one of the developed tribes in the changing world.

FOOT NOTES

- (1) The author expresses his thanks to the University of Colombo for awarding a Research Grant for a research project on "Folk Rituals and Beliefs of the Eastern Sri Lanka", during 1977 - 1979. Most of the material used in this paper were collected during this period. A second field trip was made in April 1987. Messrs. K. Kanapathipillai, teacher Aligambai School and N. Sabapathi, Akkaraipattu are both remembered with gratitude, for the help rendered by them during these field studies. I also thank Professor A. Veluppillai, Head, Department of Tamil, University of Jaffna, for his valuable criticism and suggestions.
- (2) See for reference: H. A. I. Goonatilleke, *Bibliography of Ceylon*
- (3) "The Sinhalese speak of all these gypsies as Ahigunthakayas, which means the snake charmers. The original word from which this term is taken is Ahitundika or Ahigundika. This word occurs in the "Bhuridatta Jataka", where it is said that the Bodhisattuwa in one birth was a cobra with a thousand hoods and an Ahitundikaya caught the cobra and played tricks with it. The God being angry at this; cursed the man; ever since the tribe has been nomadic", Bell, H. C. P. *Ceylon Antiquary* II, (ii) 1916, p. 113.
- (4) The mountainous and hilly tracts in the Tamil Nadu were classified as the Kurinchyland, after the name of a flower significant in the flora; The primitive hill tribes that inhabited this Kurinchy were called Kuravar.
- (5) *Encyclopaedia of Britannica: Micropaedia*, Vol, I, p. 819
- (6) S. V. O. Somanader : 1937
- (7) W. S. Karunatilake : 1974 : 420
- (8) S. Thananjeyarajasingham : 1973 : p. 123
- (9) Mac Gilvary's work (1973) gives full details of this village.
- (10) This Government Housing Scheme was ceremonially opened by the Hon. Prime Minister R. Premadasa in 1980.
- (11) Thananjeyarajasingham : 1973 : p. 123.
- (12) The paddy cultivation depending on north - east monsoon rainy season is called as PERUMPOGAM; The south - west monsoon rainy season paddy cultivation is called as CIRUPOGAM.

- (13) Thananjeyarajasingam : 1973 - 124.
- (14) Richard Spittel stated that many ophiologists aver that though snakes are highly sensitive to vibrations through the ground, they are utterly deaf to air - borne vibrations and therefore, to the music of the snake charmers' pipe - ground or pin (1957 : 178).
- (15) D. Winslow : (1980)
- (16) S. Thananjeyarajasingam 1973 , p. 126
- (17) See Roop Singh 1987 : p. 89.

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THE BATTICOTTA SEMINARY

1823 — 1855

THE AMERICAN MISSIONS ATTEMPT AT HIGHER EDUCATION IN JAFFNA

IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

S. Jebanesan

The period between 1823 and 1855 is one of utmost importance in the history of higher education among the Tamils of Jaffna. The American Missionaries who had come from the New World with a view to propagate Christianity in the Jaffna Peninsula undertook to establish a college which was basically similar in its objectives and the courses of instruction provided, to the advanced centres of learning — the Universities in Europe. The college which they established had many distinctive features and was unique in the whole Island. It is considered as the oldest among the institutions of higher learning in Asia devoted to imparting a modern education. As an institution of higher learning it was unrivalled in the whole Island during the nineteenth century. Besides, it was also the oldest among the institutions of higher learning in Asia providing instruction in English. Long before the British colonial Government made definite policy decisions regarding English Education the promoters of the Batticotta Seminary had foreseen the value of English Education in British Ceylon. Although instruction at the Seminary was in English, adequate attention was paid to the study of Tamil and Sanskrit languages and their literary traditions. One of the Principal objectives of the Seminary was to disseminate Western knowledge and Science and introducing them into the Tamil language with a view to fulfill contemporary requirements.

Although similar centres of higher learning were set up in India even before the establishment of the Seminary, those institutions were not comparable to the Western Universities. Marquis Wellesley, the Governor General of India, had established Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800. Although the courses of study provided and the teaching staff employed were of university standards, instruction was provided only to officers of the British Government.¹ In 1812 a similar college was established in Madras by the joint efforts of Colonel Mackenzie and Lord Ellis. The College of Fort St. George which was thus established principally for the purpose of educating British Officers in Dravidian languages was closed in 1854.²

The Baptist missionaries who established themselves in Bengal towards the end of the eighteenth century set up a college at Serampore in 1818. Those who were associated with its management were steadfast in their conviction that instruction should be provided in the medium of the mother tongue.³ The Serampore College therefore became an institution which was confined to the Bengali region of India.

The Indians who had an attraction for English Education had established the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1816. But these enthusiasts were anxious to provide instruction on European Sciences and literature only. The founders of this Institution advocated the view that Hinduism and Hindu Philosophy should not be taught at this Institution.⁴ It could not therefore develop as an institution of the University model. In 1855 it became the Presidency College of Calcutta.

After 1830 some full-fledged University Colleges appeared in India. In that year Alexander Duff of the Scottish Mission founded the Scottish Church College in Calcutta. In 1832 John Wilson of the same mission established a College in Bombay which was later named after him and was referred to as Wilson college. Another such missionary, John Anderson, established a college called the Institution in Madras, in the year 1837. It later developed as the Madras Christian College. There have been several studies on these institutions and the services they rendered to society. Their contributions have been examined and evaluated from different stand points.

But hitherto there have been no serious and comprehensive studies about the American Ceylon Mission and the Batticotta Seminary established by this mission. However, from time to time, brief historical accounts about the American Mission have been published. "A History of the American Ceylon Mission" written by C. D. Veluppillai in Tamil was published in 1922.⁵ It briefly surveys the history of the American Ceylon Mission from 1816 to 1916. But the Educational work of the American Ceylon Mission has not received adequate attention. The author has given only brief notes about the Batticotta Seminary. The author has not made use of materials in mission reports and other sources. If he had taken pains to make citations and bibliographical references the work would have been of considerable value to modern scholarship.

In "A Century of English Education" J. V. Chelliah attempts to provide a historical account of the Batticotta Seminary and Jaffna College. This monograph was also published in 1922.⁶ Although he had access to materials relating to the Seminary he had failed to make proper use of them. The Seminary's contribution to social progress and the advancement of Tamil Studies have not

received adequate attention. In this book there are no references to sources of information. His account of the Seminary is essentially superficial and in some instances faulty.

American Education in Ceylon 1816 - 1875. An assessment of its impact is a monograph submitted by C. H. Piyaratne for his Ph. D. degree at the University of Michigan in 1968⁷. The Educational work undertaken by the American Ceylon Mission has been discussed in detail but the Social Changes brought about by the Seminary have not been discussed adequately. The author has utilized only the sources that were available in America. The manuscript sources available locally and Tamil publications relating to the work of the mission have not been used by him. The Triennial Report of the Batticotta Seminary were also not accessible to him.

In 1973 R. Rajapakse wrote a thesis on **Christian Missions, Theosophy and Trade: History of American relations with Ceylon 1815 - 1915** to the University of Pennsylvania.⁸ As he had attempted to study the work of the American Mission during a period of a hundred years and tried to evaluate its significance in the context of developments within the whole Island, there was no detailed study of the Batticotta Seminary in his work. Even in this work the sources that are available locally have not been used.

Some of the American Missionaries who have served in the Jaffna peninsula have written a few treatises on the work of American Ceylon Mission. They were generally intended for the reading public in the United States of America. It may therefore be assumed that they were not written with a view to evaluate the contributions of the mission from the stand point of examining developments in the Tamil Society. Among these those written by the Winslows⁹, the Lietch sisters (1880 - 1886)¹⁰ and Miss Helen. I Root¹¹. (1899 - 1907) are most remarkable from the point of view of our study. These are basically in the form of diaries.

A detail study of the American Mission and the Batticotta Seminary with special reference to their contribution to the modernization of Tamil Society in Sri Lanka has not yet been attempted and as such there is a major gap in the modern History of that society. S. Vithiananthan, K. E. Mathiaparanam, S. Ambihai-bahan, S. Kulendran, and others have written on the contribution of the American Ceylon Mission to the development of Tamil.¹² They indicate the need for making a detail study of the Batticotta Seminary. In the course of a lecture delivered at the Annamalai University in 1963, T. P. Meenakshisundaram emphasized that the Tamils are indebted in considerable measure to the American

Mission for the progress of Tamil learning in the nineteenth century and that the publications of the Batticotta Seminary should be reprinted for the benefit of modern Tamil scholarship.¹³

If the work of the Batticotta Seminary about which there is an abundance of literary sources, is examined from different points of view many facts could be clarified.

One of the important questions that has to be posed is, why the American Missionaries who were concerned with evangelical work gave prominence to the advancement of Scientific Knowledge. What was the purpose of the study of the basic Saivaite texts at the Seminary? What were the consequences of such studies? Why did the American Missionaries who were eminently successful in the educational work failed to achieve a similar degree of success in evangelical work?

The Seminary was responsible for the production of some very useful standard works on Logic, Geography, History, Mathematics and Astronomy in Tamil. It also provided a stimulus for the development of Drama, History of Literature, Prose Writing and New Poetry. Many Scholars who were educated at the Seminary were well accomplished in English, Tamil, and Sanskrit learning. The scholars educated at the Seminary became sceptical of the religious traditions and practices prevailing in Jaffna.

Such a situation resulted in an intellectual ferment involving most of the scholars living in Jaffna. When considered in the light of these developments one would see that the American Missionaries and the local scholars produced by the institutions they established in Jaffna occupy a prominent position in the modernization of the Jaffna society. Why were the Graduates of the Batticotta Seminary steeped in the traditions of Tamil culture? Why were not the seminary students attracted by the cultural traditions and ideals of the West to the same extent as the students trained in other missionary institutions were attracted? What type of students received Education at the Seminary? Why did the Education provided by the Seminary fail to attract people of the lower ranks of the Society? What was the impact of the Seminary on the attitudes and thinking of the Tamils in the Island? It would be possible to find answers to such questions.

The modern history of the Tamils in Sri Lanka in general, and their educational and cultural progress in particular have not been studied in depth. The present study would practically explain the great progress achieved in English

Education and Science Education in the Jaffna Peninsula. Besides it could also be seen how the Seminary contributed towards the modernization of Jaffna society through social changes, political consciousness and employment opportunities.

The origins of the Batticotta Seminary

The establishment of the Batticotta Seminary was an event of utmost importance in the history of education in South Asia. In **A Century of English Education**, which is a history of the Batticotta Seminary and Jaffna College. until 1922, J. V. Chelliah says:

“That the small sandy peninsula of Jaffna situated in a remote corner of the Island of Ceylon should enjoy the privilege of having one of the pioneer institutions of higher Western learning in the East can only be accounted for by the inscrutable ways of Providence.”¹⁴

The Political Conditions in Sri Lanka

A combination of religious, historical and social considerations led to the formation of the Seminary. The British Government except under Edward Barnes extended warm support to the activities of the American Mission. The religious sentiments prevailing in England and the influence wielded by the Evangelicals in the British Parliament were factors that led to the positive responses to the missionaries from the Government of the colony. When the charter of the East India company was revived in 1813 the Evangelical interests strived for the inclusion of clauses in the charter which accommodated their interests. It was incorporated in the charter that the East India Company should be responsible for furthering the cause of evangelism, permit the establishment of missions in the territories under its jurisdiction and assume responsibility for the remuneration of Bishops and Archdeacons.

Robert Brownrigg who was the Governor of the colony from 1812 to 1820 was deeply interested in the Evangelical movement. The colonial office in London provided all support for Brownrigg in the promotion of evangelical work. In a communication to the Governor in 1812 the Secretary of State for colonies says:

“His Majesty’s Government are most anxious to afford means of Education and Religious education”¹⁵

All the Christian Missions received support from Brownrigg. In matters of rights and privileges all the mission were placed on an equal footing. Because of the great support extended by the Governor all the missions gained a foot-

hold in the Island. With reference to the support he extended to the missions Robert Brownrigg observes.

“It has been a matter of peculiar satisfaction to me that I have seen under my Government Wesleyans, Presbyterians and Babtists uniting with regular clergy of the Church of England”¹⁶

In the second decade of the nineteenth century conditions in England and Sri Lanka favoured the development of educational institutions by the mission. However, it is a matter for investigation that the American Ceylon Mission alone among the Protestant Missions was able to establish an institution of higher learning.

Puritans Love for Learning

The religious conceptions of the American Mission gave pride of place to learning. The congregationalists since their inception had taken a great interest in the cause of learning. As the congregationalists who were puritans were denied admission to the old established universities in England they set out to establish universities of their own. The University of London was one of such institutions. Commenting on the Puritan concern for Education, church historian R. W. Dale observes;

“Congregationalists for many generations were accustomed to assert the claims of the interlect in religion far more earnestly than other evangelical churches.”¹⁷

It is noteworthy that almost all American missionaries who came to the Island during the nineteenth century have had a university education. Levy Spaulding who came as a missionary in 1820 had completed his education at the Cornell University with distinction and had come first in the M. A. examination. Clifton Phillips who had done research on the work of the American Mission in foreign countries says:

“It was in collegiate circles that the missionary enthusiasm flamed high creating societies like the secret brethren and producing the sense of vocation that called forth the Youthful evangelists to foreign lands.”¹⁸

The congregationalists settled in America established many Universities for educating their clergymen. The University of Harvard was thus established in 1638. William and Marry College was set up in 1693 and the Yale Univer-

sity was established in 1701. These three institutions were designed as Puritan models of centres of learning. But during the late eighteenth century religious sentiment fell into the background at these universities. Their connection with the church became only a nominal one. Rationalism and scientific inquiry which gained an overwhelming importance in education and knowledge in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries pervaded the Puritan citadels of learning. 19 During the early nineteenth century the Americans attached an unusual importance to education and believed that knowledge was power. Although the American Missionaries considered that education was a vital agent of evangelization, yet they were inspired by the ideal that the imparting of knowledge was an act of charity. They shared with Thomas Jefferson the firm belief that education was the only avenue to all kinds of progress. It was their conviction that economic prosperity and social progress were dependent on, and inextricably connected with the advancement of learning.

The American passion for education is a logical outgrowth of their background in the enlightenment; like their contemporary Jefferson they believed that Education was the only avenue to all forms of progress and that social and economic development went hand in hand with growth of the spirit.²⁰

Instrument of Evangelization

The American Missionary James Richards who came to the Island in 1816 makes the following observation in relating to the importance of education.

“What in our minds can be a good substitute for the society of believed brethren, sisters and friends whom we have left behind, as a presence of a circle of males and females bearing their names snatched from their ignorance and misery of idolatry, through their instrumentality and placed in circumstances favourable for cultivating the same virtues which our brethren and friends possess”.²¹

The American Missionaries in the Island published a prospectus outlining the objectives, aims and relevance to social needs of a collegiate institution and made it available for distribution among their associates in Sri Lanka, India and America. The ideas they expressed about education in their prospectus are worthy of utmost consideration.

They said:

“Knowledge is power”. This maxim, so justly celebrated, so steadily kept in view by the philosopher and statesman is, not less practi-

oal or important to the Christian Philanthropist when those who are engaged in a meliorating the condition of their fellow men have knowledge or means of disseminating knowledge they have the power of doing good. To extend the blessings of the most favoured countries of Europe or America to almost any section of the globe, we need only carry thither the literary and religious institutions of those countries whatever may be said of the influence of the soil, climate or even government upon national characters and happiness it cannot be doubted that these depend principally upon causes more exclusively intellectual and religious being and under the combined influence of pure science and true religion and of these only attains the moral dignity of his nature.²²

All the Protestant Christian missions established in the Island considered education the most effective medium for prosecuting evangelical work. It was on account of this consideration that the missionaries established native primary schools in India and Sri Lanka in several thousands.

Viscount Torrington, British Governor of Sri Lanka (1847 - 1850), made the following observation about the scheme of education:

"Education is the best preparation for conversion to christianity Experience has taught every church whose clergy officiate among the natives of Ceylon that preaching makes but a transient impression if any, unless the way has been first prepared by the process of mental conversion."²³

The system of education initiated by the American missionaries with the opening of primary schools at Mallakam and Tellippalai had developed into a stable one in 1823. The system provided satisfaction and a sense of achievement to them. In 1824 there were ninety primary schools with an attendance of 2863 boys and 613 girls in various parts of Jaffna.²⁴

In their programme of educational development, the Boarding schools came next to the Primary schools. Students with a capacity and desire for learning were selected for schooling and were provided free board, lodging and clothing in the boarding schools. Boarding schools were set up in five mission stations viz:- Pandateruppu, Tellippalai, Manipay, Uduvil and Vaddukoddai. The missionaries had observed the low cost of living and the comparatively less rigid observance of caste rules were more favourable for the development of those schools in Jaffna than in South India. In 1923 there were one hundred and fifty boys and twenty eight girls receiving instruction at those five boarding schools.

The expenditure incurred for the maintenance of these children was met from the grants supplied by the donors in Massachusetts. As a gesture of goodwill for the help rendered by the donors their names were applied to the children for whom the grants were allocated. In the Boarding schools instruction was provided both in English and Tamil. Christianity, Mathematics, Grammar and Geography were among the subjects included in the curriculum. Gradually the prejudices against mission boardings began to fade out. A considerable number of students showed a keen interest in joining these schools.

The unusual interest and intelligence displayed by these students vindicated the need for the establishment of a centre of higher learning. In this context it shall be noted that all the protestant missions working in South Asia became involved in the educational activities and initially with the primary schools. Once these were developed, by necessity they had to institute centres of higher learning. In 1799, the Baptist missionary William Carey established a native school at Serampore. Subsequently in 1818 he instituted a college providing instruction in the Bengali language. Like the American missionaries of the congregational church the Anglicans and the Methodists also started their educational work with primary schools in Jaffna. The Anglican seminary at Nallur was inaugurated in 1823. The Methodists established their Seminary in Jaffna Town in 1848. But the educational standards of these institutions were much lower in comparison with that of the institution set up by the American missionaries.

The College Plan

When the American missionaries had decided to set up a College and drew up a plan, they appealed to their benefactors in America and India for support. They prepared and published a prospectus styled "Plan for a College for the literary and Religious Instructions of Tamil and other Youths"

This was widely distributed locally and abroad. It may be mentioned here that this was in pursuance of a tradition initiated by Willam Carey in Bengal.²⁵

In the letter which they wrote to the Mission headquarters in Boston in 1824, the members of the American Ceylon Mission made the following observations about their plan of work in relation to the seminary.

"In our last letter we mentioned that we had it in contemplation to establish a Central School or College. We have matured the plan of such an institution, and had it printed. As soon as circumstances will admit we hope to carry this plan into execution., for particulars upon this head we refer you to a separate communication which will soon be sent to you.

In order that the most favoured boys at our respective stations may be better prepared to reap the benefit of such an institution we are about to establish an Academy; into which they will be received, and put under the care of one of the brethren, who will devote his time almost exclusively to their improvement, Batticotta has been considered the most eligible place for its location and the brother who has been unanimously chosen to take charge of it is Brother Poor. He will in a short time remove to Batticotta and his place at Tillipally will be supplied by brother Woodward''²⁶

It is an undeniable fact that education had been a monopoly of religion in the countries of Asia and Europe from ancient times. The history of medieval Europe is inextricably bound with that of the monasteries. In the Indian sub-continent Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism had promoted the cause of learning with the objective of furthering their religious ideologies, It is difficult to find instances where educational institutions were maintained outside the control of religious agencies.

In England even in the nineteenth century educational institutions were maintained by Christian denominations for promoting their interests. The concept that education was meant for promoting the welfare of the people had not developed in Asia and Europe even in the nineteenth century. The organization and working of the educational institutions, therefore, had a religious orientation.

The ideas expressed by the American Missionaries in their plan reveal that they also were motivated by similar considerations.

Although like other Christian denominations they considered education as a medium of evangelism yet they were also of the view that education was the basis for cultural and economic advancement. The promoters of the Seminary said:

''Agriculture and the mechanic arts will be improved, learning will rise in estimation and gradually obtain a dominion over wealth and caste the native character will be raised and the native mind freed from the shackles of custom which now confine all in the beaten track of their ancestors. will imbibe that spirit of improvements which has so long distinguished and blessed most Christian countries. It is not want of mind which leaves Asia at so greater distance behind Europe in the march of improvement. It is the want of, a spirit of inquiry and of unwillingness to improve. A college such as this is intended

to be. would give a new tone to the whole system of education in the district and exert an influence which would be felt in every school and village.²⁷

It was also pointed out that such a scheme would provide a number of benefits to the colonial government of the Island. The improvement of the judicial system, the availability of competent interpreters, the raising of English teachers and high ranking officers were among the developments that would emerge. In this connection they observed:

“The advantages of this must be appreciated by all these gentlemen in the Civil Service who in their official duties have intercourse with the Tamil part of the population. Among a people so litigious as the Malabars and at the same time removed, from the observation of their rulers by difference in situation, customs and language, the impartial administration of justice becomes a most perplexing and difficult concern. The mass of the people are so bound together by the ties of caste, family and interest and are at the same time so regardless of the obligation of an oath; that those of the same class cannot be made to testify against each other. A native of influence can therefore scarcely be brought to justice. His course of life however bad is known principally by those who are under his influence. He may be the leader of a gang of robbers and it may be known, even particular acts of his depredation may be pointed out while the most active magistrate is unable to convict him for want of evidence. How much then must course of justice be impelled in its descent to the lower classes, when in addition to all this, interpreter at any court may give what colouring he pleases to the evidence which he is the medium of transmitting, with little danger of its being discovered, if he is not above the influence of a bribe, the cause of truth will be sacrificed to his love of gain. Were the knowledge of English more common among the natives, they would act as checks upon each other and the practice of bribing less common.²⁸

The Name of The Institution

The American Ceylon Mission had not come to any definite decision regarding the name of the Institution which they wanted to establish. They referred to it as variously as the Central School, Seminary and College. There was also some debate among them about the site. Although they first decided to establish it at Vaddukoddai, they were indecisive, and later toyed with the idea of establishing it within the limits of Jaffna town. They therefore made a decision

to purchase the residential premises of Anthony Mooyart who was previously an official serving under the Dutch government for the sum of one thousand five hundred Rix dollars. However, it was finally decided in 1827 that this institution should be set up at Vaddukoddai. In the same year it was ceremoniously named American Mission Seminary. In the constitution which was revised in 1846 the institution was referred to as the Batticotta Seminary.

The local missionaries published the plan of the institution in March 1823 and set up the Central School at Vaddukoddai on the 22nd of July. This was done on their own initiative without the express permission from the mission headquarters in Boston or the consent of the British Government in the Island. Forty eligible candidates selected from five boarding schools were admitted to the new institution. Daniel Poor M. A. D. D. assumed responsibility as its head with the approval of his colleagues. Gabriel Tissera was placed in charge of the departments of English and Tamil. Besides two teachers were appointed to the Institution.

Although the missionaries had set out to find an institution which would confer degrees, circumstances were prohibitive in that respect. Generally a theological institution providing training for clergymen is spoken as a Seminary. The term is commonly applied in the Roman Catholic and the Protestant traditions. Such seminaries were under the direct supervision of the churches. During the Portuguese and Dutch periods the seminaries established in the island were meant for clergymen.

In America the educational institutions which had the right of conferring degrees were referred to as the Colleges. In 1827 the Baptist missionaries established in Serampore, applied for and obtained a charter from the King of Denmark who had political jurisdiction over Serampore. Since 1826 the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions communicated to the Secretary of State for colonies in London for the purpose of obtaining a charter for the institution at Vaddukoddai. In the meanwhile the local missionaries made efforts to obtain permission for their project from the British Government in the island.

When Robert Brownrigg the British Governor in Ceylon relinquished his post in 1820, he was succeeded by his deputy Edward Barnes. Barnes had fought under Wellington at Waterloo and therefore had a sentimental hatred for the Americans as America was at war with Britain during the Napoleonic wars. He viewed with suspicion the activities of the American missionaries. He took up the position that the number of American missionaries should not be increased,

and if a college was to be established it should be managed by British personnel and as the British Government had the intention of establishing such an institution, there was no need of the American establishing a college. When the Church Missionary Society inaugurated a seminary at Kotte in 1827 Edward Barnes participated at the function and expressed support for it undaunted by the refusal of the Government to grant a charter to the American Missionaries who were steadfast in their determination to sustain the institution. With a view to offset the restrictions of the government they decided to name it as the Seminary, on the advise of the mission headquarters in Boston.

The Curriculum and Courses

The Batticotta Seminary being the first experiment in providing Western Education to an Oriental Society had to take into account several factors in designing its curriculum and courses. Most of the American missionaries who served in Jaffna had completed their courses of study at the prestigious American Universities like Harvard, Yale and Princeton. It is therefore natural that the syllabuses which they prepared for the Batticotta Seminary were modelled on those of the American universities from which they graduated. The significant innovations they introduced were in consideration of local needs and circumstances.

Medium of Instruction

In the plan for the college which they had published in 1823, the authors had elaborately stated the case for English as the medium of instruction. In this publication it was stated:

A leading object will be to give native youth of good promise a thorough knowledge of the English Language. The great reason for this is that it will open to them the treasures of European science and literature and bring fully before the mind the evidence of Christianity.³⁰

The arguments which they advanced in favour of English as the medium of instruction are worthy of examination. The idea of establishing a college or an Institution of higher learning was largely influenced by the work of the Baptist missionaries of Serampore. In 1818 the Baptist missionaries who published a prospectus setting forth the plan and objectives of the institution they intended to establish in Serampore advanced the reasons for adapting Bangali as the medium of instruction. American missionaries considered these arguments carefully and came to the conclusion that they had no relevance to the situation in Jaffna.³¹

The arguments adduced by the American missionaries in favour of English were basically similar to the ideas of Thomas Macaulay who laid the guidelines of educational policy in India. Maculay said:

I have not yet found an orientalist who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the who lenative literature of India and Arabia.³²

The American missionaries also expressed their ideas on this matter in the same tone. In "The plan" we see the echo of Macanlay's guidelines.

Were all that is valuable in history in the arts, in metaphysics, ethics law physics and divinity which is found in all the languages of Eastern Asia living and dead put in the balance with what is contained in English on the same subjects or in any other calculated, really to enlarge the mind and from it to correct and manly thought the treasures even of a small, but select English library, such as a native might read would outweigh them all³³

It should, however, be noted that the objective of the American missionaries in advocating the cause of English as the medium of instruction was fundamentally different from that of Macaulay. Maculay was of the firm conviction that Oriental Culture and studies were an impediment to modernization which in his view amounted to Westernization.

The American missionaries however do not seem to have intended to Anglicize Jaffna Society. From the very beginning it would seem that they were opposed to that process of development. The sentiments expressed by Samuel Green in one of his letters provides some indication of the extent to which the American missionaries were opposed to the process of anglicization.

He wrote

"I begin to think that the charge here will be from a waist cloth to pants from a scarf to a coat, from a turban

to a hat from vegetarianism to carnivorism from a hut to a house and so on till many while yet unchristianized may be denationalized. I would rather here see Christian Hindus than Hindus Europeanized''³⁴

These missionaries who were under the spell of eighteenth century liberalism did not want to destroy the values of traditional culture. But they firmly believed that it was only through English education that the native society could be sufficiently enlightened. They, therefore, rejected the ideas of Serampore missionaries relating to the medium of instruction. They were of the view that education in the native language could not confer benefits on Jaffna society although the case was slightly different in respect of India. In some of the Indian languages like Gujarati and Marathi there was some progress in book production and the assimilation of modern European knowledge through the media of such languages.

In 'The plan' they wrote.

"In some parts of India where the inhabitants are more of a reading people where they enjoy the advantages of the press, and where the epitomes, if not larger works on European Science are circulated the case is somewhat different.

The treasures of the English are to a small extent transferred to the native languages. Owing to this no doubt and considering the facilities they have for further enriching the common dialects from stores of European learning the venerable missionaries at Serampore have seemed to disparage English studies for natives''³⁵

They attributed the lack of mental and intellectual development among the Tamils to their unacquaintance with English Education. They formed such an opinion about the Tamil people and their literature owing to several reasons. Although they recognized that Tamil was of great antiquity like Greek, Sanskrit, and Hebrew they had no opportunity of familiarizing themselves with Tamil literature of high quality or with men of learning or scholarship. Tamil scholars refrained from having any contact with the missionaries. It was also not possible for the missionaries to obtain manuscript copies of Tamil texts. It was only in course of time that they were able to gain some knowledge about Tamil Literature. Daniel Poor, for instance, was able to procure a copy of a Tamil Astronomical work only in 1829 after a period of thirteen years sojourn in Jaffna. It is interesting to learn that the person who sold the manuscript to him made

the request that the transaction should be kept a secret.³⁶ In 1835 Daniel Poor had the chance to study "Agatiar Padal" (அகத்தியர் பாடல்) about which he had a high opinion and expressed great appreciation of the work. While referring to this work he said:

"Last evening at my usual meeting in Santilipay I had Akuttiar's 30 songs sung. He is said to be one of the most learned if not the most so of the Tamil race. The credit of being the author of the Tamil language is ascribed to him. It is said that he is still alive in some distant country. According to report he is one span in height. I regret very much that I did not come into possession of his songs until very late, as several of them convey sentiments strictly in unison with the doctrines we preach".³⁷

Of special interest are the views of H. R. Hoisington Principal of the Batticotta Seminary (1836 — 1849) on Thirukural.

"Introduced today into the first class the Cural one of the most eminent moral poems of India. It contains the chief doctrines of the vedas..... This we design as the highest Tamil classic".³⁸

Although they became appreciative of the quality of Tamil literature after gaining some acquaintance with it, at the beginning of their career in Jaffna they had developed a strong prejudice on account of their ignorance and were strongly opposed to providing instructions in the medium of Tamil.

Western Culture and Science

In order to realize the objectives of their institution they made provision for teaching Western Culture and Science to their students. Until the mid-nineteenth century generally all the missionaries serving throughout the world were of the firm belief that the inculcation of Western Culture and science would facilitate the progress of evangelism. Although rationalism had its impact in the early nineteenth century the theories developed by Lyell and Darwin which could shake the foundations of Biblical cosmology had not extended much influence in Western Society. Lyell's Principles of Geology was published in 1833. "The Origins of Species" and "The Genealogy of man" by Charles Darwin were published respectively in 1859 and 1871. Before the ideas incorporated in these works had influenced Western thought it was believed by missionaries that Western Science would be a useful medium for serving the needs of Christian missionary enterprise. The American missionaries made the following observations about their expectations.

“ The light of erudition and science is always favourable to Christianity. It courts inquiry and the more it is examined the wider will it be disseminated”³⁹

At the seminary it was intended that the first year students would be taught Tamil and English Languages. Students would be taught Mathematics, Science and Western Culture in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th years. Although languages were not taught in Western Colleges in the first year the American missionaries strongly felt that the beginners should acquire competence to, write and comprehend the languages effectively. The curriculum which they prepared for the institution is as follows.

Studies: 1st year: Tamil poetry, select English authors translating English into Tamil and Tamil into English.

2nd year: Arithmetic, Geography, Chronology, and Abridged History.

3rd year: Rhetoric, Mathematics, Geography and Natural History.

4th year: Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Mineralogy.

5th year: Astronomy, General History and Logic.

6th year: Philosophy of the Mind, Evidences of Christianity Natural and Revealed Religion.⁴⁰

Tamil Studies

Although the missionaries were very keen in prosecuting this scheme of education it would appear that they had a concern for promoting studies relating to the Tamil language. Imparting to the Tamil youth a sound knowledge of the English language came first in the order of priorities in their scheme of education. The cultivation of Tamil studies came next in order of importance.

They made the following observations about the Tamil language.

“ To maintain any good degree of respect among the native inhabitants. it is necessary to understand their literature. The Tamil language like the Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek and etc. is an original and perfect language and is in itself highly worthy of cultivation”⁴¹

The earliest stations established abroad by the American missionaries were in the Tamil land. The American missionaries established themselves in Jaffna with the hope of evangelyzing the entire Tamil society including the one in South

India. It therefore became necessary for the missionaries to acquire a sound knowledge of the Tamil language. It was thought such an attainment would enable them to get acquainted with the people and would facilitate the process of evangelization. As it was indispensable for the missionaries to gain some knowledge of the culture, religion and heritage of the Tamils they were eager to learn the Tamil language in its spoken and literary forms.

Although they attached a great deal of importance to English education they were under the strong conviction that Christianity should be indigenized. They were inclined to foster the development of an indigeneous Christian literary tradition and a theology based on local cultural conditions.

They felt the need for raising a Christian elite well acquainted with and proficient in the Tamil language. They also made efforts to train men and women who could write and conduct discourses on Christianity in elegant Tamil. They openly expressed their feelings about their objectives in this matter very forthrightly

They observed:

It is common to find among Tamil people men who can read correctly, who understand to some extent the poetic language, and able perhaps to form a kind of artificial verse, who yet cannot write a single page of correct prose. Indeed with very few exceptions nothing is written in this "Iron Age". All agree in looking to their ancestors for books which were composed as they imagine under a kind of inspiration, and have a greater degree of sanctity from being quite unintelligible to the common people. One effect of this is that few books are read and fewer still understood. Those put into the hands of boys at school are so far above their comprehension that they learn the words without attaching the least meaning to them whatever to correct both these evils and to prepare the way for the sacred scriptures by forming a reading population" (an object of vast interest) the attention of many must be turned to writing intelligibly and forcibly in their own language.⁴²

They were of the opinion that the books in Tamil expounding the principles of Western Science should be made available to the public. For this purpose it was felt that persons competent for this task should be trained. They said

"Original native composition on account of the superior felicity of its style and idiom will be read when the production of a foreigner or a translation will be thrown aside. To raise up therefore and qualify a class

of native authors whose minds being enriched by science may be capable not only of embodying European ideas but of putting them into a handsome native dress must be rendering most important aid to the interests of learning and Christianity''⁴³

They undoubtedly had certain well defined objectives in formulating their scheme of higher education and although they anticipated some practical problems in its implementation they were of the conviction that their scheme would provide avenues for evangelization. They observed.

“ That all the students will be able to make great advances in most of those different branches is not supposed, but that many will thereby obtain an expansion of mind, the power of receiving and originating thought, which will not only free them from the shackles of superstition but enable to them to guide others also, is not only hoped but confidently believed ”⁴⁴

The American missionaries also planned to raise indigenous clergymen through their scheme of education. However they did not make provision for separate courses for church ministerial candidates and others. All had to follow one and the same course of study. It was anticipated that prospective candidates for ministry could be given further instruction in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Sanskrit and Hindu Astronomy.

The scheme of Education that was formulated in the plan for the college was substantially modified almost from the very beginning in response to environmental conditions in Jaffna and social needs. It was only by 1831 that the curricula for the courses attained a definite form. In course of time steps were taken to provide classes in certain subjects which were not included in the original scheme. Subjects like Hindu Astronomy and Hindu Mathematics began to occupy an important position in the courses of study.

Instruction in English accounted for about two thirds of the time allocated for studies while the rest of the time was taken for instruction in Tamil.

However, from the very beginning there was controversy about the medium of instruction. Although the parent society viz: Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was in support of the view that education should be in the medium of the native language, the missionaries established in Jaffna were strongly convinced that instruction should be

provided in the English language. By 1833 it was found that the students in Jaffna had developed a great interest in English education. Although missionaries espoused the cause of English education they wanted to cultivate Tamil Studies for two obvious reasons. The first was that they wanted to acquaint themselves with the principal texts in Tamil literature and the other was that they could command the respect of the local population only with a sound knowledge and understanding of the Tamil language and its literary and cultural tradition. The recommendations of the Colebrooke commission (1833) in matters relating to education provided an impetus to the cause of English education, and probably contributed to the neglect of Tamil studies by the missionaries and their students. The parent society in Boston did not extend full support to the policy adapted by the local missionaries in favour of English education. They desired that all subjects should be taught in the Tamil language as they were apprehensive that those who received instruction in English would be tempted to seek employment provided by the agencies of the Government. The local missionaries were therefore obliged to communicate with the mission headquarters regularly in defence of their stand point. This controversy became most acute when Rufus Anderson became the Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was of the view that those who received English Education would enter Government Service and would never be contended with employment under the establishments of the Missions with low rates of remuneration. He, therefore, insisted that at least a specified number of the students at the Seminary should be provided instruction in Tamil, In this context it may be mentioned here that the controversy regarding the medium of instruction was a principal cause for the closure of the Seminary in 1855. Rufus Anderson in his report recommending the closing of the Seminary wrote. "It has also tended to draw the most promising pupils from the village English Schools and unfit them in some respects to return and obtain a livelihood among their own people. By their Education they are so much elevated above the masses, that they feel unable to live on their income they would receive in the ordinary occupation of the country."⁴⁵

The Text Books Used At The Seminary

The books that were recommended for use at the Batticotta Seminary, provided an indication of the educational and religious background of the men who founded it and the values they wanted to inculcate among the young men who came under their guidance. The Bibliography prescribed by the university of Harvard was the main source of inspiration to these men.⁴⁶ A list of books prescribed for the Science course is incorporated in the Triennial Report of the

Seminary published in 1830. On the basis of the books that were used it could be claimed that the standard of education at the Seminary was comparable to that of contemporary European Universities. The Tamil texts taught at the Seminary were increased in numbers in course of time. As the missionaries gradually began to acquire an increasing knowledge of Tamil literature, the list of Tamil books were revised from time to time and new items were included in it.

In the original plan, Tamil studies as envisaged consisted of instruction on Tamil poetry, translation from English into Tamil and translation from Tamil into English. But during the first three years of the existence of the Seminary it appears that only translation was taught to the students.

In relation to the Tamil studies the Triennial Report of the Batticotta Seminary for 1823 makes reference to the study of translations only. The Tamil course consisted of the explanation of certain concepts and explanations in English and the translation of the English lectures into Tamil. The Third year students were given exercises in translation from English into Tamil. The second year students do not seem to have followed any course in Tamil. But by 1830 this situation had changed considerably. By that time a definite attempt was made to encourage the study of the most important works in Tamil - Literature. The Triennial report of 1830 provides a list of Tamil works that were taught at the Seminary and this suggests that the missionaries had by that time acquired a competence to learn and provide instruction on the themes of literary works. The following books are listed in that report.

“An abridgment in prose of Nannool, the standard Grammar of the poetic dialect, with an application of its principles in analyzing Auveiyar and Moothurai:-

Nannool itself accompanied with copious explanations and illustrations from standard authors.

Thiruvalluvar Cural a work on moral subjects. Some parts of Scanda Purana.

Tatwa Kattalai which treats of the constituent parts and functions of the human body and a native system of Arithmetic. The Arithmetic well deserves the student's attention though he may be acquainted with the European system. It contains many useful tables both in integers and fractions and some important rules in mensuration and other branches expressed in a laconic poetical manner by which they are easily retained in memory for practical purposes.”⁴⁷

The Triennial Report of 1833 says that the Examinations were conducted in Skanda Purana, Coorma Purana and Ramayana. The Triennial Report of 1839 says that the students in all the grades were given instruction on 'Nigandoo'.

Like other Protestant missionaries working in Jaffna, the American missionaries also had to encounter opposition from the Saivaites. The Saivaite scholars published books condemning the activities of the missionaries and the tenets of Christianity. Such polemical writings were studied by the students at the Seminary and the missionaries formulated their arguments to refute them. "Gnana Kummi" was the earliest among the tracts published by the Saivaites denouncing christianity and the evangelical work of the missionaries. It appears that this work was studied in detail at the Seminary.

In the eighteen forties the polemical tracts produced by the Saivaites were also included in the course of instruction. The missionaries who considered that a deep knowledge of Tamil and an analytical approach to the study of its literature was very vital, made efforts to teach the language and its literary tradition in accordance with the teaching methods developed in the West. However, in this attempt they encountered stubborn opposition from the students and native teachers,

The Triennial Report of 1830 says.

"It has from the beginning been considered an important object, to introduce a more rational method of teaching TAMIL, than that pursued in the Native schools and also to displace by works of real utility, those extravagant and immoral fictions of the poets which are studied by all here who make any pretensions to learning and which are held in high estimation by the people. It was at once evident however that no innovations could be effected without much patient and persevering effort. At first indeed it was necessary to make a compromise, and to proceed in some respects according to the Native system introducing the new course only in parts and by degrees; but continued effort has at length brought the department more under control."

Commenting on the traditional methods of learning Tamil

H. R. Hoisington (Principal 1835 — 1846) says.

"The experience of this term gives a decided testimony in favour of a general room for study, in which all the classes are brought together, and made to study silently. The custom is but six months old in the district and this is the only example of the country to which this is opposed, is to have but one room for study and recitation and for each and all to study with a loud voice.

The usual mode of study is merely to commit to memory words and phrases. Our present course while it does not lessen the ability to commit to memory to found, make study more strictly the business of the intellect, to make more thorough and independent scholar and at the same time to exert a most salutary influence on all as to habit of punctuality and regularity.⁴⁸

It was the objective of the missionaries to provide facilities for the study of science in the best possible manner as circumstances would permit. It is undeniable that the faith in traditional religious beliefs among the students who studied Puranic literature with Western Science was shaken. It is interesting to note that T. P. Hunt (Murugappah Sathasivam) who graduated from the Seminary in 1850 had his daughter's wedding solomanized on the eighth day after new moon (அட்டமி) considered traditionally as very inauspicious by the Hindus.

Rhetoric and Composition

Rhetoric and composition were accorded an important place in the curriculum of studies at the Batticotta Seminary. Although the Puranas were recited with explanatory comments at Hindu temples regularly, the Hindus had not cultivated the tradition of delivering discourses on selected themes with logical sequence and coherence.

As oratorical skill was an important requisite for those who were engaged in the task of preaching Christianity, special attention was paid to the cultivation of oratorical skill at the Seminary. They conducted regular classes on rhetoric and composition, and at the end of the course the candidates had to sit for an examination. The lectures delivered at the Seminary by the students after careful preparation and study were published in the "Morning star" and "The Missionary Herald" and were widely read in Jaffna and abroad. When the rival religious groups were engaged in controversies, rhetorics became one of their principal instruments.

The cultivation of the art of Tamil composition was one of the principal objectives of the inauguration of Tamil studies at the Seminary. The missionaries provided a very good training to their students to write accounts about subjects relating to Science Astronomy Religion and Geography. The essays written by the missionaries and the native teachers testify to the standard of excellence they had attained in the art of composition.

The curriculum and course of study at the Batticotta Seminary had the effect of producing a literary ferment in Jaffna society. There was an encounter

between the indigenous literary and cultural traditions with the educational thought and cultural values of the American missionaries which were inspired by Puritanism of the sixteenth century England.

The missionaries introduced into the local society some elements of the highly developed educational system of the Western world. Although the educational background of Jaffna was sound, the native scholars showed utmost reluctance in establishing contacts with missionaries. At the beginning therefore the missionaries could not perceive the antiquity and the high quality of the Tamil literary traditions. But in course of time they were able to gain some knowledge about these matters and became appreciative of them. Although they remained firm in their conviction that oriental religions were heathen, yet, they discovered vital facts about the oriental culture, art and Society. The science education provided at the Seminary had the effect of making the local students recognizing some of the fundamental weaknesses in their tradition.

The missionaries inaugurated a system of education which inculcated a scientific outlook and a spirit of inquiry among our people.

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THE VANNIYAR IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH INDIA

S. Pathmanathan

The Vanniyar, who form an important segment of the Tamil population in South India, are concentrated in the districts of Tanjore, Tirchinopoly, North Arcot, South Arcot and Chingleput where they form one of the three major divisions of the Hindu population.¹ Their numbers in Coimbatore, Salem and Pudukottai are considerable but in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu their distribution is relatively thin.

The Vanniyar, who were of diverse social origins, developed as a community of professional warriors during the medieval period when they were fully integrated with the Hindu social organization of the Tamil country. The expression Vanniyar was applied in the literary and epigraphic texts to designate not only the members of a particular caste or community but also the rank of a feudatory prince and the leader of an army.²

The Vanniyar caste consists of many sub-divisions such as the Agni, Pataiyācci, Paḷḷi, Kāvunṭan and Kūṭaikattī.³ Most of them being agricultural and manual labourers they have remained economically and socially backward until recent times. But with the impact of modernization they began to respond quickly to social and economic changes in their environment. A strong community consciousness and an increasing awareness of their strength as symbolised by the formation of a political party of their own - the Toilers party - are characteristic trends in their contemporary development.

Traditional accounts of the origins of the Vanniyar

The traditions of the origins and development of the Vanniyar are recorded in three medieval Tamil texts, the Cilai elupathu the Kallātam and the Vanniyarpuraṇam.⁴ Tradition attributes the first of these works to Kampan while the last one is said to have been written on the request of a certain Sundara Pāṇḍya, a ruler of Madurai.⁵ However, the style and contents of these texts suggest a later date, in all probability the Vijayanagara period. They were produced at a time when the institution of caste had become crystallized and caste consciousness had become acute in society. Like other works of a similar nature these texts were written for the purpose of legitimizing the claims of the Vanniyar for privileges, rank and high social status.

As they are poetical works recording origin myths, traditional accounts and some valuable historical information they have to be studied with caution and the information obtained from them should be handled with utmost care.

Traditions recorded in literature represent the Vanniyar as a caste of professional warriors and this claim receives some confirmation from epigraphic evidence. They are generally described in literature as Kshatriyas of the lineage of the Hindu God Agni. The *Kallāṭam*, which contains the earliest reference to the Vanniyar, describes them as warriors attached to the four units of the army and attributes to them a mythical origin and royal status. In this work they are said to have been transformed into human beings from twelve young boars and endowed with the sceptre for ruling the land and administering the 'laws'.⁶ It is thus clear that the author of the *Kallāṭam* believed that the Vanniyar were a class of professional warriors who had acquired military and administrative functions as in the case of the Kshatriyas.

The *Cilai eḷupatu*, which describes poetically their martial characteristics, armour and cavalry, asserts that the Vanniyar were of the Campukulam and traces their origin from the sacrificial fires of Campu.⁷ This text incidentally also mentions that the Vanniyar were of Pallava descent and such a description is of considerable significance in investigating the origins and development of the Vanniyar as a community of warriors in the South Indian historical context.

Another text, the *Vanniyarṣurāṇam*, gives a similar but more elaborate description of the origins of the Vanniyar. Its account may be summarized as follows:

The Vanniyar emerged when Vātāpi, son of Kācipan, who had acquired great prowess through penances, was ruling the world committing grave injustices. When the sage Campu dropped the *Cenkalunīr* flower given to him by Siva into the sacrificial fire Rudra Vanniyar appeared on a horse, accompanied by thousands of warriors, armed with such weapons as the bow, spear, sword and the trident. On the instructions of the sage they vanquished Vātāpi and delivered the land from his tyranny⁸.

The foregoing account is a legend and it cannot be cited as evidence in any historical reconstruction. In traditional Hindu Society when communities or groups of people, which had once been insignificant, rise to positions of high rank and social status their claims to such positions had to be legitimized in accordance with traditional norms. As the claims to high status and rank were based on considerations of birth, and when the origins were obscure, and as there was no tradition of any historical investigation of the social origins

of communities, origin myths became the most convenient and effective instruments of legitimation. Such myths were to be found in abundance in the vast literature of India. As the Vanniyar had acquired the status of warriors in medieval Tamil society the authors of the literary compositions which sought to glorify and extoll their prowess and attainments adopted the origin myths of the Kshatriyas, the warriors of North India. Consequently the Vanniyar were represented as a community sprung from the lineage of Agni in some of the Tamil texts. It may be recalled here that tradition claims that the Rajputs had their origins in the sacrificial fires at Mt. Abu.

There is, however, no unanimity in Tamil literary traditions about the origins of the Vanniyar. All texts which contain references or descriptions about them attribute to them a mythological origin: the *Kallāṭam* traces their descent from the boar while the other works trace their origin to the fire. This contradiction in the tradition makes it evident that the claim that the Vanniyar were kshatriyas of the Agnikula has no historical foundation. All the texts concerning the Vanniyar are from the Cōḷa period onwards and were written at a time when the Vanniyar had emerged as a caste of professional warriors and when some of their leaders had even attained the rank of feudatory or independent princes. It may be recalled here that the *Cilai eḷupatu* mentions that the Vanniyar possessed the royal dignity and were entitled to the paraphernalia of royalty.⁹ The *Vanniyarpūrāṇam* is probably more accurate in asserting that they belonged to the families of feudatory chieftains.¹⁰

The derivation of the word Vanniyar could be explained in two ways. The first and the traditional one is that it is a derivative from Vanni which is a Tamilised form of the Sanskrit expression Vahni meaning fire. Although such an explanation is consistent with the traditional accounts of the origins of the vanniyar as recorded in Tamil literature it will not help us to trace their social origins as it is based on a legend. The traditions of the fire - origin of the Vanniyar by itself cannot be an evidence of any ethnic affinity between the Rajputs and the Vanniyar. Besides, there are no traditions among the Vanniyar which claim that they are the descendants of Rajputs who had migrated to the Tamil country.

The second and the more plausible explanation of the word is that it is the Tamilised form of Vanya, the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tamil word *Kāṭavan* meaning an inhabitant of a jungle tract. The Pallavas of Kanchi and the feudal chieftains who ruled from Kanchi from about the twelfth century and claimed Pallava descent were referred to as *Kāṭavar*.¹¹ The Pallava kings had the epithet *Kāṭavarkōn*, 'the king of the people of the forest'. They were so described, presumably, on account of the fact that their

realm corresponded to *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam*, which in ancient times was covered with jungle. Traditions recorded in ancient Tamil poetical works, the *Paṭṭinappālai* in particular suggest that *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam* was inhabited by pastoral communities and jungle tribes and credit the Chola king *Karikālan* with having cleared forests, extended arable lands and established settlements in that region.¹² These traditions are partially corroborated by some of the accounts preserved in the Mackenzie Collection. The 'Ancient History of *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam*' in that collection may be summarized as follows:

Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam was originally a vast forest inhabited by wild beasts and primitive tribes. Subsequently the Kurumpar came from the *Karnāṭaka* country, established a kingdom, divided the land into twenty four units called *Kōṭṭam* and set up fortifications. Thereafter, the land acquired the name *Kurumpar bhūmi*. The Kurumpar also promoted commerce between their land and *Kāvēri ppaṭṭinam*. The Kurumpar were shepherds, weavers, lime sellers and traders. In course of time various kings of civilized countries made inroads into *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam* and eventually the Chola king of *Tanjore* conquered the land after a protracted struggle.

The foregoing brief account about the physiography and ethnography of *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam* in ancient times is basically consistent with the impressions formed on the basis of references in ancient Tamil texts. It was a land covered with extensive jungle tracts and was included in the category of land called *mullai* one of the five broad physiographic units into which the Tamil country was traditionally divided. Moreover, this extensive tract of land was occupied by pastoral communities such as the *Mullaiyar*, *Potumar*, *Anḍar*, *Āyar* and *Itaiyar* who were later integrated more effectively with the Tamil population of the riverine plains as a result of the conjunction of political and military events and the assimilative agencies of the Hindu cultural tradition.¹⁴

Since the *Vanniyar* are concentrated in the districts which were included in medieval *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam* and because of the fact that most of the chieftains called *Vanniyar* were from that region it could be inferred that the *Vanniyar* developed as a distinctive social group in that region. This is consistent with the explanation that the word *Vānniyar* is derived from *Vanya*, the Sanskrit equivalent of *kāṭavan*. As noticed earlier, only the rulers of *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam*, the *Pallavas* of *Kanchi* and the *kāṭava* chieftains who claimed *Pallava* descent, had the epithets *kāṭavan* and *kāṭavarkon* which signified their authority over the land covered by

jungle tracts and the people occupying them. It is relevant to consider here the claim made in the Cilai e_lupathu that the Pallavar and Malayamannar were Vanniyar.

It may be suggested that the Vanniyar were originally a group of pastoral communities confined to the forest tracts in the northern part of the Tamil country. The transformation of the Vanniyar from their original status of shepherds and hunters into a community of professional warriors must have been a process connected with the development of large and powerful kingdoms in Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam and Cholamaṇṭalam and the assimilative character of Hindu social organization and cultural tradition. They probably took to military service in considerable numbers in the Pallava kingdom and developed as a community of professional warriors with a tradition of chivalry and became prominent under the Cholas and developed the military system they inherited from the Pallavas.

The Vanniyar in the Chola Kingdom

The earliest epigraphic notices on the Vanniyar are from the period of the Cholas. In the region of Rajendra II (1052-1064) a certain Vanniya Revan is said to have joined the Chalukya ruler in his war against the Cholas but Rajendra Claims to have defeated him along with many Chalukya feudatories.¹⁵ The precise nature of the relationship between Revan and the Chalukyas of Kalyāṇi is not known. He may have been a feudatory or a warrior in the service of the Chalukyas. It could even be surmised that he was a Bāṇa or Vaidumba princeling who had sought and obtained protection under the rulers of Kalyāṇi.

An inscription from Kāṇcipuram, engraved during the time of Rājarāja II (1163-1178) mentions a unit of land called Vanniyaparru. It records a resolution of the assembly of the nāṭṭavar of Jayaṅkoṇṭa Cōlamanṭalam remitting a part of the kaṭamai of lands held as Devadāna, Paḷḷiccantam Akarapparru, Māṭapparam, Jīvitapparru, paṭaipparru and Vanniyaparru.¹⁶ What is referred to here as Vanniyaparru is apparently a unit of land held on service tenure. The remuneration for royal service under the imperial Cholas was mostly in the form of land assignments. Such assignments for military service were known variously as Paṭaipparru, Vīrabhoga and Vanniyaparru.¹⁷ The last of these was apparently a unit of land granted by the king to a regiment of Vanniyar in return for military service. The evidence of this inscription suggests that there were many landholdings

under the Vanniyar, in *Toṅṭaimaṅṭalam*, but their number and extent cannot be ascertained unless further evidence is brought to light.

In the Chola kingdom three lines of feudatory chieftains, namely the Malayamān chiefs of Malayamānāṭu otherwise called Jananātha Valanāṭu, the Gangas of Paṅkaḷanāṭu and the Cāmpuvarāyar of Paṭaiviṭu appear to have borne the epithet Vanniya(r)nāyan. All the principalities under these chieftains were in *Toṅṭaimaṅṭalam*. The Malayamān chiefs, the most important among them, ruled over Malayamānāṭu from the reign of Kulottunga I (1070 - 1122) onwards.¹⁸ There were two branches of the Malayamān family one of which ruled over a part of Malayamānāṭu from Kiḷiyūr while the other branch which was settled at Āṭaiyūr, held the other part of the same principality.

The chiefs of Malayamānāṭu are known to have had the epithets Malayamān, Periya uṭaiyān, Cētiyarāyan and Vāṇakovaraiyan.¹⁹ During the reigns of Rājādhirāja II (1153 - 1178) and Kulottunga III they had the additional epithet Vanniya(r)nāyan. Rājarāja Cētiyarāyan otherwise called Irāiyūran Carṛukkaṭātān Vanniya(r)nāyan is known from the inscriptions of the 6th year of Rājādhirāja.²⁰ Raman Poṛkuṭaṅkuṭuttān otherwise called Vanniya Devendra Malayamān had succeeded him by the 10th year of Rājādhirāja.²¹

During the early years of Kulottunga III the chieftain who ruled over Malayamānāṭu from Kiḷiyūr was Rājarāja Kōvalrāyan Vanniya(r)nāyan.²² This chief who continued to be in authority until at least A. D. 1200 had the additional epithet Palavāyudha Vallabha "Proficient in the use of many weapons".²³ He was a son of Rājarāja Cētiyarāyan, who was a general and feudatory of Rājādhirāja II.²⁴ Another general and feudatory of Rājādhirāja was Narasimhavarman Karikālacōḷan, the Malayamān of Āṭaiyūr, who is described in inscriptions as Vanniya(m)akkaḷnāyan.²⁵ Evidently he was one of the generals sent by the Chola government to support the Pāṇḍya prince Kulasekhara in his wars against the armies of Parākramabāhu I.²⁶

A Ganga chief of Paṅkaḷanāṭu, Kūttāṭuntēvan Prthivīgangan is described as Vanniya(m)ātevan in a few epigraphs from Tiruvaṅṅamālai. An inscription from Kappalūr attests that he had the additional epithet Āṇaikāṭṭina, "the one who tied the elephant", Prthivīgangan and his son, Cōḷendraciṅka Prthivīgangan otherwise called Alakiya Cōḷan were contemporaries of Kulottunga III.²⁸

The Cāmpuvarāyar chiefs who claimed Pallava descent also appear to have borne the epithet Vanniya(r)nāyan. An epigraphic record of the 38th year of

Kulottunga III refers to *Cenēṇi Ammaiyan Cāmpuvarāyan* as a *Vanniya(r)nāyan*.²⁹ He may, provisionally, be identified with *Cenkeṇi Ammaiyan* otherwise called *Vikramacōḷa Cāmpuvarāyan*, an ally of *Narasimhavarman Karikālacōḷa Cāmpuvarāyan*, who was the *Malayamān* of *Āṭaiyūrnāṭu*.³⁰

The epithet *Vanniya(r)nāyan*, a variant of which was *Vanniyarmakkaḷnāyan* may be defined as one that denoted a dignitary who was either a general who had regiments of *Vanniyar* under his charge or a chief of the people called *Vanniyar*. During the period of the imperial Cholas the word *Vanniyar* appears to have acquired two meanings. Firstly, it denoted a particular group of people, a community, as suggested by the expression *Vanniyar makkaḷ*. Secondly it signified the rank of a feudatory chieftain as suggested by an inscription of the reign of *Kulottunga III*, which records a compact between two *Malayamans* of *Kiḷiyūr*, *Rājārāja Cētiyarayan* and *Alakiyacōḷan Ākārācūran*. This epigraphic record testifies that they agreed to perform jointly and in collaboration the *irājakāriyam*, "the service for the king", and the service for the *Vanniyar*. The *Vanniyar* was evidently a dignitary of a higher rank than that held by the two chieftains referred to in the inscription and one who could command their allegiance and service.³¹

Some of the *Vanniyar* apparently had close connections with the *Veḷaikkāṟar*. Several epigraphs from *Tirukkōyilūr* record the vow of loyalty taken by several *Veḷaikkāṟar* to *Vanniyaranāyan Rājārāja Cētiyarāyan*, the *Malayamān* of *Kiḷiyūr*.³² The *Veḷaikkāṟar* pledged individually and in some cases jointly to serve and defend him even at the cost of their lives and to perish with him in the event of his death. Besides, they also promised that they would never accept service under any other master. Such instances of a very high sense of personal loyalty and dedicated service are perhaps peculiar to this period in the history of South India. The *Veḷaikkāṟar* in the service of these chieftains were a sort of retainers displaying some of the characteristics of the "household warriors" of the European feudal society.

Inscriptions testify that some of the *malayamans* were *Veḷaikkāṟar*. *Cētiyarāyan Malayamān*, *Kōvalṟāya malayamān kiḷiyūran* and *Palavāyudha Vallabha Malayamān* are described as *Veḷaikkāṟar* in the service of *Irāiyūran Cētiyarāyan Vanniyanāyan* of *Kiḷiyūr*, a feudatory of *Rājādhirāja II*.³³ Evidently the *Malayamān* family of chiefs belonged to the group of *Veḷaikkāṟar*. As the *Malayamān* chiefs were both *Vanniyar* and *Veḷaikkāṟar* it could be inferred that some of the *Veḷaikkāṟar* were *Vanniyar*. Such an impression gains support from the text of an inscription which describes a *Veḷaikkāṟar*

of Rājarāja Cētiyarān as Vanniyanācci³⁴ As Vanniyanācci is a feminine form of Vanniyanāyan one who had the epithet Vanniyanāyan could be a Vellaikkāran. The Chola feudatories called Vanniya(r)nāyan exercised authority over certain principalities which were for the most part contiguous, on a hereditary basis. Some of them held sway over large territorial divisions and had considerable power and influence. The Malayamān Cētiyarāyan, for instance, had under his jurisdiction the divisions of Malayamānāṭu, Vāṇakōppāṭināṭu, Ceṅkunrānāṭu and Uṭaikkāṭṭuṇaṭu.³⁵ These chieftains maintained armies of their own and as part of their obligations presumably supplied their Chola overlord with a certain number of troops whenever necessity arose. Many of them served as generals in the armies of the Cholas and were honoured for their valour and heroic feats in war. Epithets such as, ānaikaṭṭina, "the one who tied the elephant", Caṛṛukkuṭṭātān "the one who does not yield", and Palavāyudha Vallabha, "the one who is proficient in the use of many weapons" were presumably conferred on them by the Chola kings³⁶

Almost all the Vanniyar chiefs like all other Chola feudatories had their names prefixed with either an epithet or a consecration name of one of the Chola kings as a mark of respect and loyalty to their suzerain. The Malayamān Iṭaiyūran Vanniyanāyan was otherwise called Rājarāja Cētiyarāyan.³⁷ His son Malayamān Kōvlarāyan also had the same name.³⁸ Amattālvān, the Malayamān of Aṭaiyūr during the reigns of Rājādhirāja II and Kulottunga III had the epithet Karikālacōlan.³⁹ The son of Prthivīgangan of Paṅkaḷanāṭu, who was a contemporary of Kulottunga III, was called Alakiyacōlan.⁴⁰ The Campurāyar chiefs of the time of Rājādhirāja II and his successors had such names as Rājanārāyaṇa and Vikrama Chola prefixed to their own ones.⁴¹

In the reign of Rājādhirāja, his Vannaiyar feudatories, the Malayamān and Cāmpuvarāyar chiefs in particular exercised authority over their respective principalities with little interference from their overlord and yet remained loyal to him and supported the Chola king in his wars. During the early years of his vigorous and warlike successor, Kulottunga III, the same spirit of harmony and close co-operation characterized the relations between the Chola king and his feudatories. But, towards the end of his long reign Kulottunga had become enfeebled by age and his government which had exhausted its resources was no longer capable of sustaining its authority over rebellious and overweening vassals.

A notable development in the reign of Kulottunga III was the formation of alliances and counter alliances among his feudatories some of whom were Vanniyar chiefs. The Malayamān of Ālayn̄r, Karikāla cōlan, Vikrama Cōla Cāmpuvarāyan otherwise called Cen̄kēni Ammaiappan and the Atikaimān Viṭukāṭaḷakiya cōlan had contracted an alliance.⁴² One of the terms of their agreement was that the Atikaimān should refrain from contracting any alliance with certain other chiefs including Sīyagangan. Another epigraph, engraved in the 28th year of Kulottunga, records an agreement between two Malayaman chiefs of Kiliyū, Iraiyūran Periyauṭaiyān otherwise called Rājarāja Cetiyaarāyan and Aḷakiyanāyan Ākāracūran. Each of the two chiefs pledged to support and defend the other with all the cavalry and infantry under his command. For his part, Ākāracūran promised to refrain from having any dealings with Vānakovaraiyan and inform his ally of any overtures made to him by that chief. Besides, they decided that they should discharge their obligations to the king and should jointly extend support to the Vanniyar. They also agreed that each of them should retain all lands held by them until the 28th year of their sazerain but all territories acquired thereafter should be divided into equal shares between them.⁴³

The tone and contents of this inscription suggest that the Chola kingdom had reached an advanced state of disintegration. The compacts among feudatories made without any reference to the Chola king presupposes that royal authority over the feudatory principalities had altogether ceased to be effective. Yet, the fact that two chieftains referred to in the inscription took care to profess loyalty and allegiance to the Chola king provide some indication of the fact that the prestige of the Chola dynasty was still a factor to be reckoned with even in Tonṭaimanṭalam.

The alliances such as the one entered into between the two Malayan chiefs were primarily local arrangements for defence and acquisition of territories and were designed against rival chieftains. The rivalries and feuds among local chieftains threatened to disrupt the Chola kingdom and undermine the effectiveness of the instruments and agencies of Chola dyanastic authority. The Chola monarchy was no longer capable of assembling the forces of its feudatories for purposes of defence. The formidable military power which it once possessed was now fragmented and distributed among feudatory chieftains entangled in local conflicts. It was at this stage in the erosion of Chola dynastic power that Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya delivered his blows against the Chola monarchy from which it never really recovered.

The Pāṇḍya invasion had the effect of advancing further the process of disintegration within the Chola kingdom where feudatory princes became openly defiant and hostile towards the Chola king and they no longer felt the need to honour their obligations to him. In such a situation the compacts made earlier among local chieftains proved to be very useful and a weak Chola king could not reduce to submission a combination of many feudatory princes.

Most of the Chola feudatories were allies and during the time of Rājārāja III their ties were further cemented by matrimonial alliances. The Cāmpuvarāyar were related to the Kāṭava chiefs and soon came under the influence of the rebellious and aggressive Kāṭava Kōpperuñcin̄kan.⁴⁴ The Malayamān Cēiyarāyan who continued to be loyal to Rājārāja was won over by the Kāṭava chief whose daughter was married to the Malayamān.⁴⁵ The Bāṇa chief was already hostile to Rājārāja.⁴⁶ The turbulence of these chiefs may be said to have contributed in some measure to the fall of the Chola monarchy and the Pāṇḍya conquest of the Chola dominions.

The Pāṇḍya power attained imperial dimensions after the extensive conquests of Jaṭavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (1251 - 1268). He conquered Cōla maṇṭalam and Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam and consolidated his power in those regions during the early years of his reign. The Vanniyar chiefs in the northern part of the Tamil country presumably became Pāṇḍya feudatories during the mid-thirteenth century but our knowledge about the relationship that existed between these chieftains and the suzerian power during the period of Pāṇḍya ascendancy is extremely meagre.

A Sri Lankan Pali text, the Upāsaka janālaṅkāra mentions that a certain Codaganga, one of the Pāṇḍya feudatories, was a Vaññya Sāmanata.⁴⁷ He is said to have provided support and maintenance to Buddhist monks who had fled to the Tamil country during the confusion which followed Māgha's conquest of the island in 1215. An epigraph of the 10th year of Maravarman Kulasekhara (1268 - 1310) from Mogalur in the Tirukkōyilūr Taluk mentions of a certain Pichchan Vanniyaperumāḷ.⁴⁸ The provenance of this inscription would suggest that this individual was connected to the Malayaman family of chieftains who held the rank of Vanniyar during the period of Chola supremacy.

There are some incidental references to Vanniyar soldiers serving in the ranks of the Pāṇḍya armies during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The Pāṇḍya records of this period mention the Perumpaṭai, a unit of the Pāṇḍya army, which was sometimes permanently stationed at certain localities. It was a com-

posite unit like the *Veḷaikkārar* and evidently included such groups as the *Vanniya Vaṭṭam*, Canarese, Telugus, *Āriyar*, *Kaḷḷar*, *Villikaḷ* (bowmen) and the *Uṭṭānkūṭṭam* (*Sahavāsis*).⁴⁹ As the epigraph which enumerates these groups, mentions of the *Vanniyar* before others it may be assumed that they formed an important element in the *Pāṇḍya* armies.

The employment of the *Vanniyar* for military service under the *Pāṇḍyas* seems to have led to their settlements in the *Pāṇḍya* kingdom. Such settlements were to be found during the period of the *Madurai Sultanate* in the fourteenth century. An inscription from *Kundādevi* near *Devakotta* testifies that there were several *Vanniyar* residents in the country.⁵⁰

The Vijayanagara Conquest and the decline of Vanniyar power

The details pertaining to the *Vanniyar* during the *Vijayanagara* period are mostly obscure and the scanty information obtained from stray references in inscriptions and traditional accounts presents a rather confused outline of their history. It would appear that the *Vanniyar* chieftains of *Tonṭaimaṅṭalam* were reduced to submission by the kings of *Vijayanagara* during the late fourteenth century and that their principalities were incorporated into the fabric of the *Vijayanagara* state as feudatory provinces. The local chieftains continued to retain their traditional ranks and privileges and those among them who proved to be loyal were suitably rewarded and became the trusted lieutenants and agents of the *Karnāṭaka* rulers. Yet, as in the case of most feudatory princes, the *Vanniyar* tended to disregard the claims of their suzerain whenever centrifugal forces gathered momentum within the *Vijayanagara* state. It would appear that, in such circumstances, the resistance of local rulers had to be put down with considerable difficulty.

The chieftaincies of the *Vanniyar* in *Tonṭaimaṅṭalam* came under the influence of *Vijayanagara* during the latter part of the fourteenth century. The *Madhurāvijayam* asserts that prince *Kampana* was instructed by his father to subdue the 'Vanni kings' during the course of his expedition to the Tamil country. The *Cāmpuvarāyar* of *Paṭṭaivīṭu* and the *Kāṭava* chieftains were among those chieftains who were defeated by *Kampana* around 1365 and consequently they came under *Vijayanagara* overlordship while retaining their territorial possessions and traditional ranks almost unimpaired. Inscriptions testify that feudatory chieftains styled *Vanniyar* continued to exercise authority in some parts of the Tamil country during the *Vijayanagara* period. One such chieftain was *Vanniyānār Aṭaikkalaṅkāttār* otherwise called *Vicayālaya tēvar*, who is said to have granted a piece of land to the *Ūravar*

(residents) of Talayānilai and Parali. There are also epigraphic references to Pradhāni Vanniyar, who were presumably local chieftains or warriors serving as agents of the Vijayanagara government.

The Vijayanagara government, however, could not always count on the loyalty and support of feudatories in the Tamil country. The Vanniyar, as in the case of most other feudatory chieftains, were animated by a strong spirit of local independence and sought to free themselves from their obligations to the suzerain whenever the latter's prestige and power suffered a sharp decline. Succession disputes and the disloyalty of provincial governors often tended to aggravate political instability at the Vijayanagara capital. Under circumstances when central control cannot be maintained over the southern provinces the feudatories ignored the claims of their suzerain and asserted their independence.

The Vanniyar would appear to have been among the most refractory of such chieftains and it became necessary for the Vijayanagara government to make repeated and concerted efforts to suppress them as suggested by the following account:

Anciently the curumbar ruled in this country; Adondai Cholan came from Tanjore, destroyed them; and having acquired the title of Adondai Charkravartti he established in their place the Kondai katti Vellazhar. In those days the Vanniar, or Palli people by Permission of the ruler of the country built this fort for themselves, as their own. But they paid tribute to the sovereigns of Andhra, Carnata, and Dravida countries. No written account of their posterity has survived. In course of time Canda Rayen and Chetu rayen came to the government. Being skilful men they built their old fort very strongly.

While ruling with considerable power, they rejected all claims of customary tribute from superior kings. They were both illustrious; but candavan rayen was the more illustrious of the two. He fixed alarming stations on eminences at certain distances, around his capitl. There was no other king like him. When the rayer came to invade him, as the drums were beaten at different hill stations, the rayer did not know in which the chief was, and at length the latter, watching his opportunity, fell on the rayer's forces, and made greater slaughter. The rayer's general, being greatly incensed came with a greater force: and during four months, an uncertain war was carried on; the chief's place not being known; while, night and day he harassed the troops of the invader. The rayer now desisted from open

war; intending to effect his object indirectly. Candavan Rayen then greatly vexed the agriculturists that Adondai Chakravarthi had placed in the land. The Vellazhar in consequence arose in a body, and went to Krishna Rayer who sent the Wiyalavar (the people of the Poligar) against Candava. The Poligar being beaten retreated, and sent spies to inspect the fortress, that he might discover how to overcome Candava.'

Candava is said to have been poisoned by one of his dancing girls who was bribed heavily by his enemies. His brother, Chetu Rayen, retaliated and fought bitterly for twenty - eight days against the armies of the Rāya but eventually his citadel fell and became a dependency of Vijayanagara.⁵¹

The foregoing account deserves special attention as it records some historical information, not found elsewhere, about two Vanniyar chieftains, Candavarayan and Chetu rayan, who defied the authority of the Vijayanagara government. They are said to have been the contemporaries of Krishna (deva) Raya who eventually suppressed their rebellion and re-established Vijayanagara overlordship over their principality. Besides, the account presupposes that these chieftains had exercised authority over a part of *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam*. Indeed, it was in that part of the Tamil country that principalities subject to chieftains styled Vanniyar had existed since the late Chola period. Moreover, this account suggests that the community of Vanniyar, whom it identifies with the *paḷḷi* people, were natives of *Toṇṭaimaṇṭalam* where they had lived along with other communities from ancient times. The tradition that the Vanniyar had been tributary to the Andhra, Karnataka and Dravida kings at different times is also noteworthy. It may be mentioned here that the Vanniyar chieftains had been tributary to the Chola, Hoysala and Vijayanagara kings at different times. The probable accuracy of the details in the account of Candavarayan and Cheturayan is suggested by the fact that they are consistent with the impressions about the Vanniyar gained from other sources.

The subjugation of the recalcitrant Vanniyar chieftains appears to have been considered as a remarkable achievement by the Vijayanagara rulers and care was taken by court officials to record it conventionally in the inscrip-tional preambles. In many inscriptions the Vijayanagara king is described as "the one who took the heads of the Vanniyar of the eighteen districts".⁵²

Some of the Vijayanagara feudatories in the Tamil country also claimed in their inscriptions to have punished "the Vanni kings". The *Cūraikkuṭi* chiefs were among those who claimed to have vanquished the Vanniyar. In an ins-cription of the reign *Achutarāya, Vicayālaya tēvar* otherwise called

Cūraikkuṭi aracu paḷḷikonṭa perumāḷ claims to have defeated and driven away the eighteen Vanniyar.⁵³ His son, Acchutappa Vicayālayatēvar, also made the same claims⁵⁴ In a record from Ālaṅkuṭi in Tiruvarāṅkuḷam, Tirumalarācappallavārāyar, the chief of Aḷuntūr is said to have destroyed the eighteen Vanniyar..⁵⁵

The Setupatis of Ramnad are known to have had the epithet 'Corimuttu Vanniya cūriyan.' Besides, in their inscriptions they also claim to have crushed the refractory Vanniyar.⁵⁶ This claim, however, does not seem to have any historical foundation. During the Vijayanagara period it had become conventional even among the feudatories to incorporate in their prasastis the claims of the early Vijayanagara rulers, which of course had some historical basis.

There are some incidental references to the community of Vanniyar in Vijayanagara inscriptions which testify that they were an important group in society in respect of both numbers and economic functions. They are referred to in relation to matters concerning revenue and local protests against the extortions of government officials and land holders. The Vanniyar were among the castes which paid the communal tax (inavari).⁵⁷ An epigraph records that the Iṭaṅkai residents of the villages around Chandragiri together with the Vanniyar consented to a portion of the taxes collected at Tiruvalliyātāyam being paid to the temple.⁵⁸

In some inscriptions of the fifteenth century which record the proceedings of local protest movements against unjust exactions by government officials and tenure holders the Vanniyar are associated with the government officers and the Brāhmana and Veḷḷāḷa landholders. The extract of the relevant portions of these inscriptions as summarized by Noburu Karashima and Y. Subbarayalu runs:

- (i) "We, the people belonging to Valangai 98 and Idāngai 98 of Valudilampatṭu Uchāvadi, assembled in this temple in full strength and let the following be engraved on the wall of the said temple"
- (ii) "In this maṅḍalam (Valudilampatṭu), even if the Uchāvadi pradāli (the local Vijayanagar governor), Vanniyar (military people) and jīvita-kkārar (holders of official tenure) coerce us or the brāhmaṇ and Veḷḷāḷa kāṇiyāḷar (Holders of kani right) try to oppress us in collusion with the irājagaratṭār (government officers), we shall never submit to such oppression."

- (iii) ' If there appears any single person among us who helps the intruders, betray us, violates the grant given by Chikkarasar, or destroys the (current) measuring rod, we shall assemble as of today and enquire into it''
- (iv) ''Among those who were born in this mandalam, no one should write accounts (for the government), let others write the accounts or collude with the government officers and jīvitakkārars. If there appears one such person, we shall degrade him in the caste hierarchy.''59

In the foregoing account the Vanniyar are classed along with 'the provincial governor', Uchavadi pradhāni, the irajakarattār or government officials, the jīvitakkārar or holders of official tenure and the Kāniyālar generally described as the holders of Kāni right. All these groups of people are accused of unjust conduct and are said to have collaborated in coercing the Valangai and Idangai communities to confirm to their decisions. As the exactions proved to be intolerable the communities which were subject to oppression responded with a stern disapproval and decided on a course of non co-operation against the government officials and the landholders who collaborated with them.

Although the inscriptions concerned do not specify in which capacity the Vanniyar were involved in the process, the fact that they are accused along with others of exercising coercive methods and the consideration that they were usually associated with the military profession in earlier times suggest that they were engaged in military functions. Such an explanation presupposes that Vanniyar soldiers were engaged for military service in some parts of the Tamil country during the Vijayanagara period. The movement of the Vanniyar from Tontai-mantalam into the districts of Cholamandalam which had commenced earlier, under the Cholas, seems to have continued with considerable intensity during the centuries that followed the Vijayanagara conquest of the Tamil country.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Reference may be made to the following works: H. A. Stuart, *Madras District Gazetteers: North Arcot*, Vol. II, p. 21; F. Cox, *Madras District Manuals: North Arcot* (Madras, 1895), p. 236; *The Chingleput Late Madras District: A Manual* (Madras, 1879), p. 138; Lewis Moore, *A Manual of the Trichinopoly District* (Madras, 1875), p. 102; *Madras District Gazetteers - Tanjore* (Madras, 1906), pp 82 - 83; F. A. Nicholson, *Manual of the Coimbatore District* (Madras 1877), pp. 51, 61; *A Manual of the Pudukottai State* (Pudukottai, 1921), p. 211; J. B. B. Gribble, *A Manual of the District of Cuddapah in the presidency of Madras* (Madras, 1875).
2. *Madras Tamil Lexicon*.
3. F. A. Nicholson observes: 'The Padaiyachi, to whose name Palli is some times prefixed, was probably a soldier and under the Chola kings of Kongu the soldiers of Kongu were Vettuar, who, equally with the Padiyachis and Pallis are now called Goundens, and are probably equally entitled to be called Vanniyar.' see *Manual of the Coimbatore District*, p. 61.
4. *Cilai elupatu* ed. A. Subramanya Nayakar (Madras, 1915); *Vanniyarpuranam* ed. Ponnambalaguru (Tiruppati, 1905).
5. According to the pāyiram, introductory stanzas the author is said to have undertaken the task of writing this treatise on the request made to him by a certain Cuntara Pāṇṭiyan that the account of the Vanniyar should be written in the literary form of a purāṇam.
6. *Kallātam* ed P. V. Comacuntaranār (Madras, 1963), V. 37.
7. The *Cilai elupatu* describes the Vanniyar as Campu Kōttira aracar, 'Kings of the lineage of Campu, Paṭaitunaittalaivar, 'leaders of allied armies', Malayannar, Kunravar and Pallavar. This description seems to be based on an authentic tradition. The expression campu kottira aracar apparently refers to the Cāmpuvarayar chieftains who evidently claimed descent from Campu as suggested by the first part of their family name Campuva which means the descendant of Campu. It would appear that the Malayamans are referred to in this text as Malayamannar. The Kāṭava chieftains who claimed Pallava descent could also be described as Vanniyar. The description of the Vanniyar as Paṭaitunaittalaivar is a most appropriate one when we consider the fact that they had in fact been serving as military leaders in

their capacity as subordinate allies under the Cholas and the rulers of Vijayanagara.

8. Vanniyar purānam: Vanniya rājākkal Urpatticarukkam
9. Cilai Eḷupatu, V. 7
10. They are described as Vēntar upakula Vanniyar which expression may be explained as one which denotes princely families of feudatory status. It is significant that the text does not describe them as members of any royal dynasty, Ventarkulam. see Vanniyar purānam: ciruṣṭic carukkam, V. 10.
11. K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, The Cōlas (2nd edn.) University of Madras, 1955 p. 405.
12. Paṭṭinappālai, 11. 275 - 290 in Pattup pāṭṭu ed. U. V. Caminathaiyar (Madras 1918).
13. William Taylor, An Analysis of the Mackenzie Manuscripts: Section, 7, "Ancient History of Thondamandalam, and its earliest inhabitants called Veddars and Curumbar", pp. 81 - 83.
14. The Cūṭamani nikaṇṭu testifies that the Potuvar, Anṭar, Āyar, Itaiyar, kōvintar, kōpālar and Mullaiyar were the communities living in the mullai regions.
15. Madras Epigraphic Reports, Annual Report on Epigraphy (ARE), 1928, p 2; The Cholas, p. 257.
16. The first four of these expressions denote respectively temple lands, land held by Buddhist and Jain monasteries, lands granted to Brahmins and those held by mutts. The lands held on life tenure in return for service were called Jivittapparu. Such lands held on Military service were generally known as paṭaipparu. The Colas, p. 505.
17. The Colas, pp. 574 - 575
18. ibid , p. 405; Piṅkalaccōlar carittiram pp.
19. The Cōlas, 405
20. ARE, 1934/35, p. 61D, Nos. 188, 189
21. ibid, pp. 61 - 63, Nos. 125, 186.

22. ARE, 1937/38, No. 381.
23. ARE, 1934/35, Nos. 153, 202.
24. Piṛkālaceōḷar Carittiram p. 173
25. South Indian Inscriptions SII, Vol VII, Nos. 117, 120.
26. Piṛkālaceōḷar Carittiram, p. 393
27. ARE, 1938/39, p. 77
28. ibid.
29. ARE, 1911, p. 74.
30. SII, Vol VII, No. 119
31. ARE, 1936/37
32. ARE, 1934/35, Nos. 122, 126, 136, 142, 144 - 147, 153 - 159.
33. ARE, 1934/35, Nos. 145, 153, 202.
34. ARE, 1934/35, No. 122.
35. ARE, 1934/35, p. 61, Nos. 186, 190.
36. ARE, 1934/35, Nos. 126, 136, 171;
ARE, 1938/39, p. 77.
37. Piṛkālaceōḷar Carittiram, p. 173.
38. ibid.
39. SII, Vol. II, No. 17.
40. ARE, 1938/39, p. 77.
41. Piṛkālaceōḷar Carittiram, pp. 14, 174.
42. ibid, p. 425.
43. ARE, 1934/35, p. 61, No. 189.
44. Piṛkālaceōḷar Carittiram, p. 42.
45. ibid.
46. ibid.

47. **Upasakajanā lankā ra.** ed. Mōratōta Dhammakanda Thera, revised by Kosgoda Pannasekhara Thera (Weligama, 1914) p. 157.
48. **ARE**, 1937/37.
49. **T. N. Subraman am**, **South Indian Temple Inscriptions** Vol II (Madras, 1954), p. 662, No.706.
50. **S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar**, **South India and her Muhammadan Invaders** (Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 225.
51. **W. Taylor**. Analysis of the Mackenzie Manuscripts: Section 7. 'An account of the Candavarayen and Cheturayen, the two sovereign of the Vannier who ruled in the fort of Tiruvidai churam', pp. 78 - 79.
52. **South Indian Temple Inscriptions**, Vol. I, No. 204.
53. **Inscriptions of the Pudukottai State (IPS)**, No. 754.
54. **IPS**, No. 752.
55. *ibid.*
56. **Archaeological Survey of Southern India**, Setupati copper plate grant, Nos. 1, 3 - 7, 9, pp. 62, 66, 68, 71, 73, 81.
57. **T. V. Mahalingam**, **South Indian Polity** (Madras. 1955) p. 170.
58. **ARE**, 1911. p. 83.
ARE, 1913, p. 109.
59. **Noboru Karashima and Y. Subbarayalu**, 'Valangai / Idangai, Kaniyalar and Irajagarattar: Social conflict in Tamil nadu in the 15th Century', **Socio - cultural change in villages in Tiruchirapalli District, Tamil Nadu, India, Part I**, pp. 134 - 135.
60. This essay is a slightly modified version of a paper presented, under the same title, at the 4th International conference Seminar on Tamil Studies held in January 1974 at Jaffna Sri Lanka.

GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC POLICIES IN THE SRI LANKA NATIONAL QUESTION*

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This article was written prior to the Indo - Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. Having seen subsequent events, I find no reason to make any changes as, on the one hand, there were no changes in the economic policy of the Sri Lankan Government and on the other hand, the I P K F operations had no economic significance.

It is, now, generally, recognised that communal politics, a decisive factor in the political development of Sri Lanka, has mainly been responsible for the Tamil minority problem reaching crisis proportions, eventually, leading towards a *de facto* separation of the country. Communal politics resulted in discriminatory government policies which, over the years, have either directly or indirectly affected the language, religion, culture, education (especially higher education), and employment opportunities of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. In addition to these, lands in the traditional Tamil areas of Sri Lanka, have also gradually been transferred through colonization schemes into the hands of the majority community. The relevant language, land and educational policies of Sri Lankan governments and the impact these policies had on the Tamil minorities have, if not comprehensively, generally, been studied by a number of scholars both in Sri Lanka and abroad. The economic policies pursued, by these governments, however, have been an exception. Although there is no discord that policy decisions in other spheres have had a harmful effect on the economic opportunities of the Tamils and sufficient attention has been paid to this aspect, economic policies themselves have not come under any real scrutiny. Nevertheless, the contribution of such policies towards moulding the character and content of the Sri Lanka National Question has been quite substantial. The objective of this article is to cast some light on this neglected phenomenon.

I

First and foremost, government economic policies in independent Sri Lanka, unlike policies in other fields, were not, from the very beginning, formulated in a discriminatory fashion so as to bring additional or maximum benefits to a

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particular section of the population at the expense of another. This was, however, not intentional on the part of the governments in power. They were, given the option, quite capable of designing policies of a biased nature in economic matters too. But they were prevented from doing so by the very nature of the development pattern in Sri Lanka. The economic development of Sri Lanka, for the most part, was determined by factors external to the country. It was, therefore, nigh impossible for the rulers of the country to keep the economy always under their control and utilise it according to their whims and fancies. This is, however, not altogether surprising when one considers some of the features of the colonial economic structure.

The cardinal feature of the colonial economy of Sri Lanka was its over-reliance on export agriculture which, in the main, comprised of tea, rubber, and coconut.¹ A corollary to this was the ever increasing need to import several categories of goods with food and industrial commodities forming the bulk. Although a large majority of the indigenous population was engaged in activities connected with food production, these, under a colonial set-up, received neither the necessary incentive nor the required amount of protection from the government. Consequently, the development of the domestic agricultural sector was highly curtailed and Sri Lanka was soon compelled to import a major portion of her food requirements. Expenditure on the import of rice, the staple diet of the population, increased from about Rs. 33 million at the turn of the century to about Rs. 236 million at the time of independence.² The quantity of rice imported too had almost doubled (from about 5 million cwt. to about 10 million cwt.) during this period.³ In 1949, over 50 per cent of the total value of imports, when the total itself had spiralled to Rs. 1029 million from Rs. 104 million in 1901⁴ was spent on food items.⁵ The rest went for industrial goods consisting mainly of partially or wholly manufactured articles.⁶

It is clear then that Sri Lanka, when she gained her independence in 1948, had inherited a typical export - import economy. Foreign trade was its backbone. But, more importantly, foreign trade was still under the influence of external forces. It is true that with the attainment of independence trading activities had increasingly passed into the hands of Sri Lankans. This physical transformation, however, did not lead to any qualitative change. Gains from trade continued to depend on conditions prevailing in international markets. Sri Lanka had little or no control over them. The Annual Report of the Central Bank of Ceylon for the year 1952, for example, pointed out that Sri Lanka was in no position to influence either the export or the import prices and, for the most part (had to) take world prices . . . as given.⁷

As long as the importation of items essential to the country's development was a function of external assets earned through her exports it was inconceivable that the government could take full control of either the formulation or the execution of its economic policies. The woes of the government were further exacerbated whenever the export prices were on a declining trend. But since independence it is a truism that sliding export prices vis-a-vis rising import prices had become more a rule than an exception. It was, therefore, inevitable on the part of the government to find ways and means of generating foreign exchange earnings commensurate with its import expenditure. In the absence of sufficient earnings it had no choice but to impose restrictions on the use of such exchange and control imports. This effort to earn and, at the same time, conserve foreign exchange manifested itself in the twin policies of export promotion and import substitution pursued by successive governments of Sri Lanka.

Under these circumstances government economic policies were mainly governed by the continuing need to monitor the foreign exchange situation of the country. All other considerations had to play second fiddle to this pivotal demand. Not only was it necessary to preserve the plantation sector, the already existing source of foreign exchange, but additional sources had also to be developed in order that the earning capacity may be enhanced. On the other hand, considerable attention had to be paid towards the utilisation of external assets too. Priorities had to be mapped out and allocations be made accordingly. What one tries to emphasise here is the fact that in this relentless pursuit of foreign exchange management, governments in Sri Lanka, generally speaking, had very little leverage to impose their own political will or accommodate their political thinking in economic policy matters. To this extent, economic policies could not serve as a medium of discriminatory politics. They could not, at the framework level, differentiate between communities. But one must hasten to add that this does not mean that they remained so at the implementation level too.

It could, therefore, be said that economic activities of Sri Lankan governments, within the general set-up described above, had to contend with and accept an external element as a given factor. Nevertheless, at the implementation stage, it was possible for such activities to have varying effects between regions and communities. Although the impact need not be guided by government intentions, it cannot be ruled out that, especially in the political context of Sri Lanka, governments would always act without malice.

During the early 1950s, when the export market for primary commodities was buoyant, Sri Lanka accumulated a substantial amount of external assets. The total sum of assets increased from Rs. 963.7 million in 1949 to Rs. 1216.8 million

in 1951.⁸ In such a healthy economic environment one can reasonably envisage that a newly emerging Third World economy like Sri Lanka would spend an increasing amount of money on development oriented economic activities. But contrary to this expectation there was very little economic activity during this period. A major share of this receipt was, in fact, spent on consumption, that too on imported commodities. The government persisted with an open economic policy, a colonial legacy, and there was a free flow of imports as well as exports. It is, therefore axiomatic that there were very few policy decisions on economic matters which had community or regional implications. Even with regard to export performance the government seemed to be satisfied with the achievements of the plantation system and did not, in any way seek to diversify it. Neither did it attempt to enlarge the export sector as a whole venturing into new enterprises, particularly in the field of manufacturing.

But boom conditions in the export sector did not prolong forever. By mid-1950s there occurred a rapid decline in export prices and an ensuing depletion of foreign assets. When the country was entering the new decade the total external assets were less than half of what they were during the peak. In 1960 for example, they amounted to Rs 541 million and within another four years - in 1964 - had dropped to a bare Rs. 351 million.⁹ In such an alarming situation with no other sector save the plantations to boost the dwindling assets the government had no other alternative but to restrict the flow of imports. In the history of independent Sri Lanka, perhaps, for the first time, the ruling government was called upon to intervene directly in economic matters and arrive at some firm policy decisions. It had to not only restrict imports but had to also involve itself in the distribution of goods and services, especially the essentials. Moreover, the government was also engaged in the production of commodities of certain categories. In order to accomplish this, several public corporations were established. The government had therefore, clearly deviated from the laissez-faire policy it had been following from colonial times.

In the meantime, however, far reaching changes had taken place in the political landscape of the country. The MEP coalition, with SLFP as the major partner, had taken over the reins of power from the UNP. This signalled not only a transfer of political power but also brought along with it a train of other political as well as economic changes to which we have to, now, turn our attention. While the economic thinking of the new government imparted a degree of decisional mobility to economic policy, its political thinking and actions paved the way for a link-up of economic policy with political affairs.

II

1956 is, in many ways, considered a watershed in the political, economic and social development of Sri Lanka.¹⁰ In K. M. de Silva's words, 'It marked . . .

the rejection of so much that had come to be accepted as part of the normal order of things in post colonial Sri Lanka.'¹¹ I. D. S. Weerawardana, while analysing the General Election 1956, refers to the MEP, the agent which made this transformation possible, in the following terms:

“The MEP of 1956 was of an entirely different order. It believed in political democracy and economic socialism. It understood and supported the religious and cultural revival. It combined therefore liberalism, socialism and nationalism.”¹²

When it captured power,

“... (it) was not merely an alternative government but also an acceptable one within the terms of parliamentary democracy. It was radical without revolutionary. It was democratic while seeking socialism... Thus it attracted the rural impoverished as well as the urban liberals.”¹³

But the missing link in these and other similar accounts of developments in the post - 1956 era has been that the views expressed in them either considered or were addressed to only part of the Sri Lanka community and, in that sense were not truly national. Whatever the MEP was striving to achieve embraced the majority Sinhalese Buddhists alone and ignored all other minority communities, the Tamils of North and East in particular. Island - wide issues which tended to transcend the traditional, ethnic linguistic, or religious differences played no essential part in the MEP policy programme. Neither did the UNP of 1956 or post - 1956 advocate them. As a result, in 1956,

“for the first time since independence, politics in Tamil areas formed a system without organizational links with the larger parties competing for control in Sinhalese areas.... Two large parties competed against each other to obtain a parliamentary majority by outbidding one another in Sinhalese districts alone.”¹⁴

Wriggins correctly forecasts the future implications of this tendency to Sri Lankan politics when he goes on to say that

“If such a development is repeated communal consciousness among the Sinhalese majority of voters is likely to be aroused at every future election. And Tamil interests will be less and less adequately represented.”¹⁵

In 1956, therefore, in addition to all its other virtues, also marked the beginning of an outwardly communal line of approach by governments in power. The language, culture, education and employment, and thereby, the economy of the Tamils came to be slowly but steadily threatened. The phalanx of discri-

minatory policies we mentioned at the beginning of this essay gradually gained momentum in the post-1956 era.

But the declared economic policy of the government, at least at this juncture, stood as an exception. It was not directly based on any communal considerations. Policy decisions were not either favourably or unfavourably directed towards any particular community. Instead, it could be said that they were mostly determined by prevailing economic realities. The Tamils, like any other social group in Sri Lanka, had to endure a series of unfamiliar developments emanating from the changing economic scenery of the country. But, at the operational level as pointed out earlier, it was always possible for the same decisions to evoke different repercussions on different groups of people. In other words, they could come under the influence of other policy matters, especially at the political substratum.

It is in this light that one has to probe the impact of government economic policies on the ethnic question of Sri Lanka. It is true, on the one hand, that several actions arising out of the economic policy conversion had a detrimental effect on the Tamils and restricted their progress as a community. But, on the other hand, it should also be recognized that there were certain other policy measures which were beneficial to them and led to conditions of economic prosperity. However, irrespective of the nature of impact, it is noteworthy that the incidence eventually contributed towards the strengthening of Tamilian nationalism that was already undergoing a process of resurgence vis-a-vis a bursting Sinhalese nationalism. It is the conflict between these two ethnic based nationalisms which ultimately transformed an ordinary ethnic problem into a national question.

Economic changes in the post-1956 era were mainly an outcome of the deteriorating foreign exchange situation caused by a continuous decline in external assets. This necessitated, as we mentioned earlier, the intervention of the government in the form of import restrictions, distributional arrangements, and production endeavours. Thus a state regulated economic system was born. The primary intention of the government under this system was to trim the import of several commodities which it considered 'non essentials' or 'luxuries'. The obvious choice here was consumer oriented industrial goods and, very soon, a large number of such items came under the hammer. Restrictions ranged from a total ban to allowance for limited quantities of import using various instruments like quotas, permits, licences etc. The responsibility of the government, however did not end there. Although it chose to brand the commodities which came under restriction as 'non essentials' or 'luxuries', in actual fact, a large majority of

them, through usage, had become semi-essentials, if not absolute essentials. Unless a minimum supply of these goods was assured there was every opportunity that the consumer public would thoroughly be inconvenienced. It was, therefore, imperative on the part of the government to act in such a way that their difficulties would be minimised.

The government responded to this challenge in two ways:

i) Improve the distribution of commodities so that whatever quantities imported would not only be more efficiently used, but also justly dispensed among the needy.

ii) Initiate local level production and substitute the imports. i. e. import substitution

In order to facilitate an efficient distribution the government nationalised several service activities which were hitherto in private hands. Passenger transport banking, insurance, oil distribution were all brought under government control. In addition to this, wholesale and retail trade too were taken over by the state. State-owned Co-operative Wholesale Establishment (CWE) and its retail outlets formed the kingpin of internal commodity distribution. On the production side, the government kept the basic industries to itself and allowed private sector participation in the production of medium range and light consumer goods.

The operation of these two policies, under a budding communally motivated political environment, could produce far reaching implications on the Tamils. The impact these measures had can be seen, at three levels.¹⁶

In the first instance, Tamils, perhaps, along with the Muslim were the main losers by the government action to regulate both external and internal trade. A substantial portion of the export-import trade has for a long time been controlled by the Tamil entrepreneurial group consisting of Sri Lankans as well as Indians. Trade with India and Pakistan in particular was virtually under their monopoly. When the CWE and the State Trading Corporation took over the export-import trade profit margins earned by these entrepreneurs were severely curtailed and a number of them got completely displaced. The exercise of monopoly over the importation of commodities like lentils, onions, dried fish etc. by the CWE, adversely affected their fortunes. On the other hand, the internal trade of the country had traditionally been in the hands of middle level Tamil entrepreneurs who were scattered throughout the island. Their network of retail shops, apart from yielding enormous wealth also served as a source of employment for the unskilled section of the Tamil youth. But, now with the establishment of the CWE, a multitude of co-operative outlets extending from the city to the villages, not only took charge of the general distribution but also enjoyed a monopoly in

the supply of a number of items, subsidiary food-stuffs in particular. All price controlled goods were only obtainable in the co-operative stores and, with the worsening terms of trade, the list of such items was always on the ascent. As a result, all those who were engaged in the wholesale and retail trade of these commodities were badly hit. But the plight of the Tamil trader was much worse mainly because no suitable alternative avenues were readily available to him. Whereas his Sinhalese counterpart could make use of the expanding light industrial production (see below) and, on the basis of political patronage could diversify his activities.¹⁷ The Tamil trading community and those groups which depended on it either directly or indirectly for their own survival, therefore, became a disgruntled lot and were willing to throw in their weight behind any anti-government activity. Tamil nationalistic forces during the first phase of their resurgence i. e. 1956 - 1970, never failed to utilise this to their advantage.

Secondly, Tamils could not gainfully exploit the investment opportunities in the private sector to produce light industrial consumer goods and certain types of medium range goods. This was principally due to the criteria adopted by the government in allowing private sector investments and the manner in which such criteria were put to practice. While the government was liberal enough in granting several incentives to the newly established industries in the form of protected markets and tax holidays, it was also incumbent on its part to ensure that foreign exchange was not wasted in sustaining them. For, a majority of these industries were heavily depending on imported raw materials for their survival and unless such imports were cautiously handled a drain on external assets could set in. This would have, no doubt, defeated the whole objective of an import substitution policy. The government, therefore, formulated a system of quotas, permits and licences whereby raw material imports were kept to a minimum. It is at this juncture that political patronage came to play. In the context of existing party politics, it was easier for one in the good books of the ruling party to obtain the necessary quota or licence to sustain his industry

than anybody else. Political favouritism played a key role in the success of a particular industrialist. The amount of profit one could earn, in addition to other factors, was also determined by the quantum of political support he could mobilize. Political developments in and after 1956, as already explained, almost entirely precluded Tamil influence prevailing over the formation of governments in Sri Lanka. The pro - Sinhalese ruling parties, except, perhaps on one occasion in 1965, did not need to rely on the Tamil vote for their political survival. In this political milieu it was, therefore, virtually impossible for Tamil entrepreneurs to seek any kind of favouritism from the government in power. In contrast, the Sinhalese entrepreneur with the right kind of political inclination could look forward to prosperous times. When a number of middle level Sinhala entrepreneurs did, in fact, eventually become captains of industries, the Tamils, in the process were frustrated in their attempts and, in many instances, were driven towards anti government stand.

And thirdly, perhaps, most important of all, was the impact government policies had on the employment opportunities of Tamils. It is a well known fact that the economic prosperity of Tamils from colonial times has been attributed to their predominance in public service employment. With their relative superiority in English, they had unlimited opening in the government sector and filled in a large chunk of high level and middle level posts. But, in 1956, once Sinhala became the official language, a certain level of Sinhalese knowledge, irrespective of other qualifications, was made one of the conditions of service for all new entrants to the public service. With the medium of instruction changing over to the mother tongue, examinations to government employment were held in swabasha only and, consequently, the edge the English educated had over the vernacular educated, had now disappeared. It was, in fact, at this point that the government decided to expand the public sector and call it a non-capitalist path of development. But this, in real terms, as Newton Gunasinghe

points out, amounted to the state subordinating a significant proportion of the country's economic resources to itself.¹⁸ Once this is done it was easier for these to be distributed among the supporters of the regime, the majority Sinhalese. The Tamils, for the very same reason cited earlier, could not hope to reap any benefit out of this exercise. The new state corporations and their factories were mainly located in the Sinhalese regions. Then, on the basis of preferential recruitment for the people of the area where they were situated, Sinhalese were given employment opportunities, thus denying them to the Tamils. Moreover, the official language policy was more strictly implemented in the case of public corporations, making it more difficult for Tamils to have employment access.

The end result of these processes was the drastic fall in the number of Tamils in middle and low level occupations during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1965, for example, the percentage of Tamils in the Government Clerical Service, the main source of middle level employment, had dropped to 30 from about 50 percent in 1956.¹⁹ The fall in the Ceylon Administrative Service (which in the 1960s, replaced the Ceylon Civil Service) the same period was from 30 percent to 20 percent.²⁰ According to statistics of personnel in state services in 1972, Tamil representation in these levels was nearly half of their proportion in the total population of the country.²¹ Whereas, at the other extreme, the number of Sinhalese in public corporations registered a marked increase. According to one estimate, out of the 189,000 recruited in the state sector corporations during the period 1966 — 1970, 99 per cent was Sinhalese.²² In the Ceylon Transport Board, one of the largest corporations in terms of employment and turnover, out of the 52,000 employed until 1970, over 95 per cent was said to be Sinhalese.²³ There is no doubt that political patronage had been a key factor in the Sinhalese gaining employment opportunities in such large numbers. This is also borne out by a World Bank Study carried out in 1966, where it is mentioned that due to political favouritism most public sector ventures and corporations in Sri Lanka were saddled with an excess of personnel.²⁴ Although in

the professional and technical fields Tamils still enjoyed a healthy position.²⁵ it is noteworthy that employment generation is much greater in the middle and lower grades than at the higher grades. For every job created at the administrative or professional level, it is mentioned that fifteen jobs are created in the middle level grades and twenty in the manual grades.²⁶

From the foregoing account it is clear that government economic policies at the operational level, aided by the prevalent political thinking, always had a negative impact on the Tamil minorities. These, along with other discriminatory policies, contributed in no small measure towards the progress of Tamil nationalism. Even a short-term economic prosperity enjoyed by them in the early 1970s could not dampen it.

III

With the dawn of the 1970s, the Sri Lankan economy took another somersault and conditions looked, indeed, very grim. The growth rate of the economy was halved from 8.4 per cent in 1968 to 4.2 per cent in 1970. In 1971, it fell dramatically and reached 0.9 per cent.²⁷ If allowance is made for population growth, the growth rate, actually, fell to negative proportions and amounted to 0.6 per cent.²⁸ Per capita income at constant prices also dwindled from Rs. 774 in 1970 to Rs. 766 in 1971.²⁹ The inflationary rate as indicated by the Colombo Consumers' Price Index alone rose by 12.3 per cent in 1974.³⁰ A more meaningful guide, no doubt, would have shown a rate much higher than this. To this, one has to add the sudden increase in oil prices and the far reaching impact it had on Third World economies. Sri Lanka was in no way an exception to this. In the face of such adverse conditions, the rate of unemployment was also very high. The number of unemployed as a percentage of the workforce increased from 13.8 in 1963 to 24.0 per cent in 1973.³¹ A community-wise glance at the unemployment rates, as a percentage of the total workforce, for the years 1963 and 1973 reveals that the increase for the Low Country Sinhalese was from 17.5 per cent to 30.0, per cent for the Kandyan Sinhalese from 12.7 per cent, to 23.0 per cent, and for the Tamils from 11.6 per cent to 17.7 per cent.³²

While there was an overall decline in economic conditions, the biggest impact, however, had been on the employment scene. With the curtailment of economic activities, employment generation was awfully slow and, in many instances, had come to a grinding halt. When the situation in general was bad enough, the government had to also endure the fact that the rate of unemployment, as revealed by employment figures given above, was more severe among the Sinhalese than among the Tamils. For a government which promulgated the 1972 Republican Constitution enshrining 'the expectations of Sinhala Buddhist nationalists without a single concession to the Tamil speaking minority'.³³ this was too harsh a reality to stomach. Despite the prevailing economic catastrophe it was imperative on the part of the government to act in some manner so as to redeem the rapidly deteriorating employment opportunities. University admissions, in this respect, offered the government a safe bet.

The growth of secondary education in the 1950s, apart from increasing the number seeking employment at middle levels, had also intensified competition for entry to the University. In order to meet this need the government increased the enrolment of University students from 3,196 in 1959 to 14,287 in 1967,³⁴ primarily through the duplication of courses in the existing University and the creation of new Universities. But despite this expansion, the proportion of those refused entry to the University rose to over 80 per cent in the 1960s and to over 90 per cent in the 1970s.³⁵ From the government point of view, enlargement of University education could retrieve the unemployment problem in two ways: (i) arrest pressure on medium range job prospects by diverting job seekers to higher grades through offer of University placements; thus, there would also be a reduction in the total number unemployed, although the drop may purely be a temporary phenomenon; (ii) it was relatively easier to provide job opportunities further up the scale in higher grades, especially in professional fields like Medicine, Engineering, Architecture etc. This is notwithstanding the fact that there was unemployment among Arts graduates.

It is clear, then, that the expansion of University education, irrespective of the fact that it is a prerequisite for development, could render almost immediate relief to the problem of unemployment confronting the Sri Lanka government.

Prevailing economic constraints, however, made any further growth of University education, at least at this juncture, grossly impossible. Suddenly in 1973, amidst rumours that the Tamils had obtained about 60 per cent of the admissions to the Faculty of Engineering, the government bounced at the idea of reallocating the limited number of University places so that more Sinhalese students

would gain admission at the expense of their Tamil counterparts. Thus, was born the system of standardization whereby, initially, a lower qualifying mark was set for Sinhalese medium students. This not only provided an easy answer for the relatively more acute unemployment problem among the Sinhalese youth but also ensured that a politically acceptable section of the student population gained admission to the University. The government, in fact without any attempt to pool its resources and energy in finding a long term solution to its pressing economic problems, sought refuge in communal politics and adopted a 'rob Peter to pay Paul' tactic between the two communities.

An analogy can be drawn here with the economic depression of the early 1930s. when employment opportunities shrank to a minimum and unemployment loomed large, the Sinhalese (trade union) leadership was unwilling to concede that it was a direct consequence of the economic crisis. Instead, it accused the foreign worker, especially the Malayalis, of unjust domination of the job market and sought to divest, at least, a part of the available employment opportunities towards the Sinhalese, its major support base.³⁶ Now, the descendants of the same leadership, depending almost entirely on the Sinhalese polity for its support, again endeavoured to preserve professional positions for the Sinhalese community through reservation of University placements. The Tamils, in the absence of any political patronage, were, now, threatened with the loss of even their professional employment opportunities.

When the lower and middle grade jobs for the Tamil speaking community were severely curtailed in the 1960s, it could still preserve, as already mentioned, its position in the professional and technical grades. This was possible largely due to University education being made available to everybody purely on the criteria of merit, i. e. based on one's academic performance as reflected in the raw marks. A great majority of Tamil students chose science based courses as their main forte and concentrated in professional studies, Medicine and Engineering in particular. In 1964, for example, 37.2 per cent of the places in Science and engineering courses was held by Sri Lankan Tamils. In Medicine and Dentistry the percentage was 40.5 and in Agriculture and Veterinary Science it was 41.9.³⁷ In 1970, Tamils made up of 35.3 per cent of all admissions to science based courses in the University, obtaining 40.8 per cent of the places in Engineering and 40.9 per cent of the places in Medicine.³⁸

However, with the adoption of the standardization scheme there was a complete change in this picture. Both percentagewise and in absolute terms there was a drastic drop in the number of Tamils entering the University. Tamil students entering science based courses in the University shrank from about 40

per cent in 1969/70 to a mere 19 per cent in 1975. Correspondingly, the percentage for Sinhalese students increased from 58 to 78. Whereas, the actual number of Tamil students entering the same courses during the five-year period dropped from 315 to 268, the number of Sinhalese students rose from 457 to 1101.³⁹

Such an alarming drop in University admissions wiped out the last resort the Tamils hitherto had in the form of professional employment. Already feeling was rife that the government was discriminating against the Tamil youth in providing employment. Now, standardization not only jeopardised the chances of Tamils entering professional grades but also unleashed suddenly hundreds of youth who had Advanced Level qualifications but no hope of finding any sort of employment. Another significant feature of this development was that the bulk of this youth was, by and large, off springs of lower Tamil middle class, who, unlike the upper strata of the Tamilian society, did not have any other alternative means. Denying University education to this class was tantamount to shutting the door of social progress and economic security to them.

It is against such a background, that one has to analyse the call for a separate state and the Tamil youth resorting to violent means to achieve it. Tamil nationalism, with these developments, took a sharp turn and had become so vociferous that any improvement in the economic condition of the Tamils only helped to strengthen rather than weaken it. This was proved beyond doubt by the economic upsurge enjoyed by the Tamils during the period under consideration.

During the opening years of the 1970s amidst severe balance of payments difficulties, when the government extended its import restriction policy to food commodities, its primary target was subsidiary foodstuffs. Their imports were consuming a large slice of the foreign exchange allocations and any form of control over their imports could bring in substantial savings. Consequently, a number of subsidiary items, including onions, chillies and potatoes, were completely banned. But Jaffna, utilising the steep rise in prices arising out of this ban, reaped maximum advantage in the production of these items.⁴⁰ The advantage Jaffna secured over other areas mainly accrued through the large surplus it could accumulate in these commodities. Over 90 per cent of the onion crop and over 80 per cent of the chilie harvest were annually available for export to other areas of the island. Peasants engaged in the cultivation of these crops could, now, earn incomes easily comparable to those earned by the urban middle classes. Several belonging to the middle classes themselves, in addition to their usual sources of income, took up to the cultivation of these

crops. Such an enhancement in economic environment, naturally, added a good deal of confidence as to the economic viability of a Tamil region in whatever form and resulted in an escalation of nationalist feelings. To this one must also add the expatriate Tamil community which was spread in various parts of the globe.⁴¹ While contributing to the economic resources of the Tamils the emigrants also helped to serve as a medium of propaganda for the Tamilian cause. The interest shown by them resulted in the creation of certain overseas organizations with objectives to (i) seek overseas support to the National Movement, and (ii) study the various problems involved at a deeper level.

In sum, it will be seen that the economic policies of the 1970s had helped to elevate the national struggle of the Tamils from a bourgeoisie level to one of middle class status. The backbone of this middle class was the educated youth who had little confidence in parliamentary processes and nonviolent means.

IV

In 1977, there was yet another change of government when the UNP regained control after a landslide victory. It was evident, once again that economic policies would not remain the same. There was in fact, a complete reversal of policies. While open economy replaced a regulated economy, import substitution had given way for export promotion.⁴² Private capital assumed importance and the private sector was gradually entrusted with most of the task earlier carried out by governmental agencies. Steps were also taken to invite private foreign investments and a model similar to one adopted in Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan was introduced. In order to facilitate its operation, Investment Promotion Zones (IPZ) were planned and the first of its kind was almost immediately opened in the Negombo-Katunayake area under the Greater Colombo Economic Commission (GCEC). A Foreign Investment Advisory Committee (FIAC) was set up to advise and assist overseas investors on investment opportunities. The corresponding institute for local investors was the Local Investment Advisory Committee (LIAC). Trade was liberalised and a whole range of items hitherto restricted was now allowed into the country giving way to a boom in import trade. As a result, volume of trade too increased by a considerable extent.

An important development out of these changes was that the protected market in which the Sinhala entrepreneurial group had an edge over its Tamil counterpart was on its way to a sudden collapse. As the market forces came into full play, any one, irrespective of one's race, could enter into competitive enterprise provided he had the capacity to do so. The Tamil entrepreneurial group which had been dormant for a long time or engaged in other activities swung into action once

again. The voluminous increase in trade, commerce, and services under the new regime provided the Tamil investor ample opportunities to amass wealth. It was, in fact, in these activities that he had traditionally demonstrated his skill. Their dominance over trade and commerce, for example, was so marked that there were accusations that the Tamils, along with the Muslims, had alienated the trading power from the majority Sinhalese community.⁴³ The frustration of the Sinhalese eventually turned them chauvinistic and, in a few instances, this chauvinistic attitude even manifested in acts of violence against Tamil traders, especially during occurrences of communal disturbance.

The employment situation too showed a vast improvement in the post - 1977 period with much of the benefit which accrued out of it reaching non - Sinhala communities. The expansion of the private sector created a large number of jobs which, unlike the public sector ones, did not insist on Sinhalese proficiency. A majority of private sector ventures had to establish, in their day to day business, overseas links and a working knowledge of English, therefore, proved indispensable. Non-Sinhala communities, Tamils in particular, were able to use this to their advantage and bring in a bulk of the private sector openings under their umbrella.

The improvement in conditions in the post - 1977 era, compared to the prosperity enjoyed by the Tamils in the aftermath of the ban on subsidiary foods imports in the early 1970s, had certain differences. The Jaffna middle class and peasantry had been the main recipients of the latter. Whereas the Tamil bourgeoisie, whose main forte continued to be trade and commerce, had little or no reason to be happy over these developments. It is also true that, unlike the bourgeoisie element among the Tamils, the Tamil middle class or the peasantry failed to exhibit a class identity which went beyond ethnic and religious considerations. The only motivating factor had been their own economic survival and, when this is threatened they tended to react in a harsh manner. The militant phase of Tamil nationalism in mid - 1970s bear testimony to this. But the boon conditions of post - 1977 directly involved the Tamil bourgeoisie which evoked a class unity cutting through ethnic and religious identities. Whenever the UNP came to power because of its pro-capitalist policies, the bourgeoisie element in the Tamil community always attempted to minimise conflicts, despite the fact that the UNP too, like the SLFP followed a hostile policy towards the Tamils. In the post - 1977 period too this class, acting in conformity, demonstrated a passive approach towards the ruling UNP government. Its task was made easier, when the Government came forward to grant a few concessions to the Tamils in the Second Republican Constitution drafted in 1978⁴⁴ The urban based speaking traders and others with vested interests resented Tamil the militant attitude and whenever acts of violence were committed, they made

a special effort to dissociate themselves from them. They even went to the extent of offering financial help to the affected parties, namely, the police and the security forces.

This line of approach, however, could not continue for long. Tamil nationalism which had bourgeois origins and confined to parliamentary politics for quite a while had, gradually, crossed these boundaries. By 1970s not only had it become a middle class struggle but it had also clearly embraced extra-parliamentary methods. But once it ceased to be a non-violent movement, its progress too was very swift. A chronological glance at the events of the post-1977 era will reveal the rapidity with which the transformation was taking place. Within a matter of few years, the Tamil National Movement had graduated into a full scale Liberation Struggle. In this amazing pace, the leadership itself had changed hands from the moderates to the young militants. The latter were not in any way prepared to consider any compromise based on piecemeal or half-hearted solutions. Neither were they attracted by any concessions of a sporadic nature. Under these circumstances, it was clear that efforts of the Tamil bourgeoisie element to discourage the militants would not succeed. The manoeuvre was, in fact soon foiled. There were, no doubt, certain other developments which contributed towards its achievement.

Chief among them was the spate of violence periodically unleashed by the majority community on Tamils living in predominantly Sinhalese areas. Such calamities were usually explained as reactions to Tamil militancy and the damaging impact it had caused on Sinhalese citizens. Although there is an element of truth in this allegation that was not the only reason. A closer look will show that it also had its genesis on government economic policies. An important component of the open economic policy of the government was the gradual dismantling of the state welfare system which had been in operation from the time of independence. This deprived the poorer strata of the country's population of its primary source of real income. The impact was much greater on the urban poor, who, in spite of certain compensatory schemes like the Food Stamp Scheme, were a stark contrast to other sections of the urban population. A marked increase in private sector job opportunities also had not helped them much. They formed, therefore, an easily vulnerable group open for persuasion, especially with ulterior motives. They could easily be mobilized by the ideologists of Sinhala dominance as well as by frustrated sections of Sinhala entrepreneurs.⁴⁵ The general affluence of urban based Tamils, the trading community in particular, could always act as an inducement and spur them into action. Communal riots of the post-1977 period, in addition to other ideological reasons emanating from

the ethnic conflict, can also be explained as a sequel to this development. During such times, it is a well known fact that the Tamil business community had been the worst hit. With every riot there occurred not only a shift of its business interests from Sinhalese to Tamil areas but also its allegiance from the government towards Tamil nationalist forces. The latter process was made still easier by the state violence in Tamil areas perpetrated by its security forces. In these instances too, Tamil businessmen, among others had been the chief victims which made them willing partners in the Liberation Struggle. Traders in the Jaffna city, for example, have formed themselves into an association called the Jaffna Traders' Association and assist the Movement as well as the general public in various ways while refraining from paying the government its usual dues like the business turnover tax.⁴⁶

In the meantime, special policies adopted by the government exclusively for Tamil areas in the form of economic blockade of several commodities including some essentials, have completely alienated the Tamils and their regions from the rest of the country. Hostilities between the two communities are so high-pitched and long-drawn it looks highly improbable that the Tamils of Sri Lanka would be brought back into the main stream of the country's economic life in the near future.

Notes:

1. For details, see D. L. Snodgrass (1966).
2. Elaine Gunewardena (1965): 218.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid : 210-211.
5. D. L. Snodgrass (1966): 362.
6. Ibid.
7. Central Bank of Ceylon (1952): 5.
8. Central Bank of Ceylon (1964): Table 31.
9. Ibid.
10. For contemporary account on the changes of 1956, see W. Howard Wriggins (1960): 326-69.
11. K. M. de Silva (1981): 510.
12. I. D. S. Weerawardana (1960): 237.
13. Ibid: 237 238.
14. W. Howard Wriggins (1960): 369.
15. Ibid. Emphasis mine.
16. This section draws heavily from Newton Gunasinghe (1984)
17. Ibid: (Jan 15): 16.
18. Ibid : 15.
19. These figures are based on estimates supplied by the Arasanka Eluthu Vinaignar Sangam, a trade union of Tamil government servants. Quoted from Walter Schwarz (1975): 13.
20. Ibid.
21. Government of Sri Lanka (1972).
22. Satchi Ponnambalam (1983): 174-75.
23. Ibid: 175.
24. Quoted from Ibid : 37.

25. In certain fields like Medicine, Engineering and accountancy the proportion of Tamils had either increased or remained static. In the Irrigation Department, for example, the percentage of Tamil Engineers increased from 46 in 1955 to 48 in 1963, whereas in the Department of Health, the percentage of Tamil doctors during the same period rose from 35 to 41. See S. W. R. de A. Samarasinghe (1984) : 177.
26. Newton Gunasinghe (1984, Jan. 15) : 16
27. Central Bank of Ceylon (1974) : 3
28. Ibid
29. Ibid
30. Ibid
31. Central Bank of Ceylon (1974a) : 49
32. Ibid
33. Radhika Coomaraswamy (1984) : 31
34. C. R. de Silva (1978) : 86
35. Ibid
36. For details, see Kumari Jayawardena (1985) : 25 — 29
37. C. R. de Silva (1978) : 86 — 87
38. Ibid : 87
39. Ibid : 105 — 106
40. These developments are analysed in V. Nithiyanandan (1987)
41. For details, see Ibid.
42. For details of these changes, see Central Bank of Ceylon (1978)
43. Several such accusations, appeared in Sinhalese dailies have been cited by Newton Gunasinghe (1984, Feb. 1) : II
44. For details of these concessions, see C. R. de Silva (1979) : 192 — 209.
45. Newton Gunasinghe (1984, Feb. 1) : 11.
46. The decisions and activities of the Jaffna Traders' Association are reported almost daily in the local Jaffna press. Similar associations have also been formed in several other towns of the peninsula.

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