SOJOURNERS TO CITIZENS

Sri Lankan Tamils in Malaysia,
1885–1965

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

LATE MR. V. SELVANAYAGAM

"Jaffna may be a barren country but it is her very barrenness that has brought out the best in us."

Hindu Organ, 11.2.1926

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PREFACE

Malaya, before World War Two, represented a case where more than half the population comprised immigrants[1] who emerged as distinct and significant minorities in the development of the country. The Malays remained a predominantly peasant population with little initiative to go beyond small-scale agricultural and fishing activities. The significance of this was the policy of immigration fostered by the British government to develop the rubber and tin industries with each community establishing itself in different areas of employment. The significance of this division of labour was that each community contributed substantially towards laying the foundations of modern Malaya through their respective spheres of employment.[2] For instance, the Chinese dominated the mining and mercantile sector of the economy, the Indians provided the labour for the plantations and public works, while the Ceylon Tamils, with some English-educated Indians and Chinese, dominated the subordinate ranks of the civil service.

Besides their economic role these immigrant communities, though securely locked within communal compartments, contributed significantly to the social, cultural and even political development of Malaya. The diverse cultures of these minorities have enriched the Malayan social and cultural milieu, while the presence of these immigrant communities, who themselves actively participated in the Malayan political arena, could be said to have contributed in some measure to the rise of nationalism and political consciousness among the Malays.

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1. In 1931 there were 1,962,021 Malays, 1,709,392 Chinese, 624,009 Indians, 17,768 Europeans, 16,04 Eurasians and 56,113 Others. The non-Malay population, almost entirely immigrants, totalled 2,423,325 persons. See *Census of British Malaya, 1931* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1932), p.120.

2. On the contribution of immigrant labour in the economic development of Malaya, see R.N. Jackson, *Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya, 1786–1920* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Press, 1961); J.N. Parmer, *Colonial Labour Policy and Administration: A History of Labour in the Rubber Plantation Industry in Malaya, 1910–1941* (New York, Association of Asian Studies, 1960), and K.S. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of their Immigration and Settlement, 1786–1957* (London, Cambridge, University Press, 1969).

Though much has been written on the role of the Chinese and Indian minorities in the social, cultural, economic and political history of Malaya[3] practically no academic literature is available on the other ethnic minorities in Malaya, like the Ceylonese (whether Ceylon Tamils or Sinhalese)[4] and the Eurasians. The only published material available on the Ceylonese is in the form of a compilation of records and recollections on the community.[5] The fact that the Ceylon Tamils made a significant impact on the history of pre-independent Malaya has so far escaped the attention of historians.

The neglect on the part of historians to study the Ceylon Tamils is probably due partly to their classification as a sub-ethnic Indian community in the Census Reports, which has tended to obscure their identity as a distinct community. However, a close examination will reveal that the Ceylon Tamils and the Indians, especially the Indian Tamils, whether in Ceylon or in Malaya, though racially similar, have not only different origins but also distinct characteristics in terms of spoken language, customary laws, values, social status and ethnic consciousness which tended to differentiate the two communities. Despite physical, linguistic and certain cultural similarities the Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils maintained a separateness.

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3. V. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya* (London, Oxford University Press, 1941); W.L. Blythe, "A Historical Sketch of Chinese Labour in Malaya", *Journal of Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 20 (June, 1947), pp.64–114; V. Purcell, *The Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya* (New York, 1959); U. Mahajani, *The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya* (Bombay, Vora, 1960); R. Ampalavanar, "Social and Political Developments in the Indian Community in Malaya 1920–1941" (M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1969); S. Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore* (London, Oxford University Press, 1970); Amarjit Kaur, "North Indians: A Study of their Economic, Social and Political Activities with special reference to Selangor 1870s–1940s (M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1973).

4. The term 'Ceylonese' refers to a variety of people of Ceylon origin and this included the Ceylon Tamils, Sinhalese, Burghers, Ceylon Moors, Malays and Europeans. Only the Tamils and Sinhalese have remained a distinct yet separate Ceylonese population in Malaya while the others have either shifted identification to be gradually assimilated into the mainstream of Malayan society or have returned to Ceylon.

5. D.R. Sinnam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore, 1867–1967* (Petaling Jaya, 1968).

This study attempts to place the Ceylon Tamil community within the broad context of Malayan history. Their migration, how they adjusted to fundamental changes in a new and undeveloped country, what part they played in the overall development of Malaya, inter-communal relations and their trials and achievements are viewed in the context of multi-racial society in Malaya. It is in an attempt to provide answers to some of these questions that the socio-cultural aspects of the community's growth has been deliberately emphasised.

Beginning with a history of the origin of the Ceylon Tamils in Ceylon, this book examines in detail their history and development in Malaya from the period 1885 to 1965. The year 1885 marks the beginning of large-scale migrations of Ceylon Tamils to Malaya while the terminal period, 1965, indicates the emergence of a Malayan-born and Malayan-oriented generation who had practically no contacts with Ceylon. This period presents a picture of the community completing a full cycle from sojourners to citizens. Furthermore, the span of eighty years represents the crucial period during which the community achieved its prominence and socio-economic mobility.

Since the research covers the period between 1885 and 1965, the present West Malaysia and Sri Lanka have been referred to, throughout the study as Malaya and Ceylon, respectively. For the Tamils of Sri Lanka of this period the terms, Ceylon Tamils, Jaffna Tamils and Jaffnese have been used interchangeably.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CAR	Ceylon Administration Reports
CFM	Ceylon Federation of Malaya
C.O.	Colonial Office Records
FIO	Federation of Indian Organisations
FMS	Federated Malay States
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
MCA	Malaya Chinese Association
MCC	Malayan Ceylonese Congress
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
NYP	Nippon Yusen Kaisha
OSK	Osaka Shosen Kaisha
PPP	Peoples' Progressive Party
SCTA	Selangor Ceylon Tamils Association
SLNA	Sri Lanka National Archives
SS	Straits Settlements
TPCA	Tamilian Physical Culture Association
UFMS	Unfederated Malay States
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A Ceylonese Endowment Fund was started in 1949 as a contribution of the Ceylonese community to the University of Malaya Endowment Fund. It was intended to express the community's gratitude for having benefitted in the past from the many scholarships extended to Ceylonese by the government. In 1972 this Fund was reconstituted as the Sri Lanka Endowment Fund and two objectives were initiated. First, a biennial endowment lecture programme related to "An Aspect of Indian Culture in Southeast Asia" was organised and successfully implemented as of 1972 and, second, a fund was made available for research into the history of the Malaysians of Sri Lankan origin and their contributions to the development of Malaya.

This study is the outcome of the second objective of the Sri Lanka Endowment Fund and I am grateful for being selected to undertake the research. The late Mr. V. Selvanayagam and Professor Dr. S. Singaravelu, then members of the Committee, and Mr. S. Kulasingam and Mr. M. Rajasingam, presently members of the Committee, deserve my special thanks for their encouragement, assistance and interest in the progress of this research.

The University of Malaya, too, needs to be thanked not only for their financial assistance to carry out field research in Malaysia but also for granting me leave on four different occasions to pursue my research in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and London.

I wish to express a special word of thanks to Associate Professor Dr. J. Katthirithamby-Wells of the Department of History, University of Malaya, for accepting me as a graduate student. I have benefitted enormously from her advice, criticisms and suggestions.

The Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo, University of Jaffna Library, Jaffna, in Sri Lanka; Arkib Negara and University of Malaya Library, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; and Public Records Office and British Maritime Museum in London provided facilities and assistance which contributed largely to the accomplishment of the research. The libraries of the Victoria Institution and the Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur, the High Court Library, Kuala Lumpur, and those of the various community associations have proved useful sources for reference. The assistance provided by the staff and individuals at the above sources is greatly appreciated.

Materials collected through extensive interviews have supplemented documentary sources in a valuable way. I take this opportunity to thank all those Malaysian pensioners and other Ceylon Tamils, both in Malaysia and Sri Lanka, for the time they spared and experiences they generously shared with me through their reminiscences.

Finally, I wish to thank Mrs. Lau Beng Thye of the Department of History, University of Malaya, for kindly consenting to type the original manuscript and my wife and children for their patience and forbearance throughout the period of this study.

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INTRODUCTION

THE ORIGINS OF THE TAMILS OF JAFFNA: THEIR HISTORY AND TRADITION

A. Geographical

Ceylon, about half the size of England, is located barely 25 miles to the southernmost tip of the Indian subcontinent. It is separated from neighbouring India by the narrow and shallow Palk Strait.

The Jaffna Peninsula, about 85 miles long and from 8 to 25 miles broad and with a land mass of 400 square miles, forms the northern extremity of Ceylon.[1] To the west of the Peninsula lie the islands of Mandaitivu, Karaitivu, Kayts, Eluvativu, Analativu, Pungudutivu, Nainativu and Delft. The islands and the Peninsula, together, form the territory of Jaffna which covers most of the Northern Province of Ceylon.

By virtue of its geographical location at the apex of Ceylon and its proximity to the thickly populated Tamil districts of South India there were waves of Tamil migration to Jaffna since the sixth century B.C. Besides Jaffna the Tamils had also settled in other parts of the Northern Province and in the Eastern Provinces, particularly in Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa, These regions have come to be known as the homeland of the Ceylon Tamils though there has also been a strong minority of them in the rest of the provinces of Ceylon, paticularly in the Western, Central and Northwest Provinces.

B. Settlement of Tamils in Ceylon

The indigenous inhabitants of the island of Ceylon are believed to be the Veddahs who are now almost extinct. The subsequent wave of the colonists to the island who came from areas like Bengal, Orissa and Gujerat in India in the sixth century B.C. are believed to be of Aryan descent who, following

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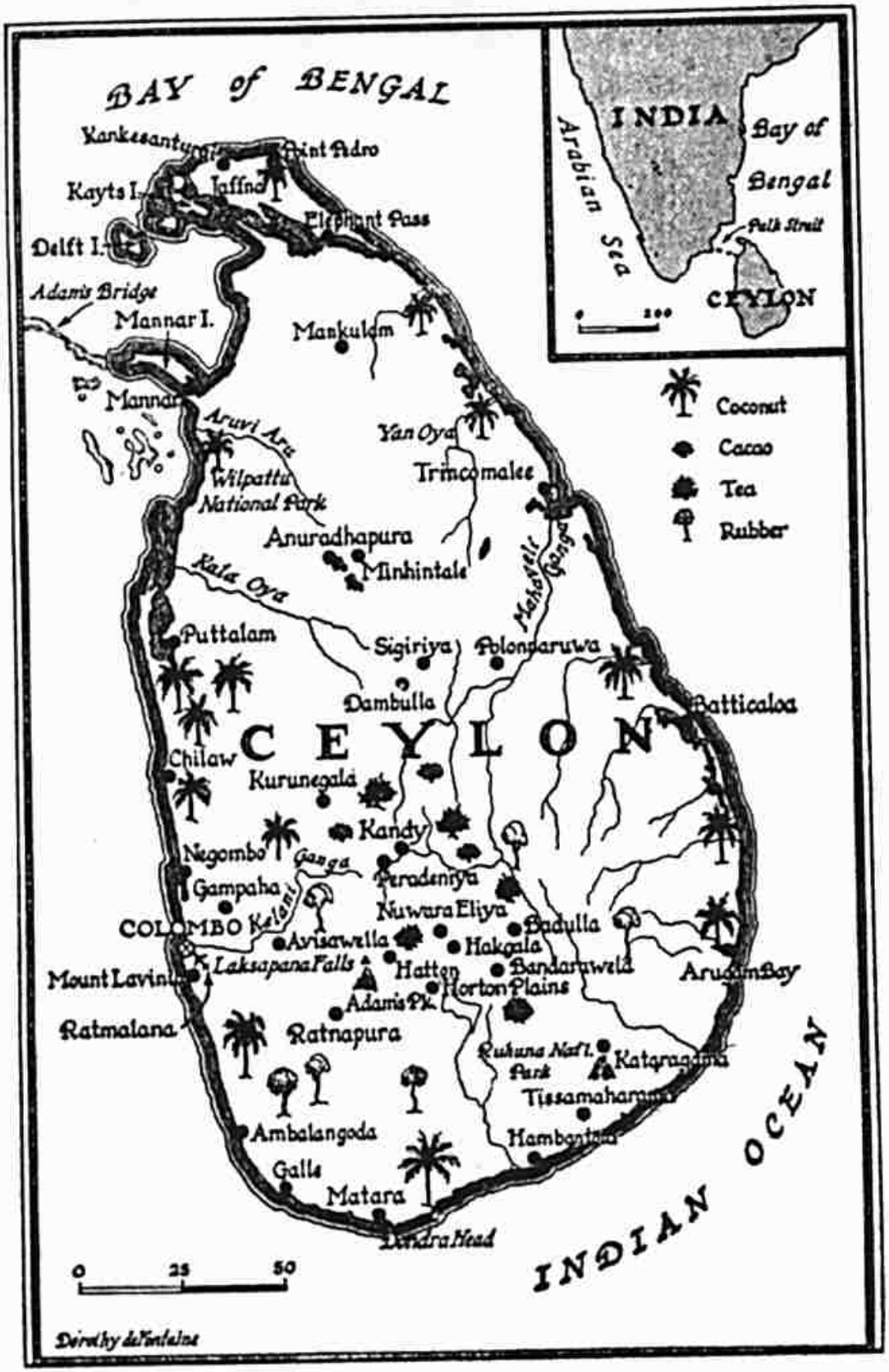
1. V.S. Balendran, C.H.C. Sirimanne and S. Arumugam, *Ground Water in Jaffna* (Colombo, Water Resources Board, 1968), p.2.

MAP 1
CEYLON


BAY of BENGAL
Point Pedro
Jaffna
Kayts I.
Elephant Pass
Delft I.
Adam's Bridge
Mannar I.
Mannar
Mankulam
Aruvi Aru
Yan Oya
Wilpattu National Park
Trincomalee
Anuradhapura
Minhintale
Kala Oya
Mahaweli Ganga
Puttalam
Sigiriya
Polonnaruwa
Dambulla
Batticaloa
CEYLON
Chilaw
Kurunegala
Kandy
Negombo
Ganga
Peradeniya
Gampaha
Kelani
Nuwara Eliya
COLOMBO
Avisawella
Badulla
Hakgala
Laksapana Falls
Hatton
Bandarawela
Mount Lavinia
Horton Plains
Adam's Pk.
Ratmalana
Ratnapura
Ruhuna Nat'l. Park
Katragama
Tissamaharama
Ambalangoda
Hambantota
Galle
Matara
Dondra Head
INDIAN OCEAN
Arugam Bay
0 25 50
Dorothy duFontaine
INDIA
Bay of Bengal
Arabian Sea
Palk Strait
CEYLON
100
Coconut
Cacao
Tea
Rubber

their settlement in Ceylon were called Sinhalese.[2] The earliest extant Sinhalese chronicle, the **Mahavamsa,**[3] shows linguistic affinities and frequent occurence of place names of eastern India which suggest Aryan colonisation of the island. Following their advent in Ceylon the Sinhalese established a culturally rich civilisation, which bears affinities to the northern Indian civilisation in Bengal, though the former, unlike the latter, was based on extensive irrigation systems through tanks. They had also excelled in the arts and learning.[4]

What is regarded as the greatest event of ancient Ceylon, which also marked the beginning of the authentic history of the Sinhalese, was the introduction of Indian Buddhism during the reign of King Asoka in the second century B.C. The Sinhalese king, his court, and his people were converted to Buddhism and the rulers of the dynasty became the patrons of the religion. Soon, Buddhism became the most pervasive force in the life of the Sinhalese people.[5] The power and influence of the Sinhalese Buddhists in the north was, however, soon challenged by the infiltration of waves of South Indian Hindu colonists.[6] These migrations dated back to as early as the time of King Vijaya, the first ruler of the **Mahavamsa** or Great Dynasty which ruled from the sixth century B.C. to fourth century A.D.

Records indicate than even preceding the early waves of the South Indian colonists there were scattered settlements of Tamils in various parts of Ceylon. A thriving commercial trade between South India and Ceylon had led to the establishment of five recognised **isvarams** of Siva which were popular in

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2. C.W. Nicholas and S. Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon* (Colombo, Ceylon University Press, 1961), p.17.

3. *Mahavamsa* or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon is a Pali commentary compiled by Buddhist monks in the sixth century A.D.

4. C.W. Nicholas and S. Paranavitana, *A Concise History of Ceylon*, pp.30–35.

5. *Ibid.*, pp.48–52. It was during the reign of Devanampiya Tissa (247–207 B.C.), the ruler of Anuradhapura, the Sinhalese capital of Ceylon, that Emperor Asoka dispatched his son, Mahindra, to Ceylon to spread the teachings of the Buddha. Tissa founded the first historic *stupa* in Ceylon as well as *viharas* or places of worship.

6. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident* (London, Elek Books, 1970), p.37.

India, namely Tiruketeeswaram near Mahatittha, Muneeswaram in Salawatta, Tondeswaram near Mantota, Tirukoneswaram near Kottiyar and Nakuleswaram near Kankesanthurai.[7] These shrines located in widely separated parts of Ceylon attest not only to the presence of a wealthy Tamil mercantile population in Ceylon but also to the wide distribution of Tamils throughout Ceylon from very early times. This distribution testifies that the Tamils entered Ceylon at whatever point was convenient, and not necessarily via the major sea ports of Jaffna, from as long ago as 2,000 years.[8]

The South Indian immigrants who constituted the early waves of migration, were mainly from the Tamil kingdoms of Pandya and Chola. The expansion of the Tamil element in post–Mauryan period is historically well known, in contrast to the earlier period for which evidence is obtainable only in the form of archaeological remains, like the Brahmi inscription on the face of the ruined buildings at Anuradhapura, folk literature called **kalvettu**[9] and poetic works like the **vaiya padal.**[10] It is said that King Vijaya of the **Mahavamsa** dynasty found brides for himself and his followers in the Pandyan kingdom preceding his invasion of Ceylon. Thus, a large retinue of colonists of various denominations and their spouses contributed to settling on the island. Substantial Tamil influence on the Sinhalese, however, came to be felt only after the dissolution of the vast Mauryan empire following Emperor Asoka's death. There were periods when the throne of the Sinhalese kings actually fell into the hand of the Tamils.[11] Some time during the third century B.C., for example, two Tamil horse trader seized the throne of the then Sinhalese king and retained

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7. P.E. Pieris, "Nagadipa and Buddhist Remains in Jaffna", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, Vol.XXV, No. 70, pp. 17–18.

8. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol.II (London, Longmans Green, 1859), p.539; H.W. Codrington, *A Short History of Ceylon* (London, 1853), p.32; P.E. Pieris, "Nagadipa and Buddhist Remains in Jaffna", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Ceylon Branch)*, Vol.XXV, No.70, pp.17–18 and Vol.XXVIII, No.12, p.68; H.W. Stoudt, *The Physical Anthropology of Ceylon* (Colombo, National Museum, 1961), p.4 and p.167.

9. *Kalvettu* originally meant lithic inscription but now it covers all sorts of folk literature.

10. *Vaiya padal* was composed by Vaiyapuri Ayyar, a court bard of King Jagaraja Segara (1519–1565) of Jaffna.

11. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon* (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1964), pp.99–101.

it for twenty-two years. Later, another Tamil, Elara of Chola country, seized Anuradhapura which he ruled for an unbroken spell of fourty-four years until he was finally defeated by Dutugemunu who re-established Sinhalese, power in Ceylon. Tamil influence and power was not, however, easily vanquished. Between 102 B.C. and 89 B.C., seven Tamil kings from the Pandyan kingdom ruled Ceylon. About four centuries later Tamil rulers from the Pandyan dynasty resumed power in Ceylon for another twenty-six years. Each of these sporadic periods of Tamil rule was accompanied by several waves of Tamil migration. The migration of the middle of the first century A.D. resulted, subsequently, in the heavy concentration of Tamil settlements in North Ceylon, adjacent to the South Indian coast.

According to **Koneswar Kalvettu**, Kulakkodan, in 436 A.D. the king of Chola dynasty, came to worship at the Koneswar Kovil at Tiruconamalai (Trincomalee). He brought with him a large number of **vanniyars**,[12] a caste of peasants, who settled in the area to cultivate land and perform services at the shrine. The influx of these **vanniyars** continued to increase with the Chola expansion which began in the fifth century and gained momentum during the tenth century. By the end of this period the first wave of migration came to an end, leaving permanent Tamil settlements complete with three Siva temples, namely, Thiruketeeswaram at Mantota, Koneswaram at Trincomalee and Thirukovil at Batticaloa.[13]

Amongst the immigrants of the Chola period were many Tamil **brahmins** who migrated to Ceylon and served as priests only, contributing to the spread of Saivite Hinduism in Ceylon, especially the northern areas. Together with them, a number of social and occupational groups from the Tamil country also migrated to Ceylon. These included the **mullainattar**, or the inhabitants of the pastoral tracts **(mullai)** of the Tamil country, and **malayalathar** or people from Malabar which formed part of the ancient Tamilakam or Tamil country. Alluding to the various caste groups that embarked for Ceylon, Vaiyapuri Ayyar, the Tamil poet, sings:[14]

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12. *Vanniyars* were a caste of cultivators or peasants.

13. M.D. Raghavan, *India in Ceylonese History, Society and Culture* (London, Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp.51–52.

14. *Ibid.*, p.53.

Meekaman voyaged over the rising waves to Lanka,
In the ship were the beautiful royal ladies,
Nallathevan, high ranking Sobagiri, Sukrivan, Ankusan,
Sinkathi Mapanan, Thatparayan Arasan, Selvakodiyon Thevan.

Thillai Muvayiravar, Chetti Vani, Thisaikondar,
People of Kudalur, Mullainattar, Paraver,
The original Mukiyar, Parayar, Vilaivanar, Muver, Koller,
Mata Maravar, Navitar, Komatti, Koviyar, Tachchar, Kannar,
Eighteen Castes of kudies and numbers of Tatar Sangamer.

Kuchiliyar, Akampadiyar, Kothirathar, Kovalarkal, Kuyar,
Kopalaranor, Dancers, people of Naga Nainativu and of,
Manmunai tivu abounding in fish, people of Varunakula descent,
Malayalathar, Sillian of Achchamai, and Arya Vankisa Maraiyar.

Malaver, Oddiyar, Tottiyar women,
Sword-girt Vanniyar, Muver Vanar, powerful bowmen,
Flutist and cymbal-players, drummers, players on vanka
And other reputed instruments, with splendour and pageantry
Resounding the seven seas, the ladies arrived.

From the seventh through the eleventh centuries the influx of Tamils into the north was extensive, so much so that the northern kingdoms of Rajarata became almost a dependency of the Pandya and Chola. The Tamil influence and presence became considerable after the Chola occupation of Ceylon and it grew stronger with Pandyan expansion. By 993 A.D. the Cholas had captured Anuradhapura, the Sinhalese capital, and the Chola king, Rajaraja, forced the Sinhalese rulers to withdraw to the southeast. The Sinhalese then built a new capital at Polonaruwa which claimed equal magnificence as Anuradhapura. The reign of Parakrama Bahu the Great (1153–1186) who established his kingdom at Polonnaruwa, witnessed an efflorescence of Sinhalese supremacy, power and culture. He recaptured Ceylon from the Tamils and waged wars with the Cholas. He even ventured on a military campaign abroad and invaded Siam, Burma and the Pandyan kingdom.[15] Some two decades after his death in 1186, however, Magha, the ruler of Kalinga in India, invaded Ceylon with a army of 24,000 Tamils and seized the Sinhalese throne in 1211. During his oppressive rule the Sinhalese were driven into the Ruhuna territory in the South. This period brought a fresh wave of migration from South India, attested to be the largest, when the Tamils expanded all over fertile lowlands of

15. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident*, pp.54–56.

the North.[16] During his reign of twenty years, Buddhist shrines were destroyed and the monasteries desecrated, while Saivism was propagated and favoured.[17]

In 1325 the Tamils established the separate kingdom of Jaffna.[18] According to Tamil tradition, a family that migrated from the Kalinga region and claimed descent from the Ganga Dynasty settled in Rameswaram, an island at the southernmost tip of India. Its members who married into the **brahmin** families of Rameswaram and adopted the title of Arya Chakravartis became the founders of the kingdom of Jaffna. The political boundaries of the Jaffna kings, however, shifted with their changing political fortunes.

Ibn Battuta, the great Arab traveller who visited Jaffna in 1344 mentions that the Tamil king ruled all the territory up to the southern boundary of Puttalam. The king also held the pearl fisheries and collected taxes from the Sinhalese kings of the south.[19] This Tamil kingdom thrived on till the sixteenth century when political developments in South India brought it under the domain of the expanding Vijayanagar Empire. The subsequent expansion, thereafter, of Muslim power in South India which brought about the downfall of the Vijayanagar dynasty also marked the end of Tamil power in Jaffna.

The early colonists of Ceylon during the Chola and Pandya period of South India originated from Kerala, and the Ramnad, Tinnevelly and Madura districts in Tamilnad. Kerala was part of Tamilakam, or the Tamil country, and it was one of the areas from where the colonists came in large numbers, attracted by opportunities to eke out a living in Ceylon. Under the Vijayanagar power, Telegus, most of whom came from the Coromandel coast, figured predominantly amongst the immigrants of Ceylon. They also contributed indirectly to the migration of the **vellalars**, a dominant Tamil caste, from South India to Ceylon. The appointment by the Vijayanagar emperors of Telegus as tax-collectors and military chiefs all over the Madura and Tanjore districts of the Tamil country to replace the influential and wealthy **vellalars**,[20] who had

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16. *Ibid*, p.60.
17. C. Brito (Translated), *Yalpana-Vaipava-Malai* (Colombo, 1879), Appendix, p.73.
18. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon*, p.104.
19. *Ibid.*, p.105.
20. C. Rasanayagam, *Ancient Jaffna* (Madras, Everymans Publishers Ltd., 1926), pp.335–336.

originally held these positions offset, the migration of the latter as well to Ceylon. According to Rasanayagam, many respectable **vellalar** families may have migrated during this period to Ceylon. Some of them settled in Jaffna and others sought refuge under the Sinhalese kings and, having accepted positions of honour and trust, became the progenitors of some of the most respectable **vellalar** families of the South. The migration of a large number of **vellalar** chieftains is consistent with the claims of hundreds of families in different parts of Jaffna Peninsula, to descent from one or other of these early colonists.[21]

The people who migrated from Malabar (or the present-day Kerala) and the Coromandel Coast brought along with them their culture which was gradually assimilated. Thus, a heterogenous set of laws and customs pertaining to family and society developed among the population in Jaffna.[22]

C. The Kingdom of Jaffna

(a) Administration

The kingdom of Jaffna was divided into four provinces, namely Valigamam, Tenmaradchi, Vadamaradchi and Pachchilapali. The head of the state was the king who was often characterised by the three great virtues of heroism, justice and charity. These virtues were instilled in the rulers through their reputedly good education. The sovereign as the guardian of the people was the supreme head of politics in Jaffna and was expected to discharge his duties to the satisfaction of his subjects.[23]

Both the town and village unit were referred to, generally, as **ur** and this formed the basic unit for administration. The **thalamaikaran** or headman was in charge of the administration of the village and a number of these were supervised by an **adigar** appointed by the king.[24]

All the land belonged to the king. He granted arable land to castes, classes and individuals in return for specific services. In other words, payment was

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21. *Ibid.*, p.336.

22. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon*, pp.106–108.

23. C.S. Navaratnam, *Tamils and Ceylon* (Jaffna, Saiva Prakasa Press, 1958), pp.180–189.

24. Ibid.

made in kind by the grant of service land. Such services ranged from ceremonial rituals to the more pragmatic services of war and peace.[25] Such grants were renewed on application to the king and on payment of a fee. The **pandara-pillais** or tax collectors collected all dues and contributions for the king.

The administration of justice in the village was the responsibility of the **panchayat**, or a council of elders in the village. They meted out justice in accordance with the customs of the land and social norms as laid down in the **Tesavalamai**. The king's court was, however, the final court of appeal. For the dispensation of justice the king made a daily appearance in an audience hall.[26]

(b) Economic Conditions

Fundamentally, Jaffna was a caste-based society, in which the caste structure was based on occupational structure.[27] Members of each caste carried out their respective caste-revelant occupations. A majority of the people lived in the villages and each village had its temple, its physician, its astrologer and the temple priest. The landowners as the most influential class had, attached to them, a class of landless labourers who were paid for in grain. The smiths and carpenters supplied the agricultural implements for which they received payment in grain. Similarly, the barber and washerman collected their dues in grain at harvest time. The village thus formed the basic unit of economic life for the majority of Jaffnese.

The people of Jaffna were mainly involved in the pursuit of an agricultural economy, heavily dependent upon the land. The tenurial system in Jaffna was founded upon a personal basis called **uliyam**. Jaffna country is widely repsented as a barren piece of land which presented " . . . one uniform land; unbroken by a single hill, and scarcely varied by an undulation of more than a very few feet".[28] The soils were largely derived from the Miocene limestone, which were classified as red loams, grey loams, lagoon muds and coastal sands. The red loam, being the most valuable, was cultivated entirely with garden crops,

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25. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation 1795–1833,* Vol. II (Colombo, The Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1862), p.385.

26. C.S. Navaratnam, *Tamils and Ceylon,* p.183.

27. M.D. Raghavan, *Tamil Culture in Ceylon* (Colombo, Ceylon Printers Ltd., undated), pp.117–127.

28. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon,* Vol.II (London, Longmans Green, 1859), p.518.

the grey loams served as paddy soils, while the sand soils supported coconut cultivation.[29] With no rivers of streams, the air was moistened and refreshed by the evaporation from the surface of the coastal areas. The climate and soil favoured the cultivation only of dry grains which included **varagoo** (paspalum frumentaceum), **kollo**, millet, **moondy** and pulse of various kinds in addition to **coracan** (cynosurus coracanus) and **gingele** (sesamum orientele) and vegetables, fruits, tobacco, coconut and palmyra palm (Borassus flabelliformis).[30] The little wet rice grown was compensated by imports from other parts of Ceylon and India.

Because of the absence of rivers and streams, farmers were dependent extremely on the rains of the two monsoons in May and November and wells figured prominently in village life. Every cottage had a well and an enclosed garden surrounding the cottage wherein were grown the fruits, vegetables, onions, chillies, turmeric, ginger pumpkin, brinjals, potatoes and some of the grains, both for home consumption and for export. The wells here provided the chief means of water supply and labourers were often employed to raise water. According to one source, sometimes the owners ". . . get up at all hours of the night to take turns at draining water from the wells."[31] Such was the hard life and the indefatigable industry of the farmer to eke out a living from the land.

Though a variety of cash crops were cultivated the staple of Jaffna was tobacco. In the cultivation of tobacco the ground was highly manured which enabled the farmer to grow two or three cash crops in succession without additional manuring. This method was popular because of the scarcity of fertile land in Jaffna. Tobacco was exported chiefly to Travancore in South India for rice, to Aceh in Sumatra in exchange for areca-nut and gum, and to Penang for specie.[32] The ruler of Travancore had an agent resident in Jaffna to purchase the tobacco from the growers.

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29. A.W.R. Joachim and S. Kandiah, "Studies on Ceylon Soils: V–Soils associated with limestone", *Tropical Agriculturist*, Vol.LXXX (1935), pp.67–77; J.E. Tennent, Ceylon, Vol.I, p.20.

30. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol. II, p.534.

31. S.A. Pakeman, *Ceylon* (London, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1964), p.200; J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol.II, p.533.

32. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation 1795–1833*, Vol. II p.473. According to the Government Agent in Jaffna the tobacco was of a special quality adapted to the tastes of Travancoreans and the Malays who it is said "overrate it so greatly that they will not purchase any other Tabac so long as there is a pound of it to be had".

Tennent, writing in 1859, noted that Jaffna was the only place in Ceylon where "no one is idle or unprofitably employed."[33] The markets were full of activity and were said to have been generally stocked with a greater variety of fruits and vegetables than those in any other part of the island. When labour was not in demand in Jaffna, the Jaffnese went into the interior "carrying adventures of curry stuffs, betel leaves and other produce, to be sold in the villages of the Wanny."[34] In fact, coastal and peddling trade involving the interchange of goods between Jaffna, Batticaloa and Mannar, for example, supplemented the income of the Tamils.[35] Some Tamils also engaged in other occupations like toddy tapping, salt manufacture, cattle rearing, cloth weaving and fishing, but the majority were primarily dependent on the land.

c. Education

Through the close cultural and social contacts maintained with South India the Jaffna kings, as patrons of learning, often invited scholars from South India to spread Tamil education in Jaffna. The Jaffnese, particularly those of the **vellalar** caste, like their counterparts in South India, placed emphasis on the education of their children. The children met either in the homes of the teachers, in the premises of temples or a **madam** where they received instruction in Tamil grammar, Tamil literature, **Nikandu** (a lexicon in verse) and ethics and, in addition, philosophy was taught to older students. Recitation and interpretation of the **purana** and epics formed the basis of mass education.[36]

d. Socio-Cultural Organisation

Every society institutionalises social and cultural practices relating to matters of marriage, family, religion, government and education which fulfil its cardinal needs. The Ceylon Tamils, likewise, have attached so much importance to their customary laws and practices pertaining to social behaviour and property that these have become institutionalised norms in their society.

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33. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol.II, p.542–543.

34. *Ibid.*

35. S. Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658–1687* (Djambatan, Amsterdam, 1958), p.174.

36. C.S. Navaratnam, *Tamils and Ceylon*, p.196.

Cultural admixture during the early phases of settlement in Jaffna in Ceylon resulted in some of their practices being tentative. However, with the passage of time, they became accepted procedures evolving sanctions and compulsions which finally crystallised into formal institutions. Their customary laws called **Tesavalamai**[37] became the deciding factor in regularising and patterning many activities in Jaffnese society. The existence of the **Tesavalamai** as an institutional agency and the regulation of customary laws created a moral compulsion to act according to it. It became the guide for the action of individuals in appropriate situations concerning persons and property.

As mentioned earlier, Jaffnese society emerged as a result of the colonisation of people from the Malabar coast of South India and, later, by an exodus of Tamils in the middle of the thirteenth century. The Malabar immigrants to Jaffna adhered to the **Marumakattayam** Law which was essentially matriarchal in nature. It was fairly similar to the Minangkabau matrilineal system of Sumatra in which descent and inheritance followed the female line.[38]

According to traditional **Marumakattayam** Law the unit of society was the **tarwad** and the children of the male members belonged to the mother's **tarwad**, not the father's.[39] The most senior member of the tarwad became the **karnaven** or manager of the unit. Sons did not become managers of their mother's but their sister's property. A male was succeeded by his sisters' children. However, with the passage of time changes took place in this system and the husband came to assume the role of a **karnaven** of the community, of property

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37. The *Tesavalamai*, literally meaning "Customs of the Land", was codified under the orders of Dutch Governor of Ceylon, Simons, in 1707. The actual codification was accomplished under the surveillance of Claus Isaaksz and approved by the twelve *Mudaliyars* or native chiefs of Jaffna.

38. T. Kato, *Matriliny and Migration. Evolving Minangkabau Traditions in Indonesia* (London, Cornell University Press, 1982), p.51. In traditional Minangkabau society the husband only visits the wife at night and returns to his mother's house during daytime, as he continues to belong to this house. His economic responsibility to his wife and children is minimal as that role is performed by the wife's brother.

39. See M.S.A. Rao, *Social Change in Malabar* (Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1957); K. Alexander, *Social Mobility in Kerala* (Poona, Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, 1965); D.G. Mandelbaum, *Society in India: Continuity and Change* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1970).

and of the **tavazhi illam**, or separate house provided by the girl's father after marriage. This institution of **tavazhi illam** is similar to the system of dowry which became established in Jaffna where the father set up separate homes for his married daughters.

A fundamental provision of this law was that females inherited the property of females and, accordingly, a dowried sister succeeded to the inheritance of another dowried sister if she had no children.[40] It drew a distinction between self-acquired property and ancestral property. It allowed the husband, as head of the family, to effect a sale, mortage or lease involving acquired property, but the permission of his wife was required if it involved her ancestral property. Should after the death of a wife, a husband wished to remarry, the care of her property and her children were taken over by her mother's **tarwad**. This matrilineal system was already in existence among the early settlers in Jaffna when the Tamils of the Coromandel Coast brought their patrilineal system of Hindu Law. The meeting of these two people with their distinct cultures led to a process of acculturation and assimilation which finally resulted in the inhabitants of Jaffna observing an admixture of matrilineal and patrilineal systems.

Brahmanical influence was felt in Jaffna after the coming of the Tamils and this reinforced the patrilineal aspects of society. With the passage of time when patrilineal system provided the basis for the structural framework, the corresponding rule that males succeeded males was recognised. Consequently, paternal inheritance was on the sons, while maternal inheritance and devolution of the dowry was on the females. Just as one dowried sister succeeded to another dowried sister's inheritance, the brother's property devolved upon his agnates. Other elements of Hindu Law that seeped into Jaffnese society include features of the Hindu joint family system. Contributions to the common pool by the sons during their period of bachelorhood; equal division of property by the sons when the parents were capable of administering the family property; and the duty of the sons to support the parents and the mother's assumption of the headship of the family on the demise of the father were all elements of Hindu Law that were incorporated into the customary laws of Jaffnese society. Thus, it is obvious that the Jaffnese society emerged with a curious admixture of both the **Marumakattayam** and Hindu Laws. So important were these customary

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40. H.W. Thambiah, *Laws and Customs of the Tamils in Jaffna* (Colombo, 1956), p.10. The Mukkuwa Law of the fishermen of Malabar and the Aliyasantana Law of the Canarese in South India also have similar arrangements as regard inheritance. The Mukkuwa Law states that "penvalli urumai penpillai' or "a female heir from the female heir."

laws of the Jaffnese that it was applied to them throughout the courts of law in Ceylon.[41]

The customary laws of the Jaffnese fell into two broad categories, first, those affecting matters pertaining to caste and marriage and, second, those pertaining to property and inheritance. Almost the entire spectrum of Jaffna socio-cultural life were subsumed under these two catagories. To the Jaffnese their traditional laws provided the basis of social order and was regarded, therefore, as the foremost institution for ensuring the unity and survival of the community. Every Jaffnese individual's life was governed by these customary laws and even Jaffnese who came to embrace Christianity continued to adhere to them. The prestige of individual families was dependent upon how faithfully they conformed to customary prescriptions.

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41. *Ibid.*, The *Tesavalamai* that was in effect in twentieth century Jaffna was not in its pristine form as it had been modified during European rule. The Portuguese effected a change whereby dowry could be given from *Mudusam* or ancestral property, *chidenam* or dowry property or *thediatettam* or acquired property. The Dutch administered the Roman-Dutch Law on matters that the *Tesavalamai* failed to touch as, for example, in the case of trees which grew by themselves, the fruit belonged to the person whose grounds they overshadowed. They passed another seventy-six orders making changes in matters affecting sales, deals, money, marriages and dowries. (pp.24–26).
The British saw to the introduction of the Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance in 1911 which simplified the laws relating to inheritance and matrimonial rights. The special provision of this Ordinance was that it did not apply to a woman who was governed by the *Tesavalamai* but who married a person to whom the *Tesavalamai* did not apply. But on the other hand, she will be governed by this Ordinance during the period of her marriage if the *Tesavalamai* did not apply to her but she married a person to whom it applied. It applied to people married or died after 17 July 1911, the date of proclamation of this Ordinance. (p.243).
All the provisions of the customary laws applied to persons and property in Jaffna. Only in 1947 when the Ordinance No.58 of 1947 was introduced did it make the Ordinance of 1911 applicable to all properties situated in any part of Ceylon owned by persons governed by the *Tesavalamai*. It also affected the immovable property in Ceylon of persons governed by the *Tesavalamai* but who died in a foreign, country in which case the law of intestate succession was according to the provisions of *Tesavalamai*. (p.244).

(i) Social Structure

Caste and marriage were irrevocably linked. As the Jaffnese were migrants from India where the concept of social stratification was prominent, the caste system existed as a vital social institution in Jaffnese society. Though the system in Jaffna did not represent an exact transplant of the South Indian model, it maintained the essential features of the system, such as distinction and discrimination based on the traditional concept of purity and pollution.[42] Their proximity to the Indian subcontinent and their continuous association with the people of South India assisted in the perpetuation of this primordial sentiment.

In Jaffna there were the **brahmins** who were ritually the highest caste, were few in number, exclusive in their social behaviour, and hardly ever married outside their caste. Some of them held important positions like advisers to the king and teachers while others officiated as **saiva kurukkal** at the temples in Jaffna. The **vellalars** formed a powerful landowning caste who predominated numerically in Jaffna. Others included the **karaiyar** or fisher caste, **tattar** or goldsmith, **kollar** or blacksmith, **natuvar** or temple musicians, **pandaram** or temple servants, and **koviar**[43] or servants to the **vellalar**. These are all recognised as clean castes. The unclean castes were indentified as the **ampattar** or barbers.[44]

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42. Pollution arises from death, decay, disease, human emissions, unclean animals, alcohol, meat and the act of killing. Anyone having any association with the above sources of impurity or undertaking occupations related to them are considered as defiling and hence deemed a low caste. The transmission of pollution takes place through touch, sight, distance and shadow. Coming into contact, directly or indirectly, with an agent of pollution was considered as polluting. Untouchability was the highest manifestation of impurity. See L. Dumont, *Home Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970); C.C.A. Bougle, *Essays on the Caste System* (Cambridge, University Press, 1971); G.S. Ghurye, *Caste and Race in India* (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1969); *D. Bose, The Problems of Indian Society* (Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1968).

43. *Koviar* is a caste peculiar to Jaffna and not found in the Indian caste system. The origin of this caste has not been definitely established. As servants of *vellalars* they were inferior but they enjoyed a better ritual status than most other castes.

44. Barbers performed certain ritual functions in Jaffnese society e.g. the men were required to shave the corpse while the women were the village midwives who handled deliveries at home.

vannar or washermen, **pallar** or agricultural labourers, **paraiyar** or weavers and drummers, **nalavar** or agricultural labourers and **thirumbar** who were washermen for **paraiyar** and **nalavar**. The **pallar, paraiyar** and **nalavar** were depressed castes who had restricted relationship with the higher castes, while the **thirumbar** had no relationship at all with the higher castes. The washerman and barber, though considered ritually impure, were allowed to perform their respective caste functions at ceremonial occasions for the higher castes.

Essentially, an agrarian social order with agriculture as the main pursuit of the people it determined a patron-client relationship, with the concomitant practice of slavery, which was in vogue in Jaffna since the early phase of settlement. Castes which were bound to the **vellalar** landowners included the **brahmin, vannar, ambattar** and **paraiyar** while the **koviars, pallars** and **nalavars** alone were slave castes. Among the non-bound castes the temple musicians and servants were less non-bound as compared to fishermen and artisans. The slaves as property of the master were bought and sold or given as dowry by their owners who invariably were the **vellalars**. The latter had the right to exact services, provide care and maintenance and order the lives of the slaves they owned, even to the extent of arranging and endorsing their marriages.

By virtue of the secular dominance the **vellalars** not only provided their children with English education, once this became available, so as to prepare

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45. The Tesavalamai Regulation 1806 passed by the British recognised that "all questions that relate to those rights and privileges which subsist in the said province between the higher castes, particularly the Vellalas, on the one hand, and the lower castes, particularly the Covias, Nalluas and Pullues, on the other, shall be decided according to said customs and ancient usages of the province." Slavery was recognised during the initial period of British rule where they introduced rules relating to registration of slaves. But in 1821 they passed a regulation whereby all female slave children were purchased by the government at birth and adult slaves to purchase their own freedom. Arbitrators were appointed to determine the rate for adult slaves. However, with the introduction of Regulation No. 20 in 1844 slavery was abolished in Ceylon but this did not bring any drastic effect in Jaffnese society as members of the slave castes remained as *de facto* slaves for economical reasons. Even towards the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries though slavery was not practised overtly, the relationship between the *vellalar* landlord and his labourers of the depressed castes who worked on the fields smacked of slavery.

them for government employment, but also took steps to lay a number of social prohibitions on lower castes[46] who attempted to educate their children. This was evident when at the encouragement and protection of the Christian missionaries many lower castes, especially the **koviars**, educated their children and the **vellalars** reacted with contempt and suspicion. In fact, the occasional attempt by the lower castes to exert their individuals rights proved a constant source of friction between the **vellalars** and **koviars** in Jaffna.

Although Jaffna constituted many different castes, the **vellalars** who ranked highest formed, numerically, almost half the population.[47] The status and dominance of **vellalars** in Jaffna society undoubtedly had great bearing in the socio-cultural life of Jaffnese. By tradition they were landlords, independent farmers and holders of political office, first, under the old kings and, later, under the colonial powers. It appears that Jaffna was governed by **vellalars** and neither the Portuguese nor Dutch employed **brahmins** as advisers. Referred to by the honorific title of **kamakaran**, or field men, they were conscious of their high social status in that no **vellalar** would work for a lower caste and, sometimes, not even for another **vellalar. Vellalar** peasants who were in poverty preferred to rent or share-crop rather than work for others. Even as farmers they did not do all the work on the land. Menial tasks, such as climbing trees and weeding paddy fields, was left to the lower castes.[48] Some **vellalars** even declined to plough, harvest and winnow. The image of a 'gentleman' farmer who worked less on the field but could produce his own rice and provide a surplus to feed his servants and slaves was the ideal that every **vellalar** tried to achieve. Such was the sense of self-esteem held by the **vellalars.**[40]

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46. Umbrella, fly whisk and palanquins were to be used only by *vellalars* besides expecting the lower castes to bare the upper part of the body as a sign of respect to the high castes.

47. M. Banks, "The Social Organisation of the Jaffna Tamils of North Ceylon With Special Reference to Kinship, Marriage and Inheritance", Ph.D. Dissertation (Trinity College, University of London, London, 1957), p.350. The author carried out a survey of caste distribution in Jaffna through the assistance of village headmen and found there were about 48 different castes. But the majority of the population were distributed as follows: *Brahmins* 0.7%, *Vellalars* 50%, *Koviar* 7%; *Pandaram* 1%, Goldsmith 0.6%, Carpenter 2%, *Nattuvar* less than 0.2%, Dhobies 1.5%, Barbers 0.9%, *Nallavar* 9%, Pallar 9%, Paraiyar 2.7%, *Thirumbar* 0.2% and the rest of *Karaiyar* caste.

48. C.S. Navaratnam, *Tamils and Ceylon*, p.191. In ancient Jaffna there were two classes of *vellalars* namely *uluthuviththunpor* (those who get their fields ploughed by others) and *uluthunpor* (whose who plough their fields themselves).

Kathleen Ryan talks of an implicit equation of gods and kings with **vellalars** in Jaffna society and this may be understood in terms of the privileged position of the latter.[50] In Jaffna high walls had encircled the royal residences of kings as well as the temples. On more modest proportions, walls also encircled the homes of **vellalars** for protection both from mortal and spiritual forces. According to Hindu belief the deities were the fountain-head of fertility, social order and auspicious conditions and the kings were their earthly counterparts. It was, moreover, the foremost duty of the king to safeguard **dharma** (righteousness) and preserve the cosmic and social order in society. Kathleen Ryan argues that though there were no kings in Jaffna after the establishment of European rule, the idea persisted that those who possessed power were responsible for maintaining the ecological and social order. The **vellalars** as patron-chiefs in Jaffna society were expected to adhere to **dharma** and emulate the role of kings. Thus we find the **vellalars**, who replicated the role of kings or rulers on a lesser scale, were considered responsible for the stability and welfare of the community. Their paternalistic role earned them an enhanced position in society and items and symbols such as umbrellas, fly whisks, palanquins and head-dress, paraphernalia traditionally associated with gods and kings, became also the privileged possession exclusively of the **vellalar** caste.

In time, their relative dominance in terms of wealth due to their numerical preponderance in well-paid non-agricultural employment during British rule added to a feeling of superiority among them. They occupied the ranks of middle and upper classes in Jaffna society as clerks, professionals and government officials. Even the **brahmins** who were ritually the highest caste were servants to the **vellalars** who owned and administered the temples. They dismissed **brahmin** priests at will and did not hesitate to punish priests guilty of misbehaving. Their exclusive right to own slaves and employ servants also contributed to their psychological dominance in their attitude towards others. In every village the temples were the property of the **vellalars** who expected the other clean castes to attend and support them and sometimes, they even

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49. Banks, "The Social Organisation of the Jaffna Tamils of North Ceylon", p.377. Though the traditional prestige of the farmer disappeared during British period in favour of government employment the close association between landownership and influence still remained. Village headmenship were still held by the landowning *vellalars*.

50. K.S. Ryan, "Pollution in Practice: Ritual, Structure and Change in Tamil Sri Lanka," Ph.D. dissertation (Cornell University, Cornell, 1980), pp.39–41.

used sanctions to enforce participations.[51] In these temples the hierarchical implications of the ceremonies and their stigmatised roles in the rituals were not lost on the lower castes. The secular as well as spiritual dominance of the **vellalars** over all other castes engendered self confidence, perseverance, leadership traits, dominating qualities and community consciousness among them.

As a community ritually next to the **brahmins**, the **vellalars** observed their socio-cultural traditions with such tenacity that social and political developments caused little or no change at all to their social status. Occupying a high status with regard to caste and as administrators and persons holding political office and the greater proportion of the wealth in the community, they were the undisputed elite. As such they were the custodians and repositories of the various cultural traditions that characterised Jaffnese society. Every Jaffnese of **vellalar** descent was exposed to his customs and practices which gradually became assimilated into his socio-cultural life. Although the customary laws and tradition affected all Jaffnese, irrespective of caste, the **vellalars** alone who had the education, power and wherewithal observed them with the greatest tenacity. This was not surprising in view of the fact that the customary laws and practices provided the stability and continuity of a community within which they enjoyed a dominant position.

(ii) **Property and Inheritance**

The customary laws of the Jaffnese explicitly stated the respective rights of husband and wife relating to property.[52] The **Tesavalamai** divided property into **mudusam** or hereditary property brought by husband or wife, **chidenam**[53]

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51. *Ibid.*, p.55. Only in the 1970s were the unclean castes in Jaffna able to gain entry into some of the larger temples, but in most of the villages they were still denied entry.

52. Details of customary laws related to property and persons are drawn mainly from H.W. Thambiah's *Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Jaffna* (Colombo, 1956).

53. According to Marumakattayam Law it was a practice in Malabar for the husband as head of the *tarwad* to provide separate branch *tarwads* known as *tavazhi illam*. This was necessary when a single *tarwad* comprised numerous families and it became difficult to manage. The early settlers from Malabar found it expedient to introduce this practice to suit economic conditions in Jaffna. In this manner a newly married daughter is given a portion of the family property to begin a separate household and the property she brings along with her from her natal home became *chidenam*.

or dowry property brought by a wife on marriage, and **thediatettam** or property acquired during the period of married life. Both the husband and wife were owners of their respective properties, but were joint owners of **thediatettam**. On the whole the husband held wider property rights which included the administration and sale of the **mudusam** and **thediatettam**, and even her dowry though, in this case, with her consent. The wife, on the other hand, was obliged to get the consent of her husband as head of the household in matters relating to her own dowry or **mudusam**, but had no right to affairs relating to her husband's **mudusam** even after his death. As a widow she could, however, sell her dowry property without the consent of her children. If the wife lived separately from the husband through desertion, mutual consent or for any other reason, she was free to dispose of her property for purpose of maintaining the family, without the consent of the husband.

Regarding the rights and obligations of the parent and children, the customary law mentioned a reciprocal relationship. Just as it was the duty of the father to support his children till they were about eighteen years old, it was the duty of the sons, when adults, to support their aged parents. If old age incapacitated parents from administering the family property, the sons were then expected to take over the responsibility and support the parents during the rest of their lives. However, should they fail in their obligation to provide for them, the parents were free to resume control of the property and mortgage or sell it for cash for their upkeep. It was the special obligation, however, on the part of the sons to settle the father's debts until the English law of Ceylon made it obsolete.

The **Tesavalamai** provided for the most intricate details of social contract, including remarriage. The father took full possession of the property on the death of the wife and he could continue to do so unless he decided to remarry. If he wished to remarry, however, the mother-in-law assumed control of the daughter's dowry property, half the **thediatettam** and she also became responsible for raising her grand-children. If one of the daughters from that marriage were in time to marry, it was the duty of the father to dower her with part of his **thediatettam** acquired during the period of his first marriage. Should the woman herself remarry and have daughters by both marriages, she dowered the children from her previous marriage from her dowry property.

The **Tesavalamai** recognised polygamy and children born out of wedlock shared equal rights in the family and property.[54] Even a child adopted

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54. The General Marriage Ordinance (1907) of Ceylon or Ordinance No. 19 of 1907 recognised only monogamy and under Criminal Law of Ceylon (Section 362 of Penal Code), bigamy was made an offence.

according to the rites and conditions laid down by customary law enjoyed equal status with the other children in the house. The **Tesavalamai** discussed a wide range of provisions in the case of adopted children and clearly stated their rights of succession.[55]

Dowry has always remained an important characteristic of Jaffnese society and many rules governed its form, possession and related rights and obligations. As it was the duty of the parents to dower their daughters, the parents or their sons and on their behalf, were obliged to make a **doty**[56] or written promise of dowry containing land, garden, slaves etc because "it is by this means that most of the girls obtain husbands, as it is not for the girls but for the property that most of the men marry."[57] So important was this dowry in the life of a girl that parents and male siblings of girls endeavoured tenaciously to replace through cash or kind any dowry land lost through decree of court. In the event of the later acquisition of wealth and property by parents it was left to their discretion to increase the dowry already given, and daughters were also at liberty to induce their parents to increase their **doty**.

With the introduction of the Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance in 1911, certain provisions of the old laws not in keeping with this Ordinance were revoked. With regard to **thediatettam** some amendments and clarifications were made which stressed that it must include only acquisitions made after marriage as well as profits and wealth earned from investment of

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55. Thambiah, *Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Jaffna*, pp.133–134. Adoption involved an elaborate ceremony witnessed by a number of people. Fingers of the close relatives and the adoptive family's children are dipped in a cup of saffron water as a mark of consent before it is drunk by adopting and adopted parties. The Tesavalamai Code stated that it was the children of the brothers and sisters who should be adopted. Only if the brothers and sisters refuse to give their children, then a person can adopt a stranger's child.

56. In early days it was advisable to take quick possession of dowried property as expressed in the Tamil maxim "ottiyum chidenamum pattiyai" otherwise the property was returned to the common estate. However, this uncertainty was overcome when a deed or *doty* was drawn by containing the grant of dowry. Since it was notarily executed it became legal document in case of eventualities.

57. The *Tesavalamai Ordinance*, Chapter 51, Part 1, No.5. Quoted from Thambiah, *Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Jaffna*, p.172.

mudusam and **chidenam**. However, the husband's position remained as before and, although he was required to replace the dowry property if he squanders it, the **thediatettam** which included profits rising from dowry property was liable to seizure for debts.

The general principle governing succession in Jaffnese society according to the **Tesavalamai** recognised the order of succession as descendants, collaterals and ascendants.[58] Thus, paternal property devolved on the father's relations like uncles and aunts or their children, in the absence of the children and their father. Similarly, maternal property was vested on the maternal uncles and aunts or their children, in the absence of the children and their mother. The paternal and maternal relations succeeded to each half of the **thediatettam**.

(iii) Marriage

Marriage as an institutionalised practice was also governed by customary law. To establish such a relationship various essential rules had to be observed not only by the partners but also the immediate family members. Rules of an implicit nature, like obtaining the consent of the parties, consent of the parents, marriageable age and the performance of necessary wedding ceremonies[59] had always received serious attention among the Jaffnese. But of special significance in marriage contractions were the explicit rules of dowry, clan exogamy and caste endogamy which were never condoned under any circumstances.

Customary law stated explicitly that persons related within the fourth degree, excepting cross-cousins, were prohibited from marrying one another.[60] In other words, the children of siblings of the same sex could not marry. Persons belonging to the same clan were also prohibited from marrying each other as they were believed to have descended from a common ancestor. Marriages which transgressed these rules were regarded as incest.

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58. The introduction of the Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance of 1911 recognised the order of succession as descendants, ascendants and collaterals.

59. See Appendix A for details of marriage ceremonies of Jaffna Tamils.

60. H.W. Thambiah, The Laws and Customs of the Tamils of Ceylon, p.18; M.D. Raghavan. "The Malabar Inhabitants of Jaffna", *Paul Pieris Felicitation Volume* (Colombo, 1956); S.C. Chitty, *The Castes, Customs, Manners and Literature of the Tamils* (Colombo, 1934), p.69.

Caste endogamy in marriage arrangements formed the essential rule as it was this consideration that determined the type of wedding ceremony, the participation of kinsmen and the granting of dowry. Violation of this pertinent rule meant a socially disapproved relationship.

Marriage within the Jaffnese community, apart from transforming an ordinary man-woman relationship into the sacred bond of husband-wife, had special social significance. It was essentially a matching of status and wealth as the amount of dowry given and the caste rank were the most important criteria in these marriages. Though the proposed amount of dowry was open to deliberation, compliance was a sign of social prestige for both parties. Marriages were usually arranged by the parents and it was these type of marriages that were held in respect by members of the community.

Among the Jaffnese cross-cousin marriages involving the father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter was the most favoured. To the Jaffnese such an alliance ensured a stable marriage between persons whose background and character was known. It was also a means of ensuring the purity of the caste and consolidating the properties of a man and his sister through the inheritance of their children. The **chidenam** which formed the essential part of Jaffnese marriage consisted of land,[61] jewels and cash.

Caste endogamy did not necessarily mean that all **vellalars** intermarried freely among themselves. As highly status conscious people, they placed due importance on the ranking of families within their caste, based on a number of factors.[62] These included possessions of other caste servants, especially **koviars**,

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61. S.J. Thambiah, "Dowry and Bridewealth and the Property Rights of Women in South Asia" in J. Goody and S.J. Thambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry* (Cambridge, University Press, 1973), p.119. Land was usually classified into (i) garden land *(thottum)* which was sub-classified into palmyra garden *(panethottum)*, coconut garden *(thenemarran thottum)* and land on which tobacco, vegetables, banana etc. were grown; (2) paddy land *(vayal)*; (3) house compound land *(nilam)* and (4) waste land.

62. M. Banks, "The Social Organisation of the Jaffna Tamils of North Ceylon", pp.197–198. The above represent traditional factors while in modern day Jaffna additional factors included English education, employment, wealth and village origin. Villages like Nallur, Urumpirai, Vaddukkoddai, Uduvil and Kopay were held in high regard partly due to their historical importance.

and holding of office such as village headman. Of importance were also the possession of slaves in the past though not necessarily at the moment of marriage, claims to descent from one of the founding families of Jaffna as recorded in the **Yalpana Vaipamalai** and possession of wealth or land or documentary evidence of its former possession. Due importance was also given to cultural traits like traditional learning, including astrology and poetry, claims to descent from the **madapalli** caste (the former cooks of Tamil kings of Jaffna) and the practice of vegetarianism. The **koviars**, as servants of the **vellalars**, derived their status from their patron families. Intra-caste village endogamy was the norm but, occasionally, intra-caste intervillage marriages of **vellalars** did occur.

Though Tamil cultural characteristics were prominent, Malabari and Telegu cultural inroads undermined the perpetuation of a purely Tamil culture in Jaffna. There evolved, consequently, a community of South Indians in Jaffna who while, in certain respects, identical were, in other respects, quite different from the South Indian Tamils in Tamilnad. The life of the Jaffnese was regulated by a complex system of customary laws and practices. The blend of patrilineal and matrilineal features within the society gave Jaffnese customary law a peculiar character of its own. It became the indelible feature of Jaffna's historical past and the fountain-head of its social and cultural unity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EFFECTS OF COLONIAL RULE ON JAFFNA

The most radical change within various aspects of Ceylonese society became evident with the dawn of European colonial influence beginning from the sixteenth century. Their lasting influence was the introduction of Christianity and Western education to the people of Ceylon.

1.1 The Portuguese and Dutch Period

From 1520s onwards there were constant palace revolutions and intrigues within the Sinhalese kingdom and resulting disunity among the rulers of the Sinhalese kingdom. The Portuguese, who were at that time carrying on a profitable cinnamon trade with Ceylon, were drawn inevitably into these conflicts when their help was sought by the rulers. Through political intervention in the interest of trade, the Portuguese established a short period of political control from 1597 to 1658. This proved important in the context of the introduction of Christianity and its implications to developments in Jaffna, as indeed in the rest of Ceylon.[1]

The success of the proselytizing of Roman Catholicism by the Sinhalese and Tamils has been attributed to the talents of the missionary priests and friars of the Franciscan, Augustinian, Jesuit, Dominican and other orders who, by 1612, had converted a large population of the island. Various methods were employed to convert the heathens, including the policy of preventing the worship of other religions, destruction of temples and places of worship, inducements to potential converts, preferential judicial treatment and assurance of ready employment.[2] Despite the harsh methods employed the sincerity of the converts was impressive. This was witnessed in the manner in which whole communities remained steadfastly loyal to Roman Catholicism during the later Dutch attempts to convert them to Protestantism.[3] The Portuguese appointed only Christians to

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1. See T. Abesinghe, *Portuguese Rule in Ceylon, 1594–1612* (Colombo, Lake House Investments Ltd., 1966) and W.L.A. Don Peter, *Education in Sri Lanka Under the Portuguese* (Colombo, The Colombo Catholic Press, 1977), for accounts of Portuguese contributions to Ceylon.

2. S. A. Pakeman, *Ceylon* (London, E. Benn, 1964), p. 42.

3. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident* (London, Elek Books, 1970), p.66.

important offices and the landed aristocracy and upper classes chose to profess the new faith rather than lose their traditional positions of leadership. They took names such as Fernando, de Silva, Pieris, de Andrado, de Costa, etc.[4] Many churches and schools were built which brought new ideas, western learning and values to the life of the Ceylonese. The Jesuit missionary group paid a lot of attention to education by setting up schools in the major towns. Almost every church had a school where religion, Portuguese language and the child's own mother tongue, either Sinhalese or Tamil, was taught.

In Jaffna the Portuguese missionaries established churches and spread the Christian faith among the local people. The Christianisation of Jaffna was carried out so extensively that the missionaries reported, in 1644, that "almost the whole kingdom is Christian."[5] The schools attached to the churches placed so much emphasis on the teaching of Christianity that even the teaching of reading and writing took only a secondary place. When the Dutch took over Jaffna in 1658 they reported that the pupils in the schools were "very far advanced in the principles of the Christian religion, wonderfully able to confound poppish errors."[6]

Although by the end of the sixteenth century the Portuguese had conquered almost the whole of Ceylon, suppressing the kingdom of Kotte and Jaffna, they failed, despite several attempts to capture Kandy. It was to keep the Portuguese away from his kingdom that the King of Kandy, Rajasinha II, in 1638 sought assistance from the Dutch. The latter, who came to the East in the Dutch East India Company's service, "took with them a certain religious zeal that had

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4. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1964), p.135.

5. P. Trindade, *Conquista Espiritual do Oriente* (ed., F. Felix Lopes), Vol. I (Lisbon, 1962–67), pp.333–334. Quoted in W.L.A. Don Peter, *Education in Sri Lanka Under the Portuguese*, p.60.

6. P. Baldaeus, *A True and Exact Description of the Great Island of Ceylon*. Trans. Pieter Brohier, Vol. VIII of *The Ceylon Historical Journal*, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka, 1960, pp.322–323. Quoted in W.L.A. Don Peter, *Education in Sri Lanka Under the Portuguese*, p.127. There were about 750 children in the Mailiddi School, 600 in Uduvil School, 600 in Pandettarippu, 800 in Kopay and Puttur and about 1,000 in Tellippalai.

been acquired in the fight against Catholicism in Europe."[7] Having succeeded in driving the Portuguese out of Ceylon by 1658, they gradually established their influence over the island. They brought Rev. Baldaeus in 1658 to extirpate Catholicism and replace it with Protestantism.[8] They passed laws forbidding the practice of Catholicism and the entry of Catholic priests to the island. Churches were taken over and made into Protestant chapels.[9]

In Jaffna, village churches and schools were taken over by Protestants and Tamil catechists were trained to help in religious work. A printing press was established where translations of the Gospel and other simple catechisms were published in Tamil. In the field of administration the most significant contribution of the Dutch was the codification of Tesavalamai[10] or the laws and customs of Tamils of Jaffna, and the introduction of Roman-Dutch law which formed the basis of modern law in Sri Lanka.[11]

1.2 Development of Administration in Ceylon under the British Period

Towards the end of the eighteenth century nearly a hundred and fifty years of Dutch rule came to an end. In 1796 the British expelled the Dutch from Ceylon,[12] which became part of the Madras Presidency.[13] Shortly after,

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7. S. Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon, 1658–1687* (Amsterdam, Djambatam, 1958), p.215.

8. *Ibid.*, p.218.

9. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon*, pp.144–145.

10. *Ibid.*, pp.138–146. The *Tesavalamai* was drawn up in 1706 under orders from Governor Simons.

11. Like the Portuguese the Dutch, too, tried to found a colony of Dutchmen in Ceylon. Besides encouraging settlers from Holland the Dutch East India Company servants were encouraged to retire in Ceylon. They were granted land and licences for trading purposes and a large proportion of them settled in the cities. They came to be called the *Burghers.*

12. See V.T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763–1793* (London, Longman Green & Co., 1952), p. 143; L.A. Mills, *Ceylon Under British Rule 1795–1932* (London, Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1964), p.2; C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon Under British Occupation 1795–1833* (Colombo, The Colombo Apothecaries Co. Ltd., 1953), p.53.

13. L.A. Mills, *Ceylon Under British Rule 1795–1932*, pp.17–21. Initially when Ceylon was under the Madras Presidency the administrative,

in 1802, Ceylon became a crown colony. British rule in Ceylon was the most significant period in the development of the island where it saw rapid economic and educational progress. By 1833 it had achieved a tremendous pace of development such that it was regarded as "the senior colony of the new empire."[14]

With the arrival of Colonel Sir William Colebrooke reforms were introduced in 1833 which remained a landmark in the history of the Ceylon Government.[15] Colebrooke's recommendations for drastic changes in Ceylon had been strongly supported by the Colonial Office despite protests by Governor Sir Robert Wilmot-Horton. Not only did Colonel Colebrooke recommend that the government monopoly of the cultivation and sale of cinnamon be abolished and the industry thrown open to private enterprise, he also abolished the land tenure by personal service and **rajakariya**[16] and did away with the exclusiveness of the Ceylon Civil Service. He suggested that "the public service should be freely open to all classes of persons according to their qualifications" while "the unrestricted

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financial and judicial aspects of administration were undertaken by members of the Madras Civil Service whilst only the military was under the control of the Commander-in-Chief in Ceylon. The British introduced the Madras revenue system which the natives of Ceylon were unfamiliar with but which also encroached upon the privileges of some sections. The Madras revenue system which was introduced demanded one half of the estimated value of the produce to be paid in silver and not in kind. Even the Ceylonese officials, the *Mudaliyars*, were replaced by *Aumildars*, natives of Madras, and their subordinates called *Peshcars, Cuttwals* and *Parpattacarars* who were ignorant of the customs, language and prejudices of the people. The resentment and blunders of the British led to an open revolt in 1797 which was successfully crushed. In the aftermath of the revolt many changes were made by the newly appointed Governor Federick North. The *Mudaliyars* were reinstated and the Madras native officials were sent back to India. The popular Dutch Service Tenure System was restored and the coconut tax, which demanded a tax of one silver fanam (2d) a year on each coconut tree owned was also abolished.

14. M. Wright, *The Development of the Legislative Council* (London, 1950), p.74. Quoted in K.M. De Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon 1840–1855* (London, Longmans Green & Co. Ltd., 1965), p.9.

15. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule 1795–1932*, p.65.

16. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation 1795–1833*, pp.385–413. *Rajakariya* or the right of the Government to exact forced labour from those holding land by Service Tenure.

admission of natives of all classes to the judicial civil offices open to Europeans when they may possess or acquire the necessary qualifications" was most desirable.[17] The reforms of 1833 brought about the division of Ceylon into five provinces, each under a Government Agent with a varying number of Assistant Agents who were young men recruited in England for service in Ceylon.[18] In 1839 Governor Stewart Mackenzie condemned this practice of appointing young men who had just arrived from England to fill vacancies as Assistant Agents or District Judge. He ordered all newly arrived officials to spend six to nine months as assistants to a Government Agent before assuming the post.

Despite the remedial measures, the efficiency of the Ceylon Civil Service "was yearly deteriorating in point of ability" and the new Governor Sir Colin Campbell in 1841 reported to Lord Stanley, the Secretary of State for Colonies that "seven of the Chief Officers of Government are in positions for which they are unsuited."[19] The Governor's despatches brought prompt action and Lord Stanley reinforced Governor Barnes' regulations of 1822 that required all civil servants aspiring for promotions to possess a competent knowledge of native languages, either Sinhalese or Tamil. But even then as late as 1848 it was reported that the civil servants' knowledge of the vernaculars were far from satisfactory.

British policy in Ceylon centred on a conscientious attempt "to improve the conditions of the people, and to hold the balance even between the conflicting interests of the planters, the native aristocracy and priesthood, and the raiyats."[20] In stages the British were able to undermine the supremacy of the native officials[21] and succeeded in preventing the oppression of the **raiyats** or the peasants by the latter who were exacting unpaid forced labour for the cultivation of their own land.[22] It was so tactfully done by Governor Maitland that the British left sufficient authority and prestige for the native officials, thus

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17. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule 1795–1932*, p.66.

18. *Ibid.*, p.68.

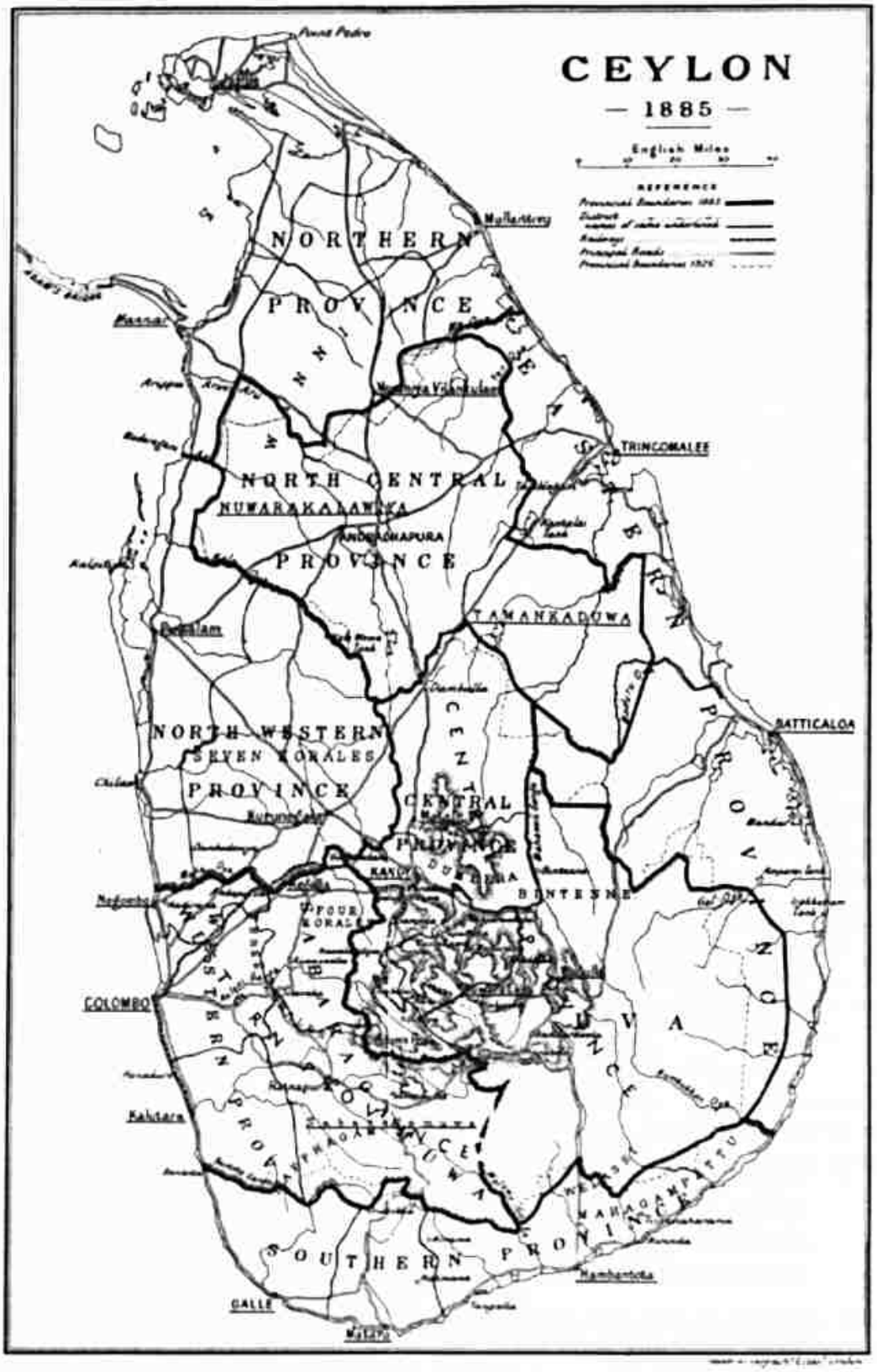
19. *Ibid.*, p.75.

20. *Ibid.*, p.121.

21. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation 1795–1833*, p.263. Native officials were called *Adigars, Disavas, Lekams, Mudaliyars and Ratemahatmayas* whose duties included administration, collection of revenue, commanding of military forces, etc.

22. The British reduced the power of the native officials mainly because they realised that the latter systematically defrauded and deceived the British Government.

MAP 2
CEYLON 1885



maintaining their loyal co-operation and the laity's respect and obedience. Only in the case of Kandy did this curtailment of the power and prestige of the native officials and the laity's refusal to grant the traditional obedience culminate in the Kandyan revolt of 1848 which the British suppressed quite successfully.[23]

A notable benefit of British policy derived by the native population was the development of the transport system in Ceylon. When the cultivation of Brazilian and Havanese coffee was extended after the conquest of Kandy, where the climate was most suitable, attention was given to the construction of a network of roads which opened up the interior and linked it with the ports.[24] So important was the project that in 1820 Governor Sir Edward Barnes first diverted the available labour and revenue from the construction of forts to the construction of roads. About 300 to 400 miles of roads were laid during his governorship and his work in the economic sphere was comparable with that of Sir Thomas Maitland in the administrative sector.[25] Constructon of public works, in fact, became the chief task of Governor Barnes and his successors.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, the network of roads proved inadequate, making the construction of railways imperative. A special problem was that coffee production was adversely affected when roads were made impassable by the monsoons. A railway line between Colombo and Kandy was proposed in 1845 but completed and opened to traffic only on October 1st, 1867. Thereafter, other lines were constructed to link other parts of Ceylon.

Labour for the public works was provided by men recruited in India who formed what came to be known as the Ceylon Pioneer Corps. They formed the most useful body of military labourers. Many of them were trained artisans, recruited from various districts like Cuddappah, Ganjam, Guntur and Madras in India and were commanded by European officers.[26] The idea of forming the corps was first conceived by Governor Sir Edward Barnes in 1829 and there

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23. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule 1795–1932*, pp. 168–202.

24. While cinnamon was the staple industry, roads were less essential since the plantations were near the coast and the smaller yield were usually transported by porters.

25. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule 1795–1932*, p.224.

26. *Ibid.*

were at first ten divisions each with two hundred men.[27] They provided invaluable services in the construction of roads, railways and other public works. Many of them were later loaned to the Federated Malay States in 1883 to assist in the construction of roads and railways.[28] By 1929 Ceylon was estimated to have had 951 miles of railways and 16,400 miles of roads which boosted the coffee industry enormously.[29]

1.3 Jaffna: Economic Conditions

Whilst elsewhere in Ceylon, the British forward policy brought rapid economic advancement the same was not true in the Jaffna Peninsula. The people of Jaffna were mainly agriculturists heavily dependent on the land. They had, under the Dutch, paid a land tax of 3 fanams on every 20 ladses (1.5 acres) of land.[30] The British increased this tax to one-tenth of the gross produce of grain sown while withdrawing tax on all other products.[31] The revised tax regulation proved a burden on the farmer whose land was suited only to the cultivation of grains.

Tobacco, the main cash crop of the Jaffna district, was also affected adversely by British policy. The crop had been traditionally the monopoly of the ruler of Travancore. The Dutch supported this monopoly because they had a favourable pepper trade with the ruler but the British, on assuming control of Jaffna, dropped this trade policy. Governor Maitland failed to negotiate for the abolition of the monopoly but raised the export duty on the Travancore

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27. In 1833 when all engineering works were placed under the Civil Engineer's Department the Pioneer Corps ceased to be a military corps but the structure of the force remained unchanged. In 1853 the force was reduced to four divisions, in 1858 increased to ten divisions and was twelve in 1868. The Ceylon Pioneer Corps was disbanded in 1894.

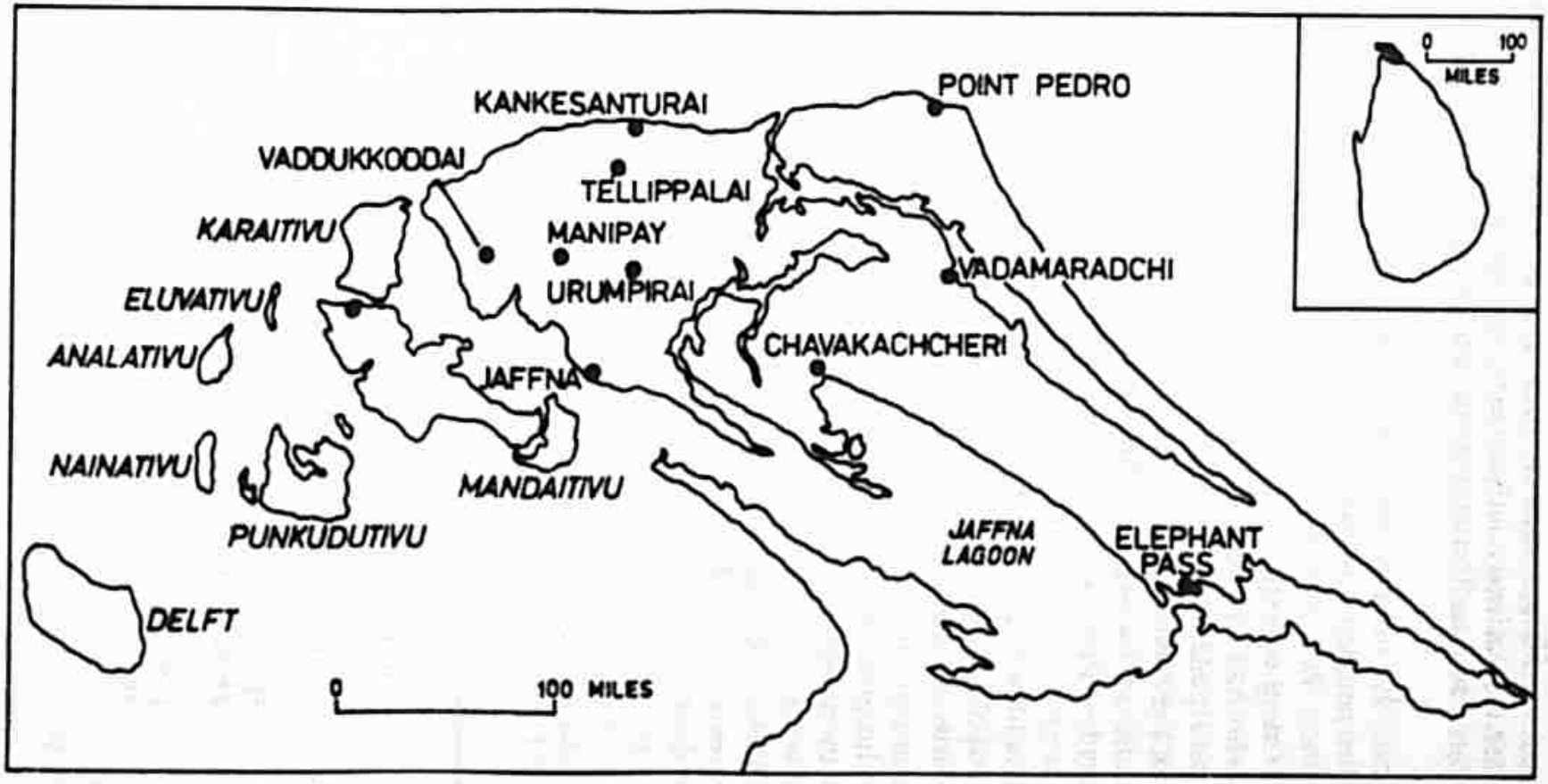
28. See Chapter Three for details on the Ceylon Pioneer Corps.

29. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule 1795–1932*, pp.258–259.

30. The tax was very low because 20 ladses produced 50 to 80 parras of padi worth 6 to 9 fanams each parra. Under the Dutch the farmer had to pay, in addition to the land tax, the house and tree tax.

31. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation, 1795–1833*, pp.330–331.

MAP 3
JAFFNA


KANKESANTURAI
POINT PEDRO
VADDUKKODDAI
TELLIPPALAI
KARAITIVU
MANIPAY
URUMPIRAI
VADAMARADCHI
ELUVATIVU
ANALATIVU
CHAVAKACHCHERI
JAFFNA
NAINATIVU
MANDAITIVU
PUNKUDUTIVU
JAFFNA LAGOON
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assignment to 50 per cent in 1806 and 60 per cent in 1809. The Raja of Travancore conveniently shifted the burden to the producers and middlemen and reduced his purchase.[32] Exports fell radically, affecting the Jaffna farmers.

Similarly adverse repercussions were also brought to the trading activities of the people of Jaffna as a result of restrictive regulations of the imperial trade policy. Even before British rule the Dutch had taken control over most of the trading activities, thus depriving the middlemen and a large number of people who had earned their living by peddling in all sorts of goods. Coastal trading and peddling of goods within Ceylon which involved the inter-change of goods between Jaffna, Batticaloa and Mannar, for example, was affected by the colonial trade policy. The trend continued to aggravate under the British and many lost their livelihood.[33]

In addition to the rising economic problems there was a steady increase in the population of Jaffna during the nineteenth century. This may be attributed partly to the medical work of the American Ceylon Mission in Jaffna. The American Mission, established in 1813, provided medical facilities in the form of hospitals besides doctors visiting outlying villages. Thus, they were able to save thousands of Jaffnese who would otherwise have died of cholera and other diseases.[34] The population of Jaffna district, which had been around 120,000 when the Dutch took over the Tamil territories in 1658, had reached 300,851 persons in 1901. The rate of population growth during this period was 7.9 per cent between 1877 and 1881 and although between 1881 and 1891 growth slackened at 5.1 per cent, it subsequently recovered to 7.5 per cent between 1891 and 1901 and then increased to 8.7 per cent between 1901 and 1911. Jaffna district alone, which in 1901 had 238 persons per square mile, had in 1911 327 persons per square mile.[35]

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32. C.R. De Silva, *ibid.*, p.473.

33. S. Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon 1658–1687*, p.174.

34. H.I. Root, *A Century in Ceylon: The American Board in Ceylon 1816–1916* (Jaffna, American Ceylon Mission, 1916), p.41.

35. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911* (Colombo, Government Printers, 1912), p.44.

In order to meet the needs of this increasing population, land which was at one time regarded as waste was being slowly converted for agriculture. Whatever land was fit for cultivation was being over-worked and in 1889 only about 4,500 acres was not under cultivation.[36]

Despite the fact that the land was being continuously worked by the farmers in Jaffna, they refused to leave their land in search of good ground elsewhere on the island. Instead, there was a steady trend towards seeking wage employment outside Jaffna. This was not difficult as there already existed the practice of conducting trading ventures to other parts of the island. It is said that "Jaffna is almost the only place in Ceylon where no one is idle or unprofitably employed."[37] At a particular time of the year when labour was not so much in demand in the fields, the Jaffnese travelled to the interior carrying curry stuffs, betel leaves and other products to trade with the villagers. Often large groups of Jaffna Tamils went regularly to Trincomalee in search of work and even to the Sinhalese areas to construct or repair irrigation tanks on contract.[38] The Tamils were described as skilled labourers. The Governor, Sir Edward Barnes, for example, who in 1829 accused the Sinhalese for not willing to enlist in the Pioneer Corps despite good wages, exempted the Tamils from this category because, in his view, "their industry was always considered exemplary."[39] Thus, with the growth of the population and the pressure on land many Jaffnese sought employment in spheres other than agriculture and usually outside Jaffna. This trend was further enhanced by the activities of the Christian missions who provided the education needed to obtain jobs in the government sector, often outside Jaffna.

1.3.1 Spread of Christianity

In the initial spread of Christianity in Ceylon there is little doubt that its influence in Jaffna was found to be greater than in other parts of the island and this was mainly due to the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church during

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36. *Ceylon Blue Books* (Colombo, Government Printers), 1889–1914.

37. J.E. Tennent, *Ceylon* (London, Longman, Green 1859), p.542.

38. *Ibid.*, p.543.

39. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation 1795–1833*, p.405. In the Pioneer Corps a private was paid 9¼d. and in the working divisions 7½d. with rations in money or kind for their wives.

to the higher castes of Tamil society as they believed that the spiritual influence would sink down to the lower grades.[48] The bulk of the lower castes who belonged to the **pallar**, **nalavar** and **koviar** castes were employed as agricultural labourers on the fields of their owners who were invariably of the **vellalar** caste. It is the members of these depressed castes who formed the slave population of Jaffna. The missions believed that if they could convert the higher castes, it might be a lot easier to win over the slave population and it cannot be denied that the missionaries were successful in such an attempt. Also the idea of congregations for prayers in churches without considerations of caste acted as an attraction to the lower castes, to whom Christianity was often regarded as a refuge and hope for emancipation.[49]

Finally, in examining the spread of Christianity it is extremely important to assess the spread of education by the missions who used education as an instrument to gain converts. Of the Wesleyans, Church Missionary Society and the American Board of Mission who were all responsible for the spread of literacy in Jaffna, the Americans stand foremost. Attached to every ecclesiastical establishment was an educational institution because they realised that it would only be possible to impart the religious tenets of Christianity by educating the people first. The missions began to concentrate on this factor and went all out to educate the Tamils. It is said that the Americans sometimes went further and regarded the work of raising the moral, social and intellectual standards as coming within the legitimate sphere of their activities.[50] So embroiled were they, in fact, in the provision of education that it began to interfere with the work of evangelisation. By 1830 there were only a hundred and ninety-two Christians with only one church at Vaddukkoddai.[51] Although this figure increased to eight by 1855, the American Board at home felt dissatisfied and, little understanding the local situation, sent a deputation in 1855 to investigate and restrict the educational activities of its mission and revamp evangelical activity.[52]

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48. *Morning Star*, Jaffna, 19 January 1940.

49. K.M. De Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon*, p.192.

50. J.V. Chelliah, *A Century of English Education* (Jaffna, Tellipallai, 1922), p.63.

51. *The American Ceylon Mission*, Ter Jubilee Brochure (Jaffna, 1966), p.5.

52. *Ibid.*, p.6.

The education offered at the mission schools was essentially Christian education as they believed that schools and the preaching of the gospel must go together. All instructions was applied to a fuller understanding of the Christian faith.[53] In the process of acquiring education many of the Hindus who studied at the mission schools were gradually converted, though in some schools conversion was obligatory. At the Batticotta and Uduvil Seminaries the expenses of some students were defrayed by sponsors from America who made annual contributions to the Mission.[54] In return these students were required to adopt Christian names, usually that of the sponsor. At the Uduvil Seminary pupils had names like Betsy Pomeroy, Charlotte Burnell, Ann Louise Payson and Harriet Newell.[55] Sometimes Hindu students who studied at the Batticotta Seminary also adopted Christians names. Many of these students, in the course of their life, could have finally converted to Christianity.

Thus the adaptive quality of the Roman Catholic Church to the religious needs of the heathen population, the proliferation of educational institutions run by the American missions and the general concept of granting Christianity government patronage contributed to the advancement and spread of Christianity among the people. Nevertheless, it can be observed that only about a tenth of the population submitted to the new faith. Of this a vast majority fell for Catholicism which provided the spiritual base through symbolism. When Protestantism was brought by the Dutch it denounced all symbols and insisted on the Bible as the only guide and thus offered no attraction to the Catholics and much less to Hindus. Similarly, during British reign, even missions like the American Board, Wesleyans and Church Missionary Society which had great influence in Jaffna did not succeed in winning over as many converts as had the Roman Catholic Church. In fact of the 11.04 per cent of the Jaffnese who were Christians in 1911, 84.97 per cent of them were Roman Catholics and only

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53. K.M. De Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon*, p. 144.

54. M.H. Harrison, *Uduvil, 1824–1924* (American Ceylon Mission Press, Tellippalai, 1925), pp.10–11.

55. *Ibid.*, p.11; T. Buell, *A Short Sketch of the Life and World of Vaidyanathar Buell* (Bombay, 1929). This book outlines the life of one Vaidyanathar Subramaniam who studied at the American Mission Seminary in 1850 and was given the Christian name of Samuel Buell. He came under the strong influence of Christianity and subsequently embraced the faith and took the name Vaidyanathar Buell. He was a teacher of the Mission institution and later became a prominent evangelist in Jaffna.

4.52 per cent belonged to the Church of England, 2.77 per cent were Wesleyans and 7.50 per cent were Congregationalists of the American Board of Mission.[56] Thus, in the spread of Christianity, it is hardly any wonder that the methods adopted by the Catholics excelled those pursued by other missions. The Hindus who embraced Roman Catholicism never experienced a religious upheaval and this was attested by the fact that over 80.0 per cent of the Christians in Jaffna were Catholics.

1.3.3 Spread of Education

The British Government in Ceylon, during the initial years, left education in the hands of the missions and only provided them with grants. This was because the British were more concerned with recovering the cost of acquisition of maritime provinces. The missions managed the schools and, in the early years, they used the vernacular with a little English. But after the introduction of the Colebrooke-Cameroon Report of 1831 the Commissioners argued that vernacular learning was of litte use and that only through a knowledge of English could education be advanced and a bond established between the British and their subjects.[57] Thus began the emphasis on English education and the vernaculars were slowly neglected. The missions fell in line with Government policy regarding education and so concentrated on the proliferation of English education. English became essential for public employment and there was a rush for English education. Government schools, too, grew rapidly in numbers from 64 in 1869 to 243 five years later, thereafter their numbers rose to 431, 440, 468 and 474 quinnennially. State-aided schools also grew from 21 in 1896 to 594 with the next fifteen years.[58] In 1826 there was a regulation that even a superior village headman should be able to read and write English. Thus, the emphasis on English education was so great among the Tamils and Sinhalese that it amounted to an obsession among them.[59]

The emphasis on English education suffered a reversal of policy during the governorship of Stewart Mackenzie (1837–41) who was much noted for his contributions. Like his predecessor, he was also a great believer in the social benefits

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56. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, p.251, p.268.

57. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident*, p.103.

58. *Ibid.*, p.105.

59. *Ibid.*, p.181.

of education but laid emphasis on vernacular education instead.[60] He realised the fact that heavy dependence on English education could only act as an impediment to the progress of education in general. He advocated that vernacular education would not only attract large numbers of students but also increase the demand for English education. Mackenzie recognised this factor in the experience of Wesleyan missionaries in South Ceylon where the medium of instruction was Sinhalese. He also provided government aid to all schools, including the mission schools, and made sure they were open to children of all denominations, employed qualified teachers and supported the promotion of education in general and religious education in particular.[61]

The result of Mackenzie's efforts in providing aid to mission schools really took root in Jaffna and resulted in their significant advancement as against the gradual eclipse of government schools. It was often stated that " . . . the excellence of the education provided in the Jaffna peninsula by the missionaries is contrasted by the efforts of the Government in the south-west coast."[62] Thus the government schools were closed and the grants were channelled to mission schools at a rate of £150 a year each to the Church Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Mission and £200 a year to the American Mission for the spread of English education.[63] The Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan and the American Board were the popular missions in the Jaffna district and, although they did not score high successes in evangelical activities, they were able to provide an extremely well-organised educational system. In 1881, 17.4 per cent of the population over five years of age could read and write a language.[64] But in 1911 about 46.9 per cent of the male Tamils and 10.6 per cent of females in Jaffna could read and write.[65]

In Jaffna, within a radius of a mile several colleges and schools for boys and girls were founded. It was often said that the Tamils in Jaffna were greatly

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60. K.M. De Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon*, p.33.

61. *Ibid.*, p.147.

62. *Ibid.*, pp.176–177.

63. *Ibid.*, p.157.

64. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident*, p.181.

65. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon 1911*, p.408.

indebted to the American missionaries of the Batticotta Seminary for providing educaton in English and Tamil. They were the most active missionary group during British rule in Ceylon and established a vast number of schools in Jaffna. American missionary activity appears to have taken root with the establishment of the American Congregationalist Mission, first in Jaffna in 1816 and where they maintained a continuous history of teaching. They set up free vernacular schools in the different villages and they "saw to it that whatever a school was called it taught Tamil successfully"[66] so much so that "it was impossible to find in Jaffna what was common in Colombo, that is young men unable to read and write their mother tongue."[67] The pioneer American missionaries indeed showed excessive zeal for educational work that they sometimes neglected the work of evangelisation. By 1830 they had established ninety-three schools in Jaffna besides three boarding schools.[68] In 1911 there were one hundred and thirty schools working under the Mission. Their efforts climaxed in the founding, in 1872, of the Jaffna College. The medical work of the Mission was also remarkable as attested in its founding of the Manipay Hospital in 1848 and the MacLeod Hospital in 1898 for women and children.[69]

In 1834 the Jaffna Central College was founded by Rev. Peter Percival of the Wesleyan Mission. In 1850 the Jaffna Catholic School (now St. Patrick's College) was opened by Dr. Bettachini, the first Bishop of Jaffna. In 1831 the Chundikuli Seminary (now St. John's College) was founded by Rev. John Talbot Johnstone of the Church Missionary Society. These catered for the education of boys. Provision was made for the education of girls in the form of the Uduvil Girls' School (1824), the Chundikuli Girls' School (1896) and the Vembadi Girl's School (1837). The Hindus set up their own vernacular schools mainly due to the efforts of a reformer-scholar, Arumuga Navalar, and individuals also built schools in their own villages and towns.[70]

It is said that of all the communities in Ceylon the passion for education was greatest among the Jaffna Tamils. They took to English education more

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66. L.J. Gratiaen, *English Schools in Ceylon, 1870–1900* (Colombo, Education Office Press, 1933), p.3.

67. *Ibid.*, p.7.

68. C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon under British Occupation*, Vol.I, p.284.

69. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, p.271.

70. J.V. Chelliah, *A Century of English Education*, p.1.

thoroughly as this qualification was the criterion for obtaining posts in the government service set up and administered by the British. The small landowners believed that "education will make a clerk of his son or fit him for a learned profession and that this will make him hold a better position than his father,"[71] and, ultimately, enhance the status of the whole family. The younger generation of men wanted to escape from rural life and work that they considered degrading. They sought to obtain education which would lead them to posts in offices in the towns. Thus, making use of the opportunities provided by the missionaries, many Tamils, from a sense of family obligation, educated not only their children but also near relatives. They believed that when once a single member of a family raised himself into the English-educated class the rest of the family followed.[72] The result was that their numbers in the government service was far in excess of the relative numbers of Jaffna Tamils against Sinhalese in the total population of Ceylon.[73]

It was chiefly the direct result of British educational policy in Ceylon that the importance of education caught on among all classes of Ceylon Tamils.[74] The organisation of the administrative departments in the late nineteenth century made government service the main industry of the people as the land provided little avenues of employment and subsequent advancement. It resulted in the emergence of a large number of white collared workers who were the products of missionary schools in Jaffna. The Jaffna Tamil had wasted no effort in acquiring the education needed to secure a government job. Denham in the 1911 Census Report commented that the Jaffna Tamil "will get all the education he can, and literacy is only limited by the supply of education available."[75] The Tamils migrated to all other parts of Ceylon, especially Colombo, in increasing numbers to equip the manpower needs of the administrative machinery. In fact, in 1911 the percentage of literates over 20 years of age in the Colombo Municipality was higher than in Jaffna owing to the number of Jaffnese employed in Colombo. The percentage of literates between 10 and 15 and 20 years old

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71. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, p.399.

72. D.R. Singam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore 1867–1967* (Petaling Jaya, 1968), p.9.

73. S.A. Pakeman, *Ceylon*, p.181.

74. S. Arasaratnam, *Ceylon*, p.157.

75. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, p.157.

was also high due to the number of children of Jaffnese working in Colombo who had sent them to Colombo schools.[76] Within the latter group were also youths who had completed their school course and came up to Colombo in search of employment. The problem of employment was, in fact, becoming a serious one.

76. *Ibid.*, p.419.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INCENTIVES FOR MIGRATION AND THE MECHANICS OF EMPLOYMENT AND SETTLEMENT IN MALAYA, 1885–1920S

Migration is a process involving the movement of individuals from one country to another with the intention of establishing a temporary or permanent change in residence. In this respect the process covers two important movements, namely, immigration and emigration. The former involves the movement of people into a country either temporarily or permanently, irrespective of whether they are nationals of the country or aliens, and emigration denotes the movement out of a country with the intent to settle temporarily or permanently in another country.

With regard to migration different views have been expressed by scholars. In his study of Indian emigration to Surinam, De Klerk observes that the adverse social and economic conditions of the donor country mainly accounted for emigration. He writes that ". . . for most of the people who allowed themselves to be recruited for emigration, the mainspring was certainly the economic urge, economic necessity, the impossibility of making a living, however poor, in their native land."[1]

Yet other scholars like Sandhu[2] are of the opinion that it is the conditions existing in the recipient nation, such as the provision of ample employment opportunities to would-be immigrants, which count foremost in attracting immigration. But it is also possible to argue that it is the interplay of both the 'push' and 'pull' factors that result in the migration of people from one country to another. This is obvious in the case of the Ceylon Tamils, especially with regard to the emigration of men from Jaffna to Malaya, in the initial phase.

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1. De Klerk, *Hindustani Immigration into Surinam* (Amsterdam, 1953). Quoted in J.D. Speckmann, *Marriage and Kinship Among* the *Indians in Suriman* (Assen, Van Gorcum, 1965), p.21.

2. K.S. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya: Some Aspects of Their Immigration and Settlement (1786–1957)* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1969), p.97. The author feels that the number of immigrants recruited ". . . appears to have been influenced more by such factors as demand in Malaya and the number of *kangany* licences issued, rather than conditions in India."

2.1 Conditions in Jaffna

As discussed in Chapter One economic conditions in Jaffna had become unfavourable by the middle of the nineteenth century. There was heavy dependence on the agricultural economy not only to sustain the growing population but also in terms of providing employment to the youths. The population increased from 265,583 persons in 1881 to 279,045 in 1891, and then to 326,510 by 1911.[3] In 1911 Jaffna district had a density of about 700 persons per square mile. This state of affairs posed added demands on the economy of Jaffna which was severely strained as was evident in the cost of living which rose by 100 per cent between 1874 and 1905. According to an official report "the reputation of Jaffna as a cheap place to live in is a thing of the past. Bazaar prices are as high as they are in most places in Ceylon."[4] The 1911 Census of Ceylon also shows that the prices of land had doubled over just two decades. It was difficult to purchase land and equally difficult to make it yield because of inadequate rain.

Certain social developments in Ceylon in the nineteenth century to some extent highly compensated for the adverse economic conditions of Jaffna peasants. Although, on the one hand, education alleviated to some degree the economic pressures, on the other, the English school became a place where the student learnt to despise the occupation of his parents.[5] Education, whether in the vernacular or in English, in this part of the country alienated those who came under its influence from manual work of all kinds. This prejudice against agricultural work made its consequence felt in the villages and children were reluctant to help their parents in cultivating the fields.[6]

Every Jaffna parent made an effort to educate his children to enable them to secure government jobs. Even the poorest villager was keen that his children should learn English which could open the road to at least a clerkship, either in Ceylon or in Malaya.[7] The village school was therefore well patronized

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3. *Census of Ceylon*, 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

4. *CAR*, 1904, Report of Government Agent, Northern Province, C23; *Ceylon Sessional Paper*, 1905, No. 43, p.3. Between 1874 and 1905 the price of a measure of rice had increased from 4½ cents to 7 cents, fowl from 12 cents to 75 cents and eggs from ½ cents to 2 cents each.

5. *CAR*, 1923, Report of Director of Education, A5.

6. *CAR*, 1920, Report of Director of Education, A11.

7. *CAR*, 1920, Report of Director of Education, A8.

and, by 1888, almost every child in the Jaffna peninsula attended school.[8] In fact, it could be said that the Jaffna parent was intensely practical as, according to one source, "he realises that an English education is a valuable asset, and is readily convertible to cash . . . Hence it is that hundreds of parents of the farming and labouring classes, who have themselves received no English education, insist on an English education for their sons. This education is often acquired in a spirit of self sacrifice; parents, brothers and sisters undergoing hardships at their homes in order that at least one member of the family may receive an English education."[9]

In this manner Jaffna was able to produce an abundant supply of educated men who were readily absorbed into the government services. As a result of this contribution Jaffna was described as "a vast factory" which produced for Government a large proportion of its clerks for the Clerical, Railway and Postal Services and the Public Works Department.[10] Even the estates in various parts of the island depended mainly on Jaffna for their supply of clerks and conductors. This influx of Tamils from the north and its effects on the Sinhalese population, who felt deprived of available employment opportunities, later evinced anti-Tamil sentiments. A purview of Jaffna Tamils employed in the educated professions reveals a number in excess of the proportion to their population. In 1911, for example, of the medical practitioners, nearly half were Ceylon Tamils, 5001 Tamils were dependent on educational employment as compared to 912 of Kandyan Sinhalese and 7176 low-country Sinhalese.[11] Undoubtedly, the Tamils came first in the proportion per mile of persons dependent on public administration for employment.[12]

This trend went on till the last decades of the nineteenth century by which time entry into government services became stiff and highly competitive with many Sinhalese, Burghers and other Ceylon people also obtaining English education. The Jaffnese had to compete with the Burghers who had already formed "the backbone of the Government clerical body".[13] For the clerical service alone

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8. *CAR*, 1888, Report of Director of Education, D86.

9. *CAR*, 1921, Report of Director of Education, A6.

10. *CAR*, 1921, Report of Director of Education, A6.

11. A.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, pp.484–485.

12. *Ibid.*, p.480.

13. *Ceylon Sessional Paper*, 1912, No. 35. Position and Prospects of the Public Service, p.17.

on an average of thirty vacancies per year from 1905 to 1910 there were about 200 applicants annually. In 1912, for example, 276 candidates sat for the Clerical Service Examination to qualify for one of the 40 vacancies.[14] On an average, less than five per cent qualified in these examinations.[15] Due to the limited scope of employment even university diploma holders failed and the result of this type of recruitment was a large body of unemployed youths "with an English education of a kind and a Cambridge Certificate of no commercial or intrinsic value".[16] Ceylon was unable to absorb all these men as the education they had received was mainly academic and too many people were educated to be clerks.[17]

2.2 Conditions in Malaya

The British settlements founded in Penang in 1786 and Singapore in 1819 in the interest of expanding the China trade were administered by the East India Company with Sir Harry Ord as Governor.[18] Shortly after, in 1873, internal disturbances in the west coast Malay States which seriously affected trade and fear of rival political interests posed by expanding French influence in Indo China, for example, resulted in British intervention in the Malay States.[19] Through treaty arrangements, by the end of the nineteenth century, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang had accepted the Residential System. Residents were appointed to each of the four states and their functions were to advise in all matters except religion and custom. In actual practice they assumed great powers because they were the chief executive agents of administration.

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14. *Ibid.*, p.18.

15. *Hindu Organ*, 8 November 1926, p.3.

16. *Report by the Rt. Hon. W.G.A. Ormsby Gore (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Colonies) on his visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java during the year 1928* (London, 1928), p.97.

17. Zeylanicus, *Ceylon: Between Orient and Occident* (London, Elek Books, 1970), p.182.

18. C.M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826–67* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1972), p.2.

19. E. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula 1880–1910* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1969), p.5.

2.2.1 Development of Administration and Need for Manpower

For administrative purposes the four states of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang were combined in 1896 to form the Federated Malay States and, together with the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca), they formed British Malaya. The main feature of the Federation scheme was the appointment of a Resident-General to act as a channel of communication between the Residents and the Governor. Sir F.A. Swettenham was appointed Resident-General and was entrusted with the task of organising the Federation. He was "to create, by degree, one civil service for the four states and draw up a scheme of grading and classifying appointments along the lines of the Civil Services of the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong and Ceylon."[20] In fact, the type of administration which came to function was based on the Ceylon administrative system.

The forward policy pursued by Sir Frederick Weld and Sir Cecil Clementi Smith went hand in hand with the development of the Federated Malay States. One of the main aims in forming the Federated Malay States was to facilitate the building of a unified system of roads and railways to connect centres of tin industry and administration with each other and with ports. Road construction was undertaken on an extensive scale and each state was soon covered by a network of bridle paths and cart roads while, in the 1890s, a trunk road was built from Malacca to Butterworth.[21] The first railway line was built between Taiping and Port Weld in Perak in 1885, followed by the Kuala Lumpur-Klang railway in 1886 and the Seremban to Port Dickson line in 1887. It was, however, Swettenham who undertook the rapid construction of the trunk line from Negeri Sembilan to Province Wellesley so as to link up all the isolated areas in Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. He felt that besides opening up good agricultural land and gold and tin mining areas, the railway line would also provide through traffic from Prai in the north to Klang in the South and, at the same time, connect up with the road to Pahang, via Kuala Lumpur.[22] He viewed the construction of 150 miles of railway in fifteen years as a slow rate of progress and so pressed for a loan of half-a-million pounds for railway construction. From 1898 the Federated Malay States embarked on a programme of railway construction which "many British officers hoped would one day connect Singapore with

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20. *Ibid.*, p.170.

21. *Ibid.*, p.119.

22. H.C. Chai, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896–1909* (London, Oxford University Press, 1967), p.183.

Burma and India."[23] By 1903 there were 350 miles of railway in the Malay Peninsula.[24]

The establishment of telegraph communication proceeded at the same time. Every district in Perak and Selangor was linked by telegraph and, by 1892, direct telegraphic communication was established from Penang through Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan to Malacca.[25] Thus, the development of railways and telecommunications in Perak and Selangor in the 1880s and 1890s brought into being large government departments. In Selangor the Post and Telegraph which began in 1880 with a post office clerk in Kuala Lumpur and, another in Klang, grew in 1895 to an establishment of fifty persons. The railways in 1895 employed about one hundred and fifty skilled and semi-skilled people as station masters, drivers, guards and clerks as well as a hundred or more porters, pointsmen, watchmen and other unskilled persons.[26]

Many other specialist departments were also set up, like the Public Works Department and Survey Department. Sanitary Boards were established to look after towns such as Kuala Lumpur, Klang and Kuala Kubu in Selangor and Ipoh, Taiping, Parit Buntar and Batu Gajah in Perak. Medical and health facilities were set up in the various states by the Residents. The first Government Hospital was started in 1878 and qualified medical practitioners were engaged from United Kingdom while apothecaries, dressers and hospital assistants were recruited from India and Ceylon.[27] By 1896 medical facilities had expanded over the Malay States where Perak had fifteen hospitals, Selangor had fourteen, Negeri Sembilan had three and Pahang had two.[28]

The British policy in the Malay Peninsula, though partly governed by directives from the Colonial Office in London, depended mainly on the Governor

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23. Sir Frederick Weld, Sir Cecil Smith, Sir F.A. Swettenham and Martin Lister shared the same idea.

24. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula 1880–1910*, p.181.

25. *Ibid.*, p.119.

26. E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874–1895* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1968), p.223.

27. Chai, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896–1909*, p.197.

28. *Ibid.*, pp.198–199.

of the Straits Settlements and the local European officials in the Malay States. In the later part of the nineteenth century there were Governors like Sir Frederick Weld, Sir John Anderson, Sir Cecil Clementi Smith and Sir Frank Swettenham who were all professed admirers of Sir Stamford Raffles who strove "to realise the dream of a Malay empire for the glory of Britain, the envy of her rivals and the welfare of the Malays.[29] They believed and saw much scope for empire building. In this process of pursuing an expansionist policy they endeavoured to increase the sources of supply of raw materials for Britain which went hand in hand with advancing social, economic and administrative developments. Men like Swettenham were entrusted with the task of organising the Federated Malay States and the British Residents of the various states had often felt the need for a competent secretariat trained in colonial administration to relieve them of routine administration and allowing them to spend more time for establishing personal contact with the local people.[30] English was the medium of government correspondence and the request from each government department was for men who could speak English.[31] English education in the Federated Malay States was in its formative stages and could not provide local men able to meet the needs of the civil service.

2.2.2 English Education and the Malays

The opening up of the Malay States in the second part of the nineteenth century and the elaborate bureaucracy that subsequently burgeoned here with departments for such matters as finance, public works, agriculture, mines, police and lands required English-educated Asians to staff them. While Europeans staffed the higher echelons of the civil service[32] the lower ranks were filled by men recruited from Ceylon and India. Nonetheless, immigrants were recruited ostensibly as a temporary measure as the British expressed that they hoped "to encou-

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29. Thio, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula 1880–1910*, Introduction, p.xv.

30. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874–1896*, p.199.

31. Chai, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896–1909*, p.260.

32. W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967), p.22. By the turn of the century the Federated Malay States with a population less than one-fifth that of Ceylon but had twice of as many European administrative officers.

rage the entry of natives into the government service as much as possible"[33] so that with the passage of time the Malays could replace the expatriate staff from India and Ceylon. This principle was, however, inconsistent with British educational policy and prevailing attitude amongst Malays towards education so that the task of procuring English-educated Malays to fit into the administrative system set up by the British remained a formidable one. All civil service appointments required a knowledge of English, which became an indispensable qualification for even minor clerical appointments, but the Malays who sent their children to schools continued to enrol them for vernacular education. The rural Malays evinced distrust in government sponsored education due to the fear that their children might be converted to Christianity[34] so much so that even the introduction of free government Malay schools in Perak and Selangor in the late 1870s and 1880s was met with unpopularity, suspicion and indifference.[35] All that the vernacular Malay schools provided was a little literacy "sufficient for the ordinary requirements of Malay boys, who will become bullock-wagon drivers, padi growers, fishermen etc."[36] In Perak, records for the year 1903 indicated that out of 2900 pupils in Malay schools only one was employed as a clerk.[37]

Furthermore, despite the laudable intention of official policy for recruiting Malays into the lower rungs of the civil service, Frank Swettenham who was first Resident of Perak (1889–96), then Resident-General (1896–1901) and, later, Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States between 1901 and 1904, was very cautious about providing English education to the Malays. He feared that instruction in English or higher

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33. *Annual Report of the Resident General on the Federated Malay States for 1902*, p.24.

34. "Quarterly Report on Education in Perak", *Perak Government Gazette*, May 11, 1894, p.76. Their suspicion was not only reflected in their refusal to attend English schools, they even refused to visit government hospitals for treatment. In 1908 a Malay hospital was established in Kuala Kangsar with the hope that Malays 'will patronise it when they know that it is a purely Malay institution, the attendants and cooks were Malays' *(Perak Annual Report 1908*, p.18, C.O.576/13).

35. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.26.

36. "The System of Education in the Federated Malay States", *Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, 14 (Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, CMD.2379, 1905), p.9. Quoted from Roff, *ibid.* p.25.

37. *Annual Report of Perak*, 1904, p.11.

education might give rise to a class of politically active malcontents who might plot to overthrow the British. When Resident of Perak in 1893, he wrote that "whilst we teach children to read and write and count in their own language, or in Malay, the 'lingua franca' of the Peninsula and Archipelago, we are safe."[38] Due to his senior position and forceful personality Swettenham dominated the Malayan administration and his policies and views tended to be accepted more than those of other British administrators in Malaya.[39] That is why even as late as 1905 it was argued that provision of English education to Malays was equivalent to putting in their hand "an intellectual weapon whereby they might attempt our undoing."[40] However, the situation changed when W.H. Treacher became Resident-General in 1904 and R.J. Wilkinson was appointed Federal Inspector of Schools (1903–1906). Both were responsible for implementing a new scheme aimed at providing a flow of English-educated Malays for government service.

The inability of the Malays to join the British administration was due mainly to their lack of competence in the English language and this prompted the British officials to undertake remedial measures in the system of education. They provided elementary schooling in English for sons of rajas and chiefs for recruitment into higher grades of government service and the separate state administrations reserved places for selected Malays at government English schools in the urban areas.[41] Christian missions were also invited by the state governments to provide English education to meet the demand for English-educated clerical and subordinate staff for the private businesses and state bureaucracies. These missions were even prepared to impart secular schooling to Malay pupils, devoid of religious instruction. Scholarships were offered and hostel accomodation provided for rural Malays to receive English education on completing four years of vernacular education. Even so, Malay parents were reluctant to send their children to English schools.[42] Of the 24 English schools in the Federated Malay States in 1900, seven were under the Christian Missions and the

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38. *Annual Report of Perak, 1893.*

39. Refer R. Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators: British Educational Policy Towards the Malays, 1875–1906* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975).

40. *The Times of Malaya* (editorial), 9 February 1905, p.5.

41. D.D. Chelliah, *A Short History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 1800–1925* (Kuala Lumpur, 1947), p.44.

42. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.29. Malay parents were reluctant to send their children to English schools for fear their children might be unhappy away from the home and also because Malay children suffered the handicap of being four years older than other town children.

enrolment was overwhelmingly non-Malay.[43]

With the turn of the century the number of Malays opting for higher education increased gradually and, by 1914, about 162 Malay boys had passed out of the Kuala Kangsar Malay College[44] with the seventh standard certificate, thus becoming eligible for clerical appointments in the government service and to serve as translators, medical dressers and survey assistants. Others joined the Malay Administrative Scheme initially as Malay Assistants Grade 3 and aspired to be admitted eventually into the Malayan Civil Service. Still the number of Malays in civil service was very small in proportion of their population and available clerical posts were filled by expatriate staff, mainly the Jaffna Tamils. Even R.J. Wilkinson who once praised the good performance of the pupils of the Kuala Kangsar Malay College stated that ". . . a few good schools could soon supply our Government Offices with every clerk we need and make us independent of the Jaffna Tamils."[45] As late as 1920, of the 1001 clerks of all grades in the General Clerical Service of the Federated Malay States, only 10.5 per cent were Malays.[46] To counteract this deficiency the pro-Malay policy was reinforced during the early decades of the century whereby the government proposed to recruit Malays to the subordinate ranks of the Federated Malay States public services and to cut down expenditure on overseas staff. As a result, some British officials like R.J. Wilkinson, Inspector of Schools, Federated Malay States, advocated that the Malays as natives of the soil "should be encouraged in preference to any other race" in government employment.[47] In 1910 steps were taken to employ more Malays in government service in preference to others and, in addition, a lower category of posts was created including that of Clerk, Malay Writer, Bailiff and Outdoor Customs Officer.[48] In fact, it was specified by regulation that Malays must receive preference in filling vacancies in the lower ranks of

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43. *Ibid.*, p.30.

44. This College was set up by R.J. Wilkinson, Inspector of Schools 1906, with the sole purpose to produce Malays to enter the clerical service.

45. Rolf, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.104. Quoted from Treacher, "British Malaya", pp.503–504.

46. *Ibid.*, p.113.

47. *Proceedings of the Council of Rulers*, 1904. Despatch from R.J. Wilkinson, Inspector of Schools, FMS to Resident-General, FMS, dated 24 February 1904.

48. *Resident-General's Office Circular*, 12 May 1910.

government departments, especially the railways and if necessary, "at the temporary cost of some loss of efficiency".[49] Although as early as 1904 this problem of poor Malay participation in government service had attracted attention, much could not be achieved as education in the Federated Malay States was started only in 1888 and was not placed on a strong footing till the beginning of the twentieth century. Thus, the Malays could hardly be expected to rise in education to the level of their Indian, Chinese and Ceylon Tamil counterparts in so short a time.

That the flow of Ceylon Tamils and other nationalities continued uninterrupted was hardly surprising. Many of them came over to Malaya, spent a year or two at a local school to fulfil the criteria of being "locally educated" before gaining employment in the government service. Furthermore, despite the official policy of encouraging Malay recruitment, many British officials preferred to recruit Ceylon Tamils. This was because as far as the British were concerned the Malay "with his moderate wants and noted disinclination to steady work of any kind, will give his labour neither to Government undertakings nor to mines or plantations."[50] This stock impression of the Malays was so strong that when a local daily[51] reported of Malay labourers being employed on the Krian Irrigation Works, the Resident-General expressed doubts whether they were truly Malays or Javanese.[52] Thus even as late as 1917 Mr. Anthony, the General Manager of the Federated Malay States Railways, requested Rev. Jacob Thompson, the Principal of St. John's College, Jaffna, to send about ten bright boys who have passed their Elementary School Leaving Certificate to join the Malayan Railways.[53] The expanding economy of Malaya and the proliferation of government administration and private enterprise demanded a continuous supply of English-educated labour which the Malay community was unable to provide.

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49. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.118.

50. *Annual Report of Resident-General*, 1902, p.23.

51. *Straits Times*, 23 October 1903.

52. *Perak Government Gazette*, 26 February 1904.

53. *Morning Star*, 27 February 1918, p.2.

2.2.3 Economic Considerations

It was the promise of a steady government job in a not-too-distant country, the opportunity to obtain a government pension on completion of service, the ability to obtain employment easily without having to stand for any entrance examination as in Ceylon, and the better wages offered in Malaya that attracted large number of Ceylon Tamils. The opening up of plantations and mines in the Malay States brought much revenue to the Malayan Government which renumerated its public servants more liberally than the Ceylon Government.

A comparative analysis of the salaries offered to the Ceylon and Malayan government servants of lower rank, between 1905 and 1910, will reveal the attraction for employment in Malaya.[54] In the General Clerical Service of Ceylon, for example, a Class I clerk received 1800 rupees increasing to a maximum of 2400 rupees, while in Malaya it was between 1200 dollars and 1920 dollars. Given an exchange rate of 2.15 rupees to a Malayan dollar[55] and 15 rupees to a £1[56] it is obvious that the Malayan clerk received better salaries

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54. *Ceylon Sessional Papers, 1905,* No. 39. Despatches relating to the Classification of Staff, Postal Department, p.2; *Ceylon Sessional Papers,* 1907, No. 55. Report of a Committee appointed to report on salaries of certain railway officials, p.687; *FMS Establishment List, 1910.* In the General Clerical Service of Ceylon a Class III clerk was paid an initial salary of 500 rupees a year rising to 1100 rupees maximum, whereas a Malayan clerk of the General Clerical Service started with 420 dollars a year rising to 720 dollars maximum. A Class II clerk was paid 1200 rupees initially and a maximum of 1600 rupees whereas his counterpart in Malaya was offered 840 dollars rising to 1140 dollars. Similarly, clerical staff of the Survey and Railway Departments began with 500 rupees but a Postal Department clerk had an initial salary of 300 rupees. The Malayan clerk in the Postal and Survey Departments started with 420 dollars but the clerk in the Railway Department began with 360 dollars. In the Ceylon Railway Department overseers were paid an initial salary of 360 rupees a year as compared to a Railway Department overseer in Malaya being paid 360 dollars a year. Apothecaries in Ceylon received 360 rupees whereas apothecaries in Malaya were paid £120. Even Grade III dressers in Malaya began with 480 dollars per annum although they held a lower appointment than apothecaries. *(FMS Establishment List, 1910; Ceylon Sessional Papers, 1910,* No. 32. Despatches relating to salaries of Apothecaries in the Medical Department, p.1442).

55. *Ceylon Patriot,* 7 March 1890, p.3.

56. *CAR,* 1917, Report of the Postmaster-General, C2.

than a Ceylonese clerk. The Jaffnese who had come from families surviving on bare subsistence indicated no hesitation to offer themselves for jobs that paid well in Malaya. Evidence to show that they did receive ample money in salaries is attested by the amount of remittances sent to Jaffna monthly. The low cost of living in Malaya and the better wages offered to them coupled with the thrifty nature of many Jaffnese resulted in a steady increase in remittances. By the early twentieth century, as the number of Jaffnese who came to Malaya in search of employment increased, the total remittances to Ceylon reached the million rupee mark.[57] It is thus a combination of ample job opportunities for educated men in Malaya and better wages, as compared to Ceylon, that attracted many immigrants from Ceylon.

2.3 Types of Immigration

The Ceylonese who formed the bulk of the non-labour migration into British Malaya involved mainly educated Jaffna Tamils with a sprinkling of Sinhalese and Burghers. A small number of Tamils and Sinhalese did come as labourers and domestic servants to Malaya but their numbers were insignificant compared to those who came in search of clerical, technical and other administrative appointments.[58] The category of non-labour Ceylonese immigrants who came to Malaya can be classified into those who were officially assisted and those who were unassisted by the Malayan Government.

2.3.1 Assisted Immigration: 1885–1900

The transfer of the control of the Straits Settlements from the Indian Government to that of the Colonial Office in 1867 brought about many unprecedented changes and developments in the Straits Settlements civil service. Many subordinate and senior officers of the Indian Government who had been employed with the Straits Settlements Government left the Colony. As a result the latter had to turn to Ceylon, a premier colony, for a supply of experienced officers to fill up the vacancies. The Ceylon Civil Service which was staffed with

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57. *Ceylon Blue Book, 1910,* EE3. The total amount of money order transaction alone in 1910 was Rs. 919,301 from the Federated Malay States and Rs. 209,423 from the Straits Settlements. See Appendix C for Money Order Remittances from British Malaya to Ceylon 1890–1930.

58. According to the 1891 Census of Perak there were 62 Ceylonese labourers and 37 domestic servants. Out of this there were 54 Jaffna Tamil labourers and 22 domestic servants.

European officers trained in the colonial style of administration responded favourably at the request of the Straits Settlements Government. Men like J.W.W. Birch and Noel Trotter were among the first European officers to be transferred for service in the Straits Settlements[59] and these were followed by others as the administration of the Malay States expanded.

By 1890 such primary departments as the Treasury, the Police and the Public Works and Surveys were formed and, by 1895, there were eight to ten departments in Perak and Selangor, and seven in Pahang. For purposes of revenue collection and local administration each state was divided into districts, headed by an European District Officer responsible to the Resident. As most of the early British administrators had come from Ceylon they attempted to set up a system of administration such as they were accustomed to in Ceylon. There was much correspondence with the Ceylon Government requesting information relating to the administration of departments or for permission for officers of the Malayan Government to spend time in Ceylon learning details about the working of the Ceylon Railways, for example.[60] The service of experienced British officers from Ceylon were also obtained and these included C.E. Spooner, G.W. Fryer, Oliver Marks, A.R. Venning, Sir Henry McCallum, Sir Hercules

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59. Noel Trotter was the first Postmaster-General of Singapore in 1871 and J.W.W. Birch was appointed the Colonial Secretary of the Straits Settlements in 1870 after having served in Ceylon in various capacities as Commissioner of Requests and Police Magistrate (1853–56), Assistant Government Agent (1858–67) and Government Agent for the Eastern Province (1868).

60. *Despatches, Colonial Secretary Singapore to Colonial Secretary Ceylon*, 13 January 1883 (regarding stoppage of pay of subordinate), SLNA 6/6683; 8 July 1892 (Audit of Railway Accounts), SLNA 6/9393; 16 June 1893 (request for copy of Ceylon Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure), SLNA 6/9759; 20 June 1893 (Permission to learn details of Ceylon Railways); SLNA 6/9759; 20 July 1894 (Rules and Regulations regarding granting of leave to railway officials), SLNA 6/10010; 17 August 1894 (Specimen page from Record of Service Book), SLNA 6/10019; 10 November 1894 (System of Prison Labour), SLNA 6/10021; 6 March 1896 (Telegraph Department regulations for securing secrecy of Telegrams), SLNA 6/10707; 14 September 1897 (Copy of Ceylon Railway Ordinance), SLNA 6/11052; 24 November 1897 (Permission for Superintendent Works and Surveys, Malacca to inspect related work in Ceylon), SLNA 6/11053; 18 December 1895 (Copy of papers on reclassification of Ceylon Civil Service), SLNA 6/11053.

Robinson, Sir William Taylor and Sir John Anderson.[61] In fact, it can be said that most of the British officers who served in Malaya prior to 1900 were not direct recruits from England but were men who had worked in Ceylon.[62]

As it was the responsibility of the British officers to recruit the necessary subordinate staff for the administration it was natural that these officers, many of whom who had been previously employed in Ceylon, sought recruits there in the face of local shortage.

As early as November 1874 a number of Ceylonese had been seconded for service in the Malay States[63] but it was the 1880s and 1890s that saw a significant increase in the transfer of Ceylonese officers to Malaya.[64] As the Peninsula was progressively opened up officers on loan were employed in the public works as surveyors, medical officers, clerks of works, assistant surveyors, overseers and draughtsmen. For example when, in 1892, a Public Works Department Factory was proposed for Selangor the service of an experienced overseer of the Ceylon Public Works Department was sought, on loan, together with 100 skilled men as masons, stone-carpenters and brick layers.[65] Often advertisements were inserted in the Ceylon Government Gazette and in the English newspapers in Ceylon invit-

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61. *FMS Civil Service List*, 1900.

62. *Sunday Times*, 17 February 1935, p.4.

63. *Straits Observer*, 11 November 1874, p.3 J.S. Atchinson, a lawyer, writes about the recruitment from Ceylon of 2 Tamil Interpreters and 3 Tamil Surveyors and praises the Ceylon Government for loaning them.

64. *Despatches, Governor SS to Governor Ceylon*, 5 April 1882, 27 April 1882, 1 May 1882, 5 May 1882, SLNA 6/6449; 10 October 1882, 2 December 1882, 24 April 1882, SLNA 6/6451; 18 May 1882. 5 April 1882, 6 October 1882, 11 August 1882, 13 July 1882, 5 June 1882, 30 May 1882, 15 November 1882, SLNA 6/6449; 27 January 1883, 13 January 1883, 2 January 1883, 15 January 1883, 19 January 1883, 13 and 16 February 1883, 5 March 1883, 21 June 1883, 5 June 1883, 31 May 1883, 2 March 1883, 12 March 1883, SLNA 6/6683; 17 August 1883, SLNA 6/6685; 25 April 1993, SLNA 6/6686; 23 December 1892, SLNA 6/9394; 20 April 1891, SLNA 6/9032; 23 December 1892, SLNA 6/9394; 8 July 1893, SLNA 6/9759; 19 June 1896, SLNA 6/10708.

65. *Despatches, Governor SS to Governor Ceylon*, 23 December 1892, SLNA 6/9394.

ing applications for appointments in the Malay States.[66] To these advertisements the response of the Ceylon Tamils, many of whom were already in the Ceylon Government Service, was overwhelming.[67] The better salaries offered by the Malayan Government served to attract even those who already held permanent appointments in Ceylon. In most cases successful candidates were provided passage fare by the Malayan government and, on arrival, were given free housing.

Following the establishment of British rule in the Malay States, construction of roads and railways was considered essential for the economic development of the states as products from the interior had to be transported to the ports. Till 1882 the technical staff were often seconded for service in Malaya to help specifically in the construction of roads and other public works. The job of construction had to be undertaken by experienced staff who were not available in Malaya. The Governor of the Straits Settlements in 1883 wrote to the Ceylon Government to procure suitable officers to organise the construction of a proposed railway in the state of Selangor. For this work Swettenham, then Resident of Selangor, had recommended the services of Spence Moss of the Ceylon Public Works Department to be appointed Engineer-in-Charge of the project. Moss brought with him a number of Ceylonese subordinate officers to assist him in the work.[68] So did C.E. Spooner when, in 1891, he was appointed State Engineer of the Selangor Public Works Department. Together with his men from Ceylon, Spooner designed and constructed among many buildings, the Klang Water Works and the Pudu Prison. He introduced in the Malay States the MacBride system of road metalling, then in vogue in Ceylon, but faced enormous difficul-

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66. *Ibid.*, 8 February 1882, 9 June 1882, 31 May 1882, 18 February 1882, SLNA 6/6448; 27 November 1896, SLNA 6/10711; 1 September 1893, SLNA 6/9760. Despatch dated 17 August 1883 is enclosed with a draft on account of advertisement placed in Ceylon newspapers, SLNA 6/6685. Refer Appendix B for copies of advertisements in *Ceylon Government Gazette* and newspapers.

67. Letters of Application: 7 January 1891, 9 March 1891, 13 February 1891, SLNA 6/9031; 12 March 1891, SLNA 6/9032; 9 July 1891, 23 July 1891, SLNA 6/9035; 17 June 1891, SLNA 6/9034; 26 May 1891, 21 April 1891, SLNA 6/9033; 4 September 1891, 17 September 1891, SLNA 6/9036; 26 July 1892, 29 September 1892, SLNA 6/9393; 3 February 1894, SLNA 6/10016; 8 July 1893, SLNA 6/9759; 8 October 1893, SLNA 6/6685. Tamil names were predominant in the letters of applications to the advertisements.

68. F. Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya* (London, 1942), pp.82–83.

ties due to lack of skilled technical staff. He then began recruiting a large number of experienced overseers and clerks from Ceylon. Some of these early arrivals brought with them their families and, subsequently, settled down in Malaya till they retired from service.

Besides the above category of assisted immigrants who came as a result of the government to government solicitation, there was another group who was recruited by private employers like the British planters. Many of the early individual European planters who opened up coffee and rubber plantations in Malaya were those who came to Malaya after the failure of the coffee industry in Ceylon as a result of the coffee-leaf disease.[69] Some of the planters returned to Europe, some found other employment, or resorted to rubber planting, while a small group of them migrated to Malaya in the 1880s. Notable among them were J.H.M. Robson, Oliver Marks, A.R. Rathbone, Martin Lister and Grant Mackie.[70]

Being proprietory planters these Europeans who came from Ceylon managed their estates with their own resources and planted, besides coffee as the principal crop, also cocoa, tea, cinchona and pepper as a precaution against the fall in the price of coffee which had so severely affected Ceylon.[71] Hill and Rathbone opened up the Kamuning Estate in Perak and Batu Caves Estate in Selangor for coffee planting and they also constructed the Seremban to Port Dickson railway line in 1891, as a private undertaking.[72] Hill was later appointed Immigration Agent in the Perak Government. Still others like A.R. Venning, J.H.M. Robson and Oliver Marks joined the civil service and held responsible positions.[73] Oliver Marks became British Resident of Negri Sembilan.

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69. J.G. Butler, *The British in Malaya 1880–1941* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1979), p.13.

70. C. Baxendale, *Personalities of Old Malaya* (Penang, 1930); J.H.M. Robson, *Records and Recollections, 1889–1934* Kuala Lumpur, 1934); A.R. Rathbone, *Camping and Tramping* (London, Swan Sonneschein Co. Ltd., 1898).

71. J.C. Jackson, *Planters and Speculators: Chinese and European Agricultural Enterprise in Malaya, 1786–1921* (Kuala Lumpur, 1968), Ch. 9.

72. *Annual Report of Kuala Kangsar*, 1888; *Annual Report of Sungai Ujong*, 1893.

73. Baxendale, *Personalities of Old Malaya*, p.15.

Most of the British planters, on opening up their estates, recruited the clerical and supervisory staff from Ceylon who were predominantly the Jaffna Tamils.[74] With the help of the Government the planters recruited South Indian labour for their plantations, mainly from Tamilnadu as was the practice for plantations in Ceylon. Jaffna, which had often been the source of supply for clerks and conductors in the Ceylon estates,[75] also provided a similar category of men for the Malayan plantations. The lack of local English-educated men, the need to recruit experienced estate clerical and supervisory staff for the newly opened up plantations and, probably, the necessity to employ Tamil-speaking officers to deal with the Tamil-speaking Indian labourers, could have been the underlying factors behind the attempt to employ Jaffna Tamils in the Malayan plantations. The Jaffna Tamils, on the other hand, showed willingness to seek employment in Malayan plantations because of the attractive salaries offered here. Though some joined with no previous experience, there were others who had worked for as many as twenty years in Ceylon before taking up appointments in Malaya.[76]

Once they settled in the estates, they assisted in bringing many more Jaffnese to this area of employment which became, effectively, their monopoly. It was not until the 1930s that Malayali infiltration into the plantation sector gradually eroded the Jaffnese monopoly.[77]

2.3.2 Unassisted Immigration: 1885–1920s

Despite some amount of assisted migration, for over nearly four decades the bulk of the Ceylon Tamils who emigrated to Malaya comprised mostly the officially-unassisted emigrant category. Many of the Ceylon Tamils had come to Malaya on secondment or on transfer in the last decades of the nineteenth century, some with their families, and they in turn, assisted their brothers, relatives and friends to emigrate for employment in the fast expanding government

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74. *Hindu Organ*, 8 October 1934, p.3.

75. *CAR*, 1921, Report of the Director of Education, A6.

76. *Ceylon Patriot*, 7 March 1890, p.3. The paper carried an article on one Mr. N.A. Thambiah who had been employed on Sir G.D. Elphinstone's estate in Ceylon for 20 years as an accountant and conductor and who secured an appointment in a tea plantation in Malaya on a monthly salary of 80 dollars or 180 rupees.

77. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya*, p.261.

departments in Malaya, particularly after the formation of the Federation in 1896.

Official policies of the Malayan and Ceylon Governments relating to immigration and emigration did not, as such, impose any significant restrictions. The Ceylon Government, was in fact, ready to assist in the early development of Malaya and responded favourably to requests from the Malayan Government for experienced staff. This was because it had, by 1830, achieved the status of a premier colony and by 1870 had an administrative establishment on a par with that of Hong Kong, India and other British territories overseas and, moreover, was happy to be relieved of the burden of employing all the educated men, the bulk of them from Jaffna. What had begun as an officially-assisted emigration of people from Ceylon had, eventually, with the advent of the twentieth century, resulted in an exodus of educated Ceylon Tamils in search of employment in Malaya.

The Malayan Government, on its part, followed a liberal policy with regard to both labour and non-labour immigration. Economic developments subsequent to the opening up of the Malay States resulted in the establishment of various government departments and lucrative plantations. All these developments required labour and services. India supplied the labour for the plantations and public works and attempts were made to recruit clerical staff from Britain, Australia and New Zealand but these failed as the conditions of service and pay offered were unattractive.[78] Thus, Ceylon came to supply the bulk of the educated men for the lower ranks of the government departments.

Another factor in favour of Ceylon Tamil immigration was that, even before 1890, the British administrators in Malaya had favoured a policy of encouraging the growth of a plural society rather than allow the emergence of a predominantly Chinese population who had reached tremendous proportions after the opening of the Malay States. Certain far-sighted British officials, like Governor Sir Frederick Weld, advocated that such a trend should be checked as he envisaged it would have adverse political and economic effects on the Malay population. He expressed that "the great preponderance of the Chinese over any other race in the Settlements and to a larger and marked degree in some of the Native States under our administration, should be counter-balanced as much as

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78. *Straits Settlements Annual Report*, 1900. pp.163–169.

possible by the influx of Indian and other nationalities."[79] Pursuance of such a policy undoubtedly favoured Ceylon Tamil immigration to Malaya.

There was no clear-cut government policy regarding the recruitment of foreigners although preference for local-born and local-educated persons was observed. As early as 1898, Sir Frank Swettenham, having realised the specific influx of Ceylon Tamils in departments like the Railways and especially the clerical grades, issued a circular reminding Heads of Departments and District Officers that "when application is made to fill any vacancy as clerk or overseer the claims of applicants born in the Straits must be considered in preference to the claims of Ceylon-born applicants."[80] The above instruction could not, however, be implemented as the number of local-born applicants were few and did not correspond to demand.

The number of unassisted emigrants steadily increased and the Ceylon Tamils either came on their own and procured a job through the assistance of fellow Ceylon Tamils or relatives already resident here. Often the latter were able to arrange for a job through their influence. Sometimes the local newspapers in Jaffna played an important role in encouraging young Jaffnese to emigrate to Malaya.[81] Considering the prevailing unfavourable economic conditions in Jaffna, the newspapers overtly encouraged emigration.[82] They not

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79. *Despatches, Governor SS to Secretary of State*, London, No. 307, 24 September 1887. See also R. Huessler, *British Rule in Malaya: The Malayan Civil Service and Its Predecessors, 1867–1942*. He notes that Hugh Low in Perak and Sir Frederick Weld in Singapore "agreed that labour from outside was vital, that Indians were preferable to the unruly Chinese, and that, over the years, they would be a useful counterweight to that troublesome race."

80. *Resident-General's Office Circular*, 855/1898, No. 25, dated 9 August 1898; *Morning Star*, 22 September 1898, p.1.

81. Some of the local newspapers in Jaffna include the *Hindu Organ*, *Morning Star*, *Ceylon Patriot* and *Jaffna Catholic Guardian*.

82. *Ceylon Patriot*, 26 August 1888, Editorial; *Ceylon Patriot*, 10 January 1890, p.3, mentions that the last steamer that left Colombo took 250 Jaffna Tamils to the Straits Settlements and continues "that the struggle for existence is becoming severer and severer in Jaffna and the scarcity now prevailing urges many to leave their homes and go abroad to find the means of bare subsistence."

only encouraged Jaffnese to take up government contracts which were popular at that time in Malaya[83] but also published accounts of personal experiences of some Jaffnese who had returned to Jaffna from Malaya on leave or on retirement.[84] Such accounts would have naturally provided the incentive for young aspiring Jaffnese to emigrate to Malaya and seek employment.

Besides containing advertisements of job vacancies in Malaya, articles relating to the availability of job opportunities were often published. For example, in 1890, the **Ceylon Patriot**, a weekly paper, referred to the lack of medical staff, surveyors and lawyers as follows:[85]

> Among the native population of these parts the number of competent physicians and surgeons is very limited. The Straits Settlements Government has often had to advertise for and secure Apothecaries from India and even Ceylon.
>
> There is still demand for surveyors and such as wish to find employment . . . should have a knowledge of levelling which is a necessary qualification. Another qualification is robust health as the Straits Settlements Surveyors are frequently obliged to work in the jungles far away from the centres of population.
>
> There are hundreds of Nattukkottai Chetty firms and large numbers of Moorish traders. These firms have much to do with the courts and although their language is Tamil there is not a single Tamil lawyer. The Straits bar is stocked with lawyers with British qualifications. The lawyers are not acquainted with vernacular and it is by means of interpreters not proficient in Tamil or English that they communicate.
>
> As conveyancer or notary there is plenty to do, if the adventurer from Jaffna will have the patience to locally qualify himself for the work.

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83. *Ceylon Patriot*, 13 July 1886, p.3; *Ceylon Patriot*, 24 January 1890, p.3.

84. *Hindu Organ*, 21 December 1910. An article mentions three young men of Jaffna who had gone to Kelantan for work.

85. *Ceylon Patriot*, 7 March 1890, p.3.

By 1911 there was already an abundance of lawyers as well in Jaffna and, again, outlets for employment were sought in the Malay Peninsula as was evident in the appeal made by a local daily to the many lawyers and law students to go there. It was also suggested that the Jaffnese lawyers, after three or four years practice in Malaya, would have no difficulty in saving enought money to go to England to qualify as barristers, enabling them to practice anywhere in the British Empire. Conscious of the fact that the Jaffnese in Malaya had earned themselves a name as "a class of mere Railway servants and quill-drivers in Government Offices" the local press stressed that migration to Malaya of professionals would help change the image of Jaffnese at the same time as it would relieve their country of the "unnecessary and increasing number of lawyers."[86]

Such articles in the newspapers of Jaffna on personal experience as well as information about job opportunities in Malaya vastly helped those contemplating job opportunities. Factors, like the inadequate wages to meet the rising cost of living, decreasing purchasing power of the rupee, large family commitments and rising competition for a limited number of jobs had often worked against them in their social and economic upliftment. Thus, most young Jaffnese who left school immediately made arrangements to travel to Malaya and even those already employed in Ceylon also aspired to emigrate in search of better-paid jobs.[87]

Educated Indian Tamils did figure among the early emigrants but the Ceylon Tamil arrivals were far in excess and especially after 1900 their numbers were overwhelming due to overt encouragement by British officials. Sir William Taylor, the Resident-General of the Federated Malay States (FMS), for instance, tried to recruit Ceylonese to join the ranks of government service in Malaya through his friend Sir. P. Arunachalam, the Registrar-General of the Ceylon Civil Service.[88] Many Ceylon Tamils emigrated to British Malaya through the efforts of the latter. In 1905 alone, about one thousand Jaffnese left Colombo for the

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86. *Hindu Organ*, 1 July 1911, p.3.

87. *Hindu Organ*, 1 March 1905, p.2. The article mentions of one D.S. Manickam, acting as House Surgeon in the General Hospital, Colombo, who had secured an appointment as Assistant Surgeon in the Perak Medical Department on a salary of £150 per annum.

88. Sir W.T. Taylor was Auditor-General of Ceylon in 1895. He came to the Straits Settlements as Colonial Secretary in 1901 and was appointed Resident-General, Federated Malay States from 1904 to 1910.

Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. They were mostly young men in search of employment[89] and nearly all of them succeeded in finding jobs. Those who had any difficulty in obtaining employment were prepared to take up employment on very modest salaries, "thereby effecting a saving to the Government."[90]

Most Jaffnese who became employed in Malaya usually returned to Jaffna for their long vacation and to seek brides. On their return it was common for them to bring a younger brother or relative, whom they helped educate and obtain a job.[91] Most boys who finished the Seventh Standard in Jaffna qualified to enter the junior civil service in Malaya. There were also instances of boys who had only vernacular education from Ceylon with a smattering of English but were able to get employment through the personal favour and assistance of fellow Ceylonese. This practice of nepotism continued to be rife even after the introduction, in the 1920s, of the pro-Malay policy.

After 1900 the FMS Seventh Standard Certificate was made the basic qualification for entry into government service but even this did not deter many Ceylon Tamils who wanted to search for employment in Malaya. For example, in 1919, about 50 per cent of the pupils in the Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur were Tamils direct from Jaffna.[92] Many of these boys, having completed their 6th or 7th Standard in Ceylon, had little problem passing examinations to obtain the FMS 7th Standard Certificate.[93] Sometimes boys who had completed their 6th or 7th Standard in Jaffna came over and joined the technical schools in Malaya so as to gain employment in the technical services for which there was greater demand than the clerical services. The number of Jaffnese receiving technical education was far in excess of their population ratio in the country.

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89. *Morning Star*, 13 February 1906, p.2.

90. *Ceylon Patriot*, 24 January 1890, p.2.

91. Personal interview with Mr. S. Selvanayagam, retired Education Officer, Trengganu. Jaffna, 1 May 1980.

92. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings*, 1919, C57, C60.

93. *Hindu Organ*, 2 October 1901, p.3; *Jaffna Catholic Guardian*, 22 January 1910, p.3, contain news about the success of Jaffnese in the examinations in Malaya.

In the Technical School in Kuala Lumpur in 1919 all 10 pupils for the engineering course and 18 out of 30 pupils for surveying were Jaffna Tamils. The Inspector of Schools, Selangor, noted that hardly any of the Tamils had received their basic education locally.[94] Even in the case of the medical school in Malaya it was the Ceylon Tamils who predominated. In 1904 the Straits and Federated Malay States Medical School was founded to supply medical practitioners to man the government Medical Department and hospital assistants to fill the para-medical service of the Medical Department. About 80 per cent of the students who sat for the professional examination in the medical school were Jaffnese.[95]

The reason many Jaffna Tamils were able to gain admission into the clerical services as well as the medical and technical schools in Malaya on a competitive basis was because some of them at least had sat unsuccessfully for the clerical, medical, apothecary and technical examinations in Ceylon and were, therefore, better prepared for the same examination in the Peninsula. All candidates taking the clerical service entrance examinations in Ceylon were required to possess an Elementary School Leaving Certificate (ESLC)[96] equivalent to the Federated Malay States 7th Standard Certificate. Out of the large number of candidates with the ESLC who sat for the clerical examination annually, only a small proportion passed.[97] For example, in 1906, out of 42 candidates from Jaffna who presented themselves for the admission examination to the 3rd class

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94. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings*, 1919, C60.

95. *Ceylon Patriot*, 4 June 1909, p.3.

96. *CAR*, 1919, Report of the Director of Education, A10.

97. *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, 1912, No. 35, p.17. The number of vacancies and candidates who sat for the Clerical Examination from 1905 to 1912 are as follows:

Year	Vacancies	Candidates Sat	Candidates Passed
*1905	30	213	22
1906	30	191	18
1907	42	199	32
1908	30	208	20
1909	30	209	15
1910	30	219	24
1912	40	276	47

of the Clerical Branch of the Public Service, only two candidates were successful.[98] It was not uncommon for unsuccessful candidates to emigrate to Malaya with their ESLC qualifications and procure employment or sit for the FMS 7th Standard Examination, as required in later years in Malaya, before obtaining employing in the clerical services.

In the case of medical and apothecary students a somewhat similar problem existed because of the small number who passed these examinations in Ceylon.[99] The subsequent decrease in the number of admissions of apothecary students to the Ceylon Medical College, in contrast with the large number of Ceylonese in the Straits and FMS Medical School, seems to suggest that some of the unsuccessful candidates of the Ceylon Medical College came over to Malaya to continue their studies. But even those who passed the examination in Ceylon appear not to have sought employment in the medical departments there, despite the fact that during the early decades of the century there was a shortage of qualified apothecaries for government service.[100] This, the Principal Civil Medical Officer in Ceylon reasoned, was because of the "superior emoluments offered in the Straits Settlements and Malay Peninsula,"[101]

The large number of Jaffna youths coming over to Malaya to join educational institutions produced an adverse effect on the population of Jaffna. Due to the drain of literate youths to Malaya,[102] by 1911 Jaffna had a slightly higher

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98. *CAR*, 1906, Report of the Government Agent, Northern Province, C19.

99. *CAR*, 1914, Medical Department, B11. The attendances and number of passed candidates for the medical and apothecary examinations are as follows:

	Attendance		Passes	
	Medical	Apothecary	Medical	Apothecary
Oct 1912 to Mar 1913	140	86	7	13
May 1913 to July 1913	136	85	2	13
Oct 1913 to Mar 1914	134	68	8	7
May 1914 to July 1914	146	66	4	7

100. *Ceylon Sessional Paper*, 1910, No. 32, pp.1443–1444. Despatch, Principal Medical Officer to Colonial Secretary, 22 June 1909.

101. *Ibid., Despatches, Governor Ceylon to Rt. Hon. The Earl of Creme*, 6 July 1910.

102. *Ibid.*, p.419.

ratio of women to men[103] as well as a lower proportion of literates between the ages 15 and 20. There was a contrasting trend, however, amongst the Ceylonese population in Malaya. In 1911 the Ceylonese population in Malaya was roughly 8,500 persons and, by 1921, it had increased to 11,603.[104] Amongst these, 7,000 were Jaffna Tamils whose numbers increased to 9,981 in 1921. Within the next decade the total population of Jaffna Tamils rose to about 14,500 persons. However, what is more important in these population statistics is the proportion of Ceylon Tamil males who were all employed in the Peninsula while the female population comprised mainly housewives. Available statistics indicate about 5,500 Jaffna Tamil males in 1911, 7,853 persons in 1921 and about 10,000 persons in 1931,[105] showing an increase of about 2,500 males between 1911 and 1921 and 2,200 males between 1921 and 1931. Although this shows an overall increase in the population of Ceylon Tamils employed in the Peninsula it does not reflect an overall increase in the numbers permanently settled here as almost all of them returned to Ceylon on retirement.

2.4 Characteristics of the Process of Migration

During the early phases of Ceylon Tamil migration into Malaya almost all of them came via the South Indian port of Negapatnam. It was through this port that almost all the South Indian labourers were brought to British Malaya by

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103. E.B. Denham, *Ceylon at the Census of 1911* (Colombo, Government Printer, 1912), p.299.

104. Population statistics for Ceylon Tamils before 1911 were either incomplete or inaccurate. This was because the Ceylon Tamils were often enumerated together with the Indian Tamils. Even the 1911 population figures of Ceylonese were not complete as statistics were available only for the Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang. Unlike the Sinhalese who were enumerated separately throughout the various censuses, except the 1931 Census, the Ceylon Tamils were counted separately only in the 1947 Census and thereafter. This was undertaken only after the "Memorandum in Connection with the Proposed Decenial Census of Population in British Malaya" was sent by the various Ceylon Tamil associations in Malaya to the Superintendent of Census, Malaya, in January 1940. In 1921 Ceylon Tamils were enumerated as "Indians born in Ceylon" and in 1931 both Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamils were classified as "Ceylon Peoples in Malaya." Thus actual figures are difficult to obtain.

105. *Census of Malaya, 1911, 1921, 1931* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers). See Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.

European passenger ships[106] plying the Bay of Bengal and the Straits Settlements ports of Penang and Singapore. Most of the emigrants to Malaya travelled by sailing boats or schooners from Kankesanthurai, Point Pedro, Valvettuthurai and Kayts, ports in Jaffna, to either Kodikarai or Vedaraniyam[107] in South India before proceeding to Negapatnam. Negapatnam had become such an important port for Ceylon Tamil emigrants from Jaffna to the Straits Settlements and the Malay States that the Jaffnese began to show an interest in the good administration of the port.[108] Here, they joined the South Indian emigrants destined for Malaya and boarded the European liners, amongst which the British India Steamship Navigation Company vessels were particularly popular.[109]

In order to encourage immigration of South Indian labourers to Malaya, the Straits Settlements, Perak, Selangor and Johore governments subsidised the steamship fares between Negapatnam and Penang with an annual contribution of $30,000. The European shipping firm of Huttenbach, Leibert and Company ran fortnightly services and reduced the fare to 8 rupees per person for genuine labourers to Malaya.[110] But the Ceylonese passengers being non-labourers were obliged to pay the old rate of 15 rupees for a similar passage. In 1905 the Malayan Government signed a contract with the British India Steam Navigation Company, granting an annual subsidy of $250,000 to provide passage also from other South Indian ports, like Madras to Port Swettenham and Singapore.[111] Under the contract agreements with the government, the Navigation Company conti-

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106. K.S. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya*, p.83. Until 1870s Indian-owned ships managed the transportation of labourers to Malaya but due to increased government supervision and replacement of sail by steam Indian shipping declined and European ships took over the traffic.

107. D.R. Singam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore (1867–1967)* (Petaling Jaya, 1968), p.42. The author mentions of a street called Yalpana Veethy in Vedaraniyam which testifies to the large number of Jaffnese who had used this route.

108. *Hindu Organ*, Editorial, 3 June 1896.

109. It is because they came with South Indian Tamil emigrants that all immigration records never classified Ceylon Tamils as a separate group.

110. *Straits Settlements Annual Report*, 1900, p.182; Straits Settlements–Annual Report, 188.

111. *Straits Settlements Annual Report*, 1907, pp.15–16.

nued shipping labourers to Malaya till the abolition of Indian immigration in 1938. The fare from Negapatnam to Penang was Rs. 11 and Rs. 16 to Singapore. The fare from Madras to Penang and Singapore was Rs. 13 and Rs. 18 respectively, inclusive of food.[112] Alternatively, Ceylonese emigrants made arrangements with the Ceylon Steamship Company to issue through tickets from Kayts or Kankesanthurai to Penang, Port Swettenham and Singapore via Negapatnam, paying passage money at the rate of Rs. 23 to Penang, and Rs. 26.50 to Port Swettenham and Rs. 29 to Singapore,[113] inclusive of food. Others who travelled from Colombo to Negapatnam by the British India Steamship Navigation Company ships paid a fare of Rs. 11 for deck accomodation without food.[114] However, after 1913 passengers from Ceylon who used the Negapatnam route were transported to Malaya without landing at Negapatnam, to avoid unnecessary immigration processes.[115]

The Colombo route to Malaya became feasible as an alternative only after the Jaffna-Colombo railway line was opened up in 1905. Before this the small number who came via Colombo took the steamers plying between the northern ports like Kankesanthurai and Kayts in Jaffna and Colombo. These steamers were operated by the Ceylon Steamship Company Limited which charged Rs. 5.00 for deck passage,[116] and many continued to exercise a preference for this route because of the special arrangements made for supplying high caste passengers with special meals.[117] As most emigrants to Malaya were of higher caste status this mode of travel remained popular for a long time.

In Colombo they boarded, not only the British India Steam Navigation Company steamers, but also Italian, French, Russian and other British ocean-

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112. D.R. Singam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore*, p.44.

113. *Morning Star*, 13 December 1911, p.1; *Hindu Organ*, 17 July 1912, p.1.

114. *Fergusons Directory, Ceylon*, 1905, p.x.

115. *Morning Star*, 7 May 1913, p.1.

116. The Ceylon Steamship Company steamers that sailed the Jaffna to Colombo route include S.S. Havelock, S.S. Lady Gordon, S.S. Lady Blake, S.S. Ediathy, S.S. Athaca, S.S. Lady Hamilton, S.S. Amra and S.S. Lady Macallum. These steamers also sailed to Negapatnam.

117. *Ceylon Patriot*, 31 August 1888, p.2.

going ships to Malaya.[118] After 1910 several Japanese liners began to sail between Malayan ports and Colombo and became much more popular than the European ships. The most popular steamers belonged to the Nippon Yushen Kaisha (NYK) and the Osaka Shosen Kaisha (OSK) which introduced deck passage for the Ceylonese passengers sailing to Singapore and charged about Rs. 17.00 (by OSK) and Rs. 30.00 (by NYK) without food.[119] These passengers were allowed to cook their meals on board the steamers. The Japanese provided the stoves but the coal and other necessary items had to be brought by the passengers. Common cooking by five or six boys who had come from the same village in Jaffna, or who had been acquainted before they boarded the steamer, was a frequent feature. They slept on mats on the floor and shared common bathrooms. They appeared to have had little difficulty in accomodating to such conditions as, back in Jaffna, most of them had lived in wooden houses thatched with palmyra leaves and had been accustomed to few material comforts. Boys from Urumpirai, Tellippalai, Chunnakam, Kokkuvil, Manipay, Vaddukkoddai, Chankanai, Karainagar and Pungudutivu mixed freely and got on so splendidly that the scene on board the Japanese steamer is said to have resembled a picnic party.[120] Most of these steamers carried both cargo and passengers between Ceylon and Malaya. The cargo included export items to the Straits Settlements from Ceylon like tea, soap, arrack, coconut, coir and seeds. Import items from the Straits Settlements included rice, grains, sugar, rubber, textiles, curry and sago.[121]

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118. *Ceylon Blue Books*, 1920, Z1. The European shipping lines included the American and Indian Line (4 sailings a month), Compagnie des Messageries Maritimes de France (fortnightly), Peninsular and Orient Line (irregular sailings), French Government steamers (irregular), Lloyd Triestino Steamship Company (once a month), Ocean Steamship Company Limited (3 sailings per month), the Russian Volunteer Fleet Eastern Line (monthly), etc.

119. Some of the Japanese steamers included S.S. Wakasa Maru (NYK), S.S. Haruna Maru (NYK), Awa Maru (NYK) and Panama Maru (OSK).

120. Personal interviews with Mr. K. Nagalingam, retired Railway Traffic Superintendent and Mr. V. Saravanamuthu, retired Office Assistant in Chief Secretary's Office, Kuala Lumpur. Jaffna, 3 and 4 May 1980.

121. *Ceylon Blue Books*, 1890, pp.230–254; 1915, U5–U45.

During World War I, as a result of the Emden scare[122] majority of the passengers preferred to board neutral ships, especially the Spanish steamers which remained popular even after the War as the French steamers and Peninsular and Orient Lines proved costly and because the Japanese had closed the deck and third class passage between Ceylon and Malaya.[123] The Nippon Yushen Kaisha charged Rs. 40.00 (without food) per passenger from Colombo to Singapore.[124] The Spanish boats which sailed once a month had, thus, a large number of passengers awaiting each sailing.

Most of the Ceylon Tamil emigrants faced few difficulties both before boarding the steamers in Colombo and after they landed in Penang or Port Swettenham. In Colombo, in 1910, the services of a Tamil customs officer, Mr. K.S. Kandiah, was well known among the Jaffnese emigrants.[125] The establishment of lodges called Tamil Homes in Colombo provided all the security and comfort for an emigrant from Jaffna who had to spend a few days waiting for the arrival of the steamers to Malaya. The Tamil Homes at 41 St. Sebastian Street, Colombo and at 79 Dam Street, Colombo, were the popular ones and food was charged at reasonable rates.[126] Those who could not afford even these rates lodged at the Thambiah Chattiram, a charitable home where the lodgers shared common sanitary facilities and did their own cooking.[127]

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122. The *Emden* was a German warship that attacked any enemy ship that it encountered. British ships were a common target.

123. *Hindu Organ*, 21 January 1915, p.3; 8 February 1915, p.3.

124. *Hindu Organ*, 21 September 1921, p.1.

125. *Ceylon Patriot*, 26 April 1910, p.4. Four Jaffnese who travelled from Colombo to Malaya gave an account of thier experience. They mentioned of no customs officers in Singapore to examine their luggage.

126. *Hindu Organ*, 20 December 1911, p.1; *Morning Star*, 3 January 1912, p.1. Vegetarian food was charged at Rs1.50 per day for adults, Rs1.00 for 3rd class, Rs0.75 for servants and half rate for children. A matron waited on the ladies.

127. Personal interview with Mr. K. Ponniah, retired Office Assistant. Jaffna, 18 April 1981.

The point of disembarkation depended usually on the place of proposed employment or on the location of the residence of a friend or relative who sponsored the immigrant. If the location for either one of the above reason was in North Malaya the disembarkation was at Penang; otherwise it was either at Port Swettenham or Singapore. The 'Tamil Home' served as a guest-house in Penang and also made arrangements for the transport of its guests to the mainland either by train or bus.[128] These as well as others who lodged at the 'Tamil Home' while waiting for a friend or relative fed at the numerous Tamil restaurants which catered for the thousands of Indian Tamils who arrived from South India.[129] Only those Jaffnese who came with South Indian labourers on board the British India Steamship Navigation Company steamers were temporarily quarantined at Pulau Jerajak in Penang or at Port Swettenham. Ceylon Tamils who travelled by Japanese and European steamers did not undergo quarantine and most of them usually disembarked at Singapore and then proceeded into mainland Malaya.

As both Malaya and Ceylon were under British rule, passport regulations were never enforced for emigrants travelling from one country to another. Only in 1915, as a result of the decisions taken at the Conference of Representatives of Allied States, was the requirement of a travel document introduced for passengers from Ceylon to Malaya.[130] The fees for a passport was Rs. 5.00[131] but an applicant generally spent more by having to pay the certifying charges.[132]

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128. The Tamil Home in Penang was run by Murugesu from Chankanai, Jaffna.

129. *Hindu Organ*, 25 December 1901, p.3. In 1901 there was only one Jaffna Tamil restaurant in Penang run by Murugar of Sandirupay, Jaffna. *Morning Star*, 11 October 1924, p.1. For the convenience of Ceylon Tamil passengers, K.A. Moorthy opened the Indo Ceylon Hotel in 1924 at 20 China Street, Penang.

130. *Prohibition of departure of persons from Ceylon without passport.* Proclamation dated 27 March 1917, SLNA, Pending File 2751B.

131. *Despatches, Governor Ceylon to Secretary of State*, 25 July 1915, SLNA, Pending File 2751.

132. *Despatches relating to passport*, 20 January 1921, SLNA, Pending File 1851/21. " . . . the necessity of getting the passport applications certified by a J.P. or a minister of a Christian religion or a banking firm . . . It is from Jaffna that most people travel to the FMS and there are numerous missionaries in that District who seem only too willing to oblige. The real cause for complaint is that a person certifying charges a fee that increases the cost of the passport."

Numerous complaints were lodged with the Ceylon Government concerning abuses relating to the certifying charges, as a result of which the passport regulation was withdrawn in 1921[133]

Some immigrants had jobs awaiting their arrival while others lodged temporarily at their relatives' or friends' homes while seeking employment. As most of the arrivals were mainly bachelors, they usually pooled together for the rental of a house and employed a cook. As far as possible they lived frugally so that the maximum amount of money could be remitted back to Ceylon to meet the needs of other family members. Judging from the amount of money remitted regularly to Ceylon,[134] one has to agree with the oft-quoted statement that it was the remittances from Malaya which accounted for the relative prosperity of Jaffna.[135] The average remittance from the Federated Malay States through money orders in 1916 amounted to Rs. 60,500 per month[136] but the total amount should have far exceeded this as money was also sent by bank drafts,[137] postal orders[138] and through chettiyars and merchants.[139]

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133. *Despatches relating to passport*, 15 June 1921, SLNA, Pending File 1851/21.

134. See Appendix C.

135. *CAR*, 1930, Report of the Government Agent, Northern Province, D6; M.N. Nair, *Indians in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1935), p.111; *CAR*, 1903, Report of the Government Agent, Northern Province.

136. *CAR*, 1917, Post and Telegraph, C2.

137. *Ferguson's Directory, Ceylon*, 1890–1920. Some of the banks having branches in Colombo and the Malayan towns like Penang, Taiping, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Klang include The Mercantile Bank of India Ltd., The Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China and The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation; *Hindu Organ*, 7 July 1927, p.1. Arrangements were also made to cash drafts on Colombo banks in Jaffna, for example, transactions were made by S. Veeragathipillai at Grand Bazaar or at Tondamanan in Jaffna.

138. Postal orders were first used in 1911 and was quite popular till 1920. The commission rate was less compared to money order commission of 1 per cent of the amount transacted.

139. E.B. Denham, *Census of Ceylon, 1911*, pp.67–68.

2.5 Population, Distribution and Settlement

In the 1911 and earlier census reports the Ceylon Tamils were grouped with the Indian Tamil population who formed a sizeable proportion of Malayan Indian society. There was, however, a separate census recording between 1891 and 1921 for the Sinhalese population. For the latter year the total Ceylonese population has been recorded separately in the census so that it is possible to arrive at a rough estimate of the Ceylon Tamil population in Malaya for that year, allowing for a small number of Malays, Burghers and Moors of Ceylonese origin. Only in the 1947, 1957 and 1970 censuses are separate figures for both the Tamils and Sinhalese available.[140]

Based on the available population statistics, the Ceylonese population showed a steady increase since the 1880s and, by 1911, there was slightly more than 8,000 Ceylonese in Malaya.[141] Within the next decade it increased to 11,603 and in 1931 there were 16,786 Ceylonese. Between 1931 and 1947 there was only a small increase in the Ceylonese population. This was evidently due to the Great Depression and the subsequent retrenchment in the clerical service, followed by the Second World War repatriation of many Tamils to Jaffna. By 1957, however, the population reached 28,030 due partly to natural increase and partly to the arrival of female immigrants to join their husbands. The latter trend became quite significant for the post 1931 census period by which time the Ceylon Tamils were showing an interest in settling down in Malaya. The number of females amongst the Ceylon Tamils rose from about 1,000 in 1911 to 2,054 in 1921.[142] Between 1931 and 1947 there was an increase of 2,284 females despite the retrenchment and repatriation of males to Ceylon during the same period. Thereafter there was a steady increase. In 1957 there were 11,457 females as compared to 13,281 males and by 1970 the female Ceylon Tamil population actually surpassed that of the male population by 120 persons.[143]

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140. This was due to the "Memorandum in Connection with the Proposed Decennial Census of Population in British Malaya" sent by the various Ceylon Tamil associations in Malaya to the Superintendent of Census, Malaya, in January 1940 requesting for separate population figures for Ceylon Tamils.

141. There were 7,249 Ceylonese in the FMS and 2,121 in the SS (including Singapore). Figures were unavailable for the UFMS. A reasonable estimate was 8,000 Ceylonese in Malaya excluding Singapore.

142. See Table 2.1

143. See Appendix E.

Table 2.1

Ceylonese Population in Malaya, 1911–1957

	Year	1911	1921	1931	1947	1957
CEYLONESE*	Total	8500@	11603	16786	19802	28030
	Male	7000@	8963	11533	11092	15096
	Female	1500@	2640	5253	8710	12934
CEYLON TAMILS	Total	7280	9763	14500+	15411	24738
	Male	6280	7709	10000+	8267	13281
	Female	1000	2054	4500+	6784	11457
Percentage of Ceylon Tamils in the total Ceylonese population					77.8	87.0

Note: *The term 'Ceylonese' includes Ceylon Tamils, Sinhalese, Eurasians, Malays and other Ceylon peoples.

@This is an estimated figure. The Ceylonese population in the FMS was 7,250, while in the Straits Settlements (including Singapore) there was a population of 2,121 but no figures are available for the UFMS. Giving a reasonable estimate of 500 persons in Penang and Malacca and 750 persons in the UFMS and together with the FMS population of 7,250, it adds up to an estimated population of 8,500 persons. The Ceylonese population in Penang and Malacca was 849 persons and the UFMS had a population of 1,209 persons in 1921. Similar estimates were used to determine the male and female populations.

+ This is also an estimated figure. The Sinhalese population in 1921 was 1,840 persons (1,254 males and 586 females) and in 1947 it was 2,126 persons (1,194 males and 932 females). Allowing a generous estimate of 2,200 Sinhalese in 1931, there would have been at least 14,500 Ceylon Tamils that year. Similar estimates were used to determine the male and female Tamil populations.

Source: *Census of British Malaya, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1947 and 1957* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers).

The migration of Ceylon Tamil females, besides boosting the population, also laid the basis for the growth of a locally-born Ceylonese population. In 1931 out of a total Ceylonese population of 16,786 persons in Malaya, 15,113 were Ceylon-born, but a significant change was noticed in 1947 when out of 19,802 persons only 10,222 were Ceylon-born. As the new generation, born and educated locally, generally preferred to remain in Malaya, many of their parents as well settled here after retirement. Thus, after 1947 the number of Ceylonese government servants returning to Ceylon dwindled. On the other hand, the post-war period, especially after Malaya attained independence, saw very few new arrivals from Ceylon. In 1970 the Ceylon Tamil population stood at 24,436 persons and, in fact, showed a decrease of 302 persons since 1957.[144]

The characteristics of distribution and settlement of the Ceylon Tamils was chiefly influenced by the nature and growth of developments in Malaya. As it was the four Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, collectively known as the Federated Malay States, which were first developed, it obviously followed that the Ceylon Tamils who came to answer the call for educated labour settled chiefly in these four States. Various technical and administrative departments established by the British in these four States attracted the bulk of the Ceylon Tamil population and, even as late as 1947, "only one out of every eight lives outside these five territories."[145]

The bulk of the Ceylon Tamil population invariably employed in the clerical and other lower ranks of government service predominated in the Malayan railways. The construction of the railway lines throughout the Federated Malay States resulted in this preponderance of Ceylon Tamils at the various state administrative headquarters like Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Taiping, Seremban and Kuala Lipis. Throughout the twentieth century an established 80 per cent of the population were concentrated in the Federated Malay States.[146] Of the four Federated Malay States, Selangor seems to have had the bulk of the Ceylon Tamil population with a heavy concentration in Kuala Lumpur and a significant number in Klang. Kuala Lumpur, which was the seat of the Federated Malay States Government and, subsequently, the Malayan Government, had most of the government departments located here. By virtue of this fact it accomodated more than 30

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144. *Ibid.*

145. M.V. de Tufo, *Census of Malaya, 1947* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1948), para.316. The fifth territory mentioned was Singapore which had a population of 2,960 Ceylonese in 1947.

146. See Table 2.2

per cent of the Ceylon Tamil population in Malaya. This feature had become well known in Jaffna such that the area around Scott Road (presently Jalan Tun Sambanthan 2) in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, which formed the nucleus of the Ceylon Tamil population in Malaya, was often referred to as **Sinnayalpanam** or Little Jaffna.[147]

Table 2.2

Concentration of Ceylonese Population in the Federated Malay States, 1911–1957

	1911	1921	1931	1947	1957
(A) Total Ceylonese population in Perak; Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang	7249	11133	13648	16773	22291
(B) Total Ceylonese population in Malaya	8500	13652	16786	19802	28030
Percentage of (A) in (B)	85.2	81.5	81.3	84.7	79.5

Source: *Census of British Malaya 1911, 1921 and 1931; Census of Malaya 1947 and 1957.*

The Unfederated Malay States of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis and Johore, brought under British suzerainty in 1909 also came under various development schemes, especially the construction of railways.[148] Despite opposition from the Asian and European business communities that railway construction in the undeveloped east coast states was an unsound investment, the Malayan Government spent $68 million between 1912 and 1919 on the project.[149] Ceylon Tamils who worked in these railways and in the state departments established there, subsequently settled in the state capitals like Alor Star, Kota Bahru, Kuala Trengganu and Johor Bahru. It was in Johore that extensive railway construction was undertaken to connect the various towns in the state and to provide a through communication from the Federated Malay States to Singapore. This resulted in a steady increase of Ceylon Tamil population in Johore

147. *Morning Star*, 10 August 1899, p.3.

148. K.K. Ghosh, *Twentieth Century Malaysia* (Calcutta, Progressive Publishers, 1977), pp.67–68.

149. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings*, 1921, B66;

which, by 1931, had surpassed that of Pahang. The other Unfederated Malay States had only a negligible Ceylon Tamil population.

Had all the Ceylon Tamils who immigrated into Malaya settled permanently, the Ceylon Tamil population would have been larger. As it is, with volun-

Table 2.3

Percentage of Ceylonese Population in Malaya
1911–1957

		1911	1921	1931	1947	1957
(A)	Total Ceylonese population	8500	13652	16782	19802	28030
(B)	Total population in Malaya	2645000	3327000	4348000	5849000	7725000
Percentage of (A) over (B)		0.32	0.41	0.38	0.33	0.36

Source: *Census of British Malaya 1911, 1921 and 1931; Census of Malaya 1947 and 1957.*

tary emigration and repatriation they formed in the early decades of the twentieth century hardly 0.4 per cent of the total population in Malaya.[150] This did not mean, however, that their contribution and role in the development of Malaya was equally insignificant. In socio-economic terms the numerical weakness of the Tamils of Ceylon was surprisingly deceptive.

150. See Table 2.3

CHAPTER THREE

THE CEYLON TAMIL AS GOVERNMENT SERVANT, 1885–1946

Before the formation of the Federation of Malay States in 1896 each Malay State had their own state administration with the Resident as the head of state administration which included departments like the police, treasury and public works and surveys.[1] Below him were a corps of European officers who worked in the Residency departments and outlying districts, who were collectively regarded as members of the state civil establishment. With the formation of the Federation many new departments were formed at the Federal level, like the Railways Department, Forestry, Education, Mining and Land. In all these departments, both at the state and federal level, only the lower non-clerical ranks engaged in teaching, technical and medical work and the clerical services were opened to Asians.

Recruitment to the civil service was through a special examination held for the Indian, Hong Kong, Ceylon and Home civil services. There was provision for Asians to join the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Civil Services[2] but the recruitment of non-Europeans for the Malayan Civil Services was not well received by the local European officers who probably viewed them as a threat besides disliking the idea of working on a par with non-Europeans. The official excuse given by British officials in Malaya was that the non-European recruits would be unacceptable to the Malays.[3] Others, like J.H.M. Robson, editor of the **Malay Mail**, objected on the grounds that Jaffna Tamils were "sadly wanting in backbone and grit when it comes to analysis of character" and as such were unsuitable for the prestigious civil service.[4] F.A. Swettenham, Resident General

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1. K.K. Ghosh, *Twentieth Century Malaysia* (Calcutta, Progressive Publishers, 1977), p.32.

2. It was only in 1920 that the civil services of the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States were unified to form the Malayan Civil Service.

3. Chai Hon Chan, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896–1909* (London, Oxford University Press, Ely House, 1967), p.56.

4. *Malay Mail*, Editorial, 1 October 1897.

of the Federated Malay States even went to the extent of stating that the recruitment of non-Europeans to the Civil Service would result in the inefficiency of the government.[5]

At the official level steps were taken to exclude non-Europeans only in 1904 with the arrival of Governor Sir John Anderson. In this year, the Colonial Office, at the request of the Governor, introduced a regulation that candidates for the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Civil Services had to be of European descent. In 1910 this regulation was further extended to exclude also Eurasians with the introduction of the phrase "of pure European descent on both sides."[6] Thus, with this regulation in force, the number of Ceylonese, or for that matter non-Europeans, in the Civil Service was small.[7] A non-European like P.J. Sproule, although he held a top judicial post, was not appointed Chief Justice of the Federated Malay States in 1925 because of his Ceylonese origin.[8] Dr. E.T. MacIntyre, a Jaffna Tamil had higher qualifications than some of his European superiors but held a junior position in the Medical Department.[9] So was Dr. A. Viswalingam, perhaps the best eye-surgeon in Malaya before the Second World War, who was only a junior officer in the Medical Department.[10] The Malayan Civil Service thus remained an exclusive preserve of the Europeans. As the revenue of the Malay States increased the number of Europeans in the

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5. *Governor Anderson to Lyttleton, Confidential of 17 August 1904*, C.O.273/300.

6. J.G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880–1941* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1979), p.108.

7. In 1911 there were only 6 non-Europeans in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Civil Service.

8. J.G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880–1941*, p.109. P.J. Sproule, an Eurasian, became Solicitor General in 1911 and Senior Puisne Judge, SS (1921). He had acted as Chief Justice, Straits Settlements.

9. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane*, (Singapore, University Education Press, 1971), p.22.

10. G. Maxwell (Sir), "The Mixed Communities in Malaya", *British Malaya*, February 1943, Vol. 17, no. 10, p.118. In the Agricultural Department, Gunn Lay Teck had a better Cambridge degree than his European head of the branch in the Department, but held a subordinate post.

Civil Service, too, increased. By the turn of the century the Federated Malay States with a population of less than one-fifth that of Ceylon had twice as many European officers in the Civil Service.[11]

Occupying a lower rank within the Senior Civil Service was the Higher Subordinate Class Scheme, formed in 1910 and later known as the Malay Administrative Service, to provide opportunities for Malays to gain administrative experience.[12] Regarded as a lower division of the Civil Service, it was, in the initial period, essentially clerical in nature and was placed on the same footing as the Grade III clerical service open to non-Malays as well. It was considered prestigious, among the Malays, to join this service because it held prospects of promotion into the Malayan Civil Service.

The Junior Civil Service, which included, besides the clerical service, the lower ranking non-clerical staff engaged in teaching and in technical, medical, supervisory and administrative work. It was open to all Asians. It was within these categories of employment that the Ceylon Tamils predominated far beyond any other racial group at that time. In fact it can be ascertained that they held a virtual monopoly of this category of government employment for almost fifty years, from 1885 to 1930.

3.1 Non-Clerical Junior Civil Service

The new administrative machinery established under able British Residents, like Sir Hugh Low of Perak and Sir Frank Swettenham of Selangor, succeeded in giving the country unprecedented economic prosperity. To meet the rapid expansion of these Malay States implementation of land development and administrative programmes became essential. Staff were needed in the Survey Department to plan and lay out townships, to make maps for official use, to survey and

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11. W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967), p.22. In 1901 Ceylon had a population of 3,576,990 and 81 civil service appointments. The Federated Malay States' population in that year was 678,595 with 159 civil service appointments.

12. The name was changed to Malay Administrative Service only in the 1920s. See Khasnor Johan. *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite* (Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1984.

demarcate lands alienated by the state and to assist in the delimitation of boundary lines. Ceylonese topographical surveyors who were recruited from Ceylon helped the European officers carry out the necessary survey activities in the Malay States.[13] The Ceylon Pioneer Corps which was seconded for service in Perak in 1883, besides constructing the first railways in that state, also surveyed virgin jungles and laid long stretches of new roads.[14] Selangor, too, employed this Corps in the construction of roads and railways. Although the labourers comprised men from South India, the clerks, engineers, surveyors and overseers who formed part of the Corps, were of Ceylonese origin. The other Malay States employed many Ceylonese technical staff when land development and public works were thought expedient for progress. Their number had become so large by 1895 that it was reported that "something should be definitely arranged in regard to leave periods for Ceylonese and Indians, the whole of the public works' staff being made up of these." With uncertainty in leave periods, it was claimed, "it is difficult for a department to regulate and carry on work."[15] In 1914, of the total staff of 651 in the FMS Survey Department, 550 were Asian subordinate officers,[16] and it is hardly surprising that a large percentage, exceeding 50 per cent, were Ceylon Tamils.[17]

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13. Among the earliest Ceylonese surveyors in Perak, A. Vellupillai who surveyed Kuala Kangsar and Teluk Anson and D. Jeyasuria who surveyed the mines in Larut stand foremost. See K. Sadka (ed.), *Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877, Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 27, Pt. 4, November 1954. *(Straits Settlements Council Proceedings* No. 41, 1883, para. 88. It was recorded that "the survey of the mines in Larut has been chiefly entrusted in Mr. Jeyasuria, a hard working native of Ceylon who was for several years the only person qualified to help the Head of this Department in this direction.")

14. F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp.239–240; W.H. Treacher, *Perak Annual Handbook and Civil Service List, 1893* (Taiping, 1893), p.156; F.A. Swettenham, *About Perak* (Kuala Lumpur, 1893), p.20; *Straits Settlements Council Proceedings*, 1883, No. 10, para.10.

15. *Report of the Protected Malay States for 1895, Negri Sembilan*, 1895, p.57.

16. *Annual Report of Survey Department*, FMS, 1914, p.14

17. V. Coomaraswamy, "Report on the General and Economic Conditions etc. of the Ceylonese in Malaya," *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, No. 9, 1946, p.3.

After 1920 when the number of Malays recruited for the Survey Department rose sharply as a result of a pro-Malay policy in recruitment to technical departments many training programmes were initiated, and in this the Ceylon Tamils provided useful guidance to the Malay apprentice staff. One Mr. N. Sanmugam, Technical Subordinate Special in charge of Revision Survey, had the special duty of training plane tablers at the department headquarters.[18] It was he who first originated the idea of introducing a set of multiplication tables for use with the tangent clinometer to avoid errors in rapid computations.[19]

In 1912 the Public Works Department had 157 Asian subordinate officers and this number increased to 315 in 1921[20] Despite retrenchment exercises in 1922 and 1931 and a government policy of preferential treatment to Malays thereafter, the Ceylon Tamils seemed to have dominated the technical services till 1930 and, even after that, formed a substantial proportion of the Public Works and Survey Departments' staff. In 1937 there were 175 Tamil (both Indian and Ceylonese) Public Works Overseers and Sub-overseers out of a total of 240, and 419 Tamil technical assistants (as compared to 73 Chinese, 329 Malays and 78 others).[21]

One other area in which the Ceylon Tamils featured predominantly was in the railway department of the FMS and then later, Federation of Malaya Railways. Their numerical strength in this department since the inception of the railway system in the Malay States surpassed that of any other community. From 1885 till the 1920s all lower appointments in the railways, from that of clerk to stationmaster remained a monopoly of the Ceylon Tamils.

The construction of railways which began in 1885 was regarded as an absolute necessity in the further development of all the Malay States. The mining and plantation industries which helped in the unprecedented growth of the economy required a railway system to assist in the easy flow of goods to the

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18. *Annual Report of Survey Department*, FMS and SS, 1925, p.14.

19. *Ibid.*, p.15.

20. *FMS Report of the Retrenchment Commission*, 1922, p.1.

21. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings*, 1938, B21. Separate figures for Ceylon Tamils were unavailable.

ports. The growth of the population also needed the railways to assist in the passenger traffic. By 1930 almost the entire length and breadth of the country was connected by railways and roads.[22] In the construction of all these early systems of transport the role of the Ceylon Tamil at supervisory level and that of the South Indian as menial labourer were invaluable.

The railway line connecting Taiping to Port Weld in Perak covering a distance of eight miles, began in 1881, came to a standstill the following year because of the shortage of labour and staff.[23] It was then that the Resident wrote to the Governor requesting for permission to recruit a corps similar to that of the Pioneer Force of Ceylon for the Public Works of Perak.[24] As the Pioneer Force of the Public Works Department of Ceylon was considered redundant at that time, the Ceylon Government consented to loan two divisions of the Corps under H.S. Ward and J. Trump to the Perak Government.[25] Their arrival led to the successful completion of the first railway line in Perak which was opened to traffic in June 1885[26] This Pioneer Corps which consisted of Ceylonese officers like clerks, surveyors, engineers, overseers and medical officers and South Indian labourers were then transferred to Selangor when the railway line connecting Kuala Lumpur to Klang was undertaken in 1884.[27] The ambitious programme of the British Residents for the construction of roads, railways and bridges could not have been realised without the assistance of the Ceylon Pioneer Corps. Commenting on their ability, Sir Frank Swettenham records that the highway that crosses the range dividing the valleys of Perak and Larut Rivers "was hardly fit for vehicles, until the Ceylon Pioneers took it in hand and made it into one of the best sections of road in the State."[28]

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22. *FMS and SS Report of Road and Railway Transport Enquiry Committee*, 1932, Part 1, p.2. In 1930 there were 1,072 miles of railway lines and 2,129 miles of roads opened for service in Malaya.

23. *Straits Settlements Despatches*, No. 127, 2 April 1883; *Straits Settlements Council Proceedings*, 1884, para. 10.

24. *Despatches, Resident Perak to Governor Straits Settlements*, 5 October, 1882.

25. *Despatches, Governor Ceylon to Governor Straits Settlements*, 18 April, 1883.

26. *Perak Annual Report*, 1885, p.59.

27. F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya*, pp.239–240.

28. F.A. Swettenham, *About Perak*, p.20.

Further, to man the various railway stations the State Government needed English-educated men to be clerks, ticket collectors, time keepers, store keepers, pointsmen and stationmasters to occupy the subordinate ranks under the Resident Engineer and Traffic Manager who were invariably Europeans. The demand for such lower rank staff increased with the amalgamation of the various State railways into the Federated Malay States Railways with its headquarters at Kuala Lumpur, under a General Manager.[29] The Ceylon Tamils readily met this demand for railway personnel.

In the initial years of railway development the various state governments had often requested the Ceylon government for experienced stationmasters[30] and assistant surveyors,[31] but for other posts, mainly in the clerical service, applications from Ceylon Tamils were overwhelming. European officers of the Malay States railways like Spence Moss, Resident Engineer, Selangor, and C.E. Spooner, General Manager of the FMS Railways recruited Ceylonese to equip the lower ranks of the railways.[32] Others like T.A. Cook, Traffic Manager of Federated Malay States Railways requested for youths from colleges in Jaffna to be sent over to join the railways in Malaya.[33] Especially with the amalgamation of all the various state railways the number of Ceylon Tamils recruited increased tremendously. In 1900 almost 90 per cent of the Selangor State Railways was staffed by Ceylon Tamils and almost all the stationmasters at the various railway

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29. *Annual Report of the Federated Malay States Railways,* 1930. The development of the FMS Railways was seen in its division by 1930 into units called the General Manager's Department, Traffic Department, Health Department, Engineering Department, Locomotive Department, Police Department, Signal and Telegraph Department, Stores Department, Construction Department and Accountant's Department. The real need for clerical staff, technical subordinates, overseers, foremen, chargemen, dressers, hospital assistants, health inspectors, signalmen and ticket collectors was felt.

30. *Despatches, Governor Straits Settlements to Governor Ceylon,* 14 August 1893.

31. *Despatches, High Commissioner FMS to Governor Ceylon,* 10 November 1896.

32. V. Coomaraswamy, "Report on the General and Economic Conditions . . .", p.3.

33. *Ceylon Daily News,* 26 January 1918, p.5. Mr. Jacob Thompson, Principal of St. John's College, Jaffna, was asked to send ten bright boys to be employed in the railways in Malaya.

stations in Selangor were Ceylon Tamils.[34] In 1903 there were 2,021 Jaffna Tamils and 84 Sinhalese employed in the Federated Malay States Railways as compared to 278 Malays, 1,078 Chinese and 3,084 Indians.[35] Even as late as 1940 a large percentage of clerical staff in the Head Office of the Railways and practically all stationmasters or booking clerks in the various railway stations were Ceylon Tamils. Of the total of about 2,300 non-labour railway employees between 50 and 60 per cent were Ceylon Tamils.[36] The number of Ceylon Tamils in the railways would have been even greater if not for the enforcement, after 1920, of a pro-Malay policy in railway appointments[37] and the retrenchment of staff during the period 1931–32 as a result of the Great Depression.[38]

The role of the Ceylon Tamil junior officers of the Malayan railways cannot easily be overlooked in any study of the Malayan railway system because it was they who surveyed and brought out specifications for the laying of lines, maintained accounts, regulated the smooth running of the trains and managed the isolated railway stations in every remote part of early Malaya as station masters.

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34. *Selangor Establishment List, 1900.* The stationmasters were V. Sinnappah (Kuala Lumpur); K. Sanmugam (Petaling), S. Murugasoo (Batu Tiga), S. Marimuthu (Padang Jawa), G. Newman (Klang), T. Velupillai (Sultan Street), J.M. Ashley (Pudu), S. Canapathipillai (Salak), S.K. Sabapathipillai (Sungei Besi), N.K. Samuel (Serdang), V. Somasundram (Kajang), J.R. Seevaratnam (Kepong), C.B. Goonewardana (Sungei Buluh), P.F. Fonseka (Kuang), S. Thuraiappah (Rawaŋg), S. Karthigesu (Seremban), V. Thambiah (Sungei Tampin), S. Ponniah (Ulu Yam), V. Murugasu (Rasa) C. Canagasabai (Kuala Kubu).

35. *Hindu Organ*, 30 December 1903, p.2. The figures also included railway labourers.

36. V. Coomaraswamy, "Report on the General and Economic Conditions . . . ". p.3; *Federal Council Proceedings*, FMS, 1938, para.B21. In 1938 there were 1,277 Tamils (both Indian and Ceylonese), 302 Chinese, 485 Malays and 263 Others recorded as subordinate Asian employees in the Railways.

37. *Federated Malay States Railways Circular*, 2513/1923; *Annual Report of the Federated Malay States Railways*, 1928, p.24, para.261; Annual *Report of the Federated Malay States Railways*, 1929, p.28, para.261.

38. *Annual Report of the Federated Malay States Railways*, 1931, p.31, para.275; *Annual Report of the Federated Malay States Railways*, 1932, p.39, para.204.

Participation of the Ceylon Tamils in the capacity of junior officers was also evident in other government departments like the postal, legal, customs, printing, electrical, audit, treasury, education and medical where they formed a larger proportion of the Asian staff. However, in a two-fold civil service, with a junior service within which was included all the subordinate Asian staff and a senior service which employed only Europeans, the Ceylon Tamils were never employed in or promoted to the senior service, however high their qualifications.[39] Within the higher grades of the junior civil service itself the Ceylon Tamils formed more than 50 per cent of the staff. In 1936, for example, there were 81 Ceylon Tamils, 20 Malays, 26 Eurasians and 32 Indians out of an establishment of 181 officers.[40]

In the Medical Department provisions existed, in theory, since 1920 for selected officers of the Junior Medical Service to move up to the Specialist rank, the highest in the Junior Medical Service. In practice, however, till the Second World War, hardly any one was ever promoted. As it was the policy of the British that ". . . no officer under this scheme will be regarded as senior in rank to any Medical Officer,"[41] eminent Ceylon Tamil doctors of post-independent Malaya, like Dr. A. Viswalingam who possessed British medical qualifications and who

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39. *FMS Government Year Book, 1928* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1928). In the Postal Department the Ceylon Tamils worked as sub-postmasters, postmasters and technical assistants; in the Printing Department as compositors; in the Audit Department as assistant auditors; in the Customs Department as financial assistants and office assistants; in the Courts as assistant registrars and interpreters; in the District Offices as chief clerks and sub-treasurers; in the Electrical Department as assistant electrical engineers; in the Forest Department as extra assistant conservators; in the Labour Department as extra assistant controllers of labour or assessment officers; in the Education Department as superscale teachers; in the Sanitary Department as secretary, assessment officers; clerk of works and senior sanitary inspectors; in the Treasury as chief clerks, office assistants and state treasurers and in the Medical Department as assistant surgeons, assistant medical officers, deputy medical officers, assistant pathologists and assistant opthalmologists.

40. *FMS List of locally recruited holders of certain appointments earning an initial salary of $250 per month and upwards (Kuala Lumpur,* FMS Government Printing Office, 1936).

41. *FMS Government Year Book 1925* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Prin - ters, 1925), p.154.

was well known for a number of achievements before he retired in 1946, was never considered for promotion to the Specialist rank or for emplacement in the Senior Medical Service.[42]

Employed as junior officers to the British the Jaffnese performed their jobs with sufficient sincerity, dedication and ability to win the appraisal of many British officials.[43] One of them observed that the Jaffna Tamils "who were placed in charge of many of the smaller hospitals did magnificent work within the limits of their qualifications."[44] So did the Ceylon Tamils employed in the capacity of junior civil servants in all other government departments. There were fewer English-educated Chinese and Malays to meet the demand of the expanding government departments for educated men. In the event, with a few exceptions, it was the Ceylon Tamils who maintained the "check-roll" for the Public Works Department, managed the staff of the Railways and dressed the wounds in the Medical departments.

3.2 The General Clerical Service

Not only in the non-clerical junior civil service of the various departments but also in the development and maintenance of the general clerical services of the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements the Ceylon Tamils left an indelible mark. From 1880 till the end of the third decade of the twentieth century they staffed the clerical services of the Federal and State Government

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42. A. Viswalingam, *Pioneer Preventive Social Medicine in British Malaya*, (London, Dimbleby Printers Ltd., 1977); J.G. Butcher, *The British in Malaya 1880–1941*, p.178; G. Maxwell, "The Mixed Communities of Malaya", *British Malaya*, Vol. 17, No. 10, February 1943. p.118. Among Dr. A. Viswalingam's achievements were his discovery of the disease Pellagra for the first time in Southeast Asia in 1917, for initiating the first mass campaign for the eradication of Yaws in 1919 and the creation of an Eye Department in Kuala Lumpur in 1926 which became the consultant centre for the whole of Malaya.

43. G. Maxwell, *ibid.*, p.116.

44. J.H.M. Robson, *Records and Recollections 1889–1934* (Kuala Lumpur, 1934), p.76.

departments.[45] During this period of fifty years they occupied the clerical services in such preponderant numbers that sometimes it was common in some departments for all the clerks to be of Ceylon Tamil origin.[46] In 1920 all the seven clerks in the Kuala Langat District Office in Selangor were Jaffna Tamils.[47]

With the development of the Malay States progressing at a fast pace with the introduction and subsequent expansion of communication and transport facilities, the need for the establishment of various government departments became imperative in the administration of the country. In these departments the clerical and non-clerical junior services functioned as the backbone, fostering not only the smooth running of the departments but also provide the essential link between the European administrators and the general public. The role of the Ceylon Tamil in this category of public servants had often been recognised by the European administrators. In an official document it was noted that ". . . in days that are dead the Jaffna Tamil was the backbone of the government clerical services, and without him the railways could not have been built and run, or

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45. State departments included the Resident's Office, District Officers, Courts, Education, Marine, Government Plantations, Sanitary, Licensing Office, Public Works, Agriculture, Mines, Forest and Medical Departments. After the formation of tthe Federation in 1896 the various federal departments included the Federal Secretariat, Audit, Collector of Estate Duty, Commissioner of Lands, Education, Electrical, Forest, Geological Survey, Labour, Registrar, Surveys, Town Planning and Institute of Medical Research.

46. A perusal of the General Clerical Lists before 1920 reveals an overwhelming number of typical Ceylon Tamil names like Kandavanam, Vethavanam, Rasiah, Chinniah, Thambiah, Kandiah, Chelliah, Arianayagam, Vethanayagam, Selvanayagam, Arumunayagam, Arasaratnam, Kanagaratnam, Navaratnam, Viswalingam, Nagalingam, Appudurai, Sinnadurai, Ayadurai, Thambipillai, Vellupillai, Kanapathypillai, Rajasingam, Navasingam, Thillainather, Naganathar, Ponnampalam, Thillaimpalam, Arulampalam, Karthigesu, Sinnappoo, Ampalavanar, Vallipuram, Coomaraswamy, MacIntyre, Eliathamby, Murugasu, Muttukumaru, Seenivasagam and Venasithamby.

47. *Selangor Clerical Service List*, 1920 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1921).

the government offices staffed."[48]

In 1914 out of a total of 460 clerks in the Federated Malay States Clerical Service, 351 were Ceylonese and Indians, but in 1919 the Ceylon Tamils alone formed 46 per cent of the Federated Malay States Clerical Service.[49] In 1923 there were 215 Jaffna Tamils, 101 Indian Tamils, 63 Chinese, 22 Eurasians, 11 Malays and 26 Others in the Postal Department Clerical Service.[50] Their numerical strength in the clerical service was an important factor that when the government decided to revise the salaries for the general clerical services in 1919 they decided to use the prevalent cost of living amongst the Tamils as the index for Federated Malay States clerks, unlike the Straits Settlements where it was the standard of living amongst the Eurasians which was taken into account.[51]

Despite the fact that they performed the role of lower ranking officers in the administration in answer to the shortage of local English-educated manpower, the ubiquitous Ceylon Tamils in the Malay States, between 1880 and 1930, were viewed as an impediment to the enhancement of the Malay community.[52] By 1938 the Malays numbered only 1,742 in seven key departments as compared to 3,181 Indian and Ceylon Tamils, amongst whom the latter formed a predo-

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48. *Federal Council Proceedings*, 1938, Report of the Selangor Unemployment Enquiry Committee, C71.

49. *Report of the Committee to enquire into and report on the Salaries paid to Officers of the General Clerical Services of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States*, 1919, p.3. Of the total FMS clerks 46% were Ceylon Tamils, 1.5% Sinhalese, 10.5% Eurasians, 9% Indian Tamils, 19.5% Chinese, 10.5% Malays and 3% North Indians.

50. *Abstract of Proceedings of the Conference of Residents, 50th Conference*, 24 January 1923 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1923), Item 1.

51. *Majority Report of the Straits Settlements Sub-Committee on Revision of Salaries for the General Clerical Services*. 1919, p.41, para.18.

52. *Ibid.*, para 4. The resentment was expressed when an official document stated that the Jaffna Tamils "who arrive in search of employment stay with their relatives or friends, and, in due time, offer and hire their services to employers at nominal or low wages to get a 'footing'."

minant number.[53] The fact they they constituted between a quarter and a half[54] of the English-educated working population in the pre-war period is a sure indication of the substantial role the Ceylon Tamils played in the development of early Malaya. In fact, they helped create the sound pre-war administration which the later independent Malaya inherited.

3.3 The Effects of the Pro-Malay Policy

The liberal policy of the Malayan Government with regard to Ceylon Tamil immigration also had its adverse effects on the staffing of the Malayan establishment. It was acknowledged by British officers that the Malays who showed some reluctance to English education were deprived of their rightful share in the administration of the country and also in most government appointments.[55] Only a handful of Malays secured government jobs. It was because of the recruitment of foreigners at the expense of the natives, that the British officials in Malaya attempted to encourage education among Malays and to give them priority in employment in government service.

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53. *Federal Council Proceedings*, 1938, B21.

Government Employees in the Junior Civil Service 1938 (by race)

	Malays	Tamils	Chinese	Others
Clerks in General & State Clerical Service	336	537	465	97
Public Works overseers & sub-overseers	55	175	3	7
Teachers, Government English schools	24	102	64	35
Technical Assistants	329	419	73	78
Asiatic Employees, Railways excl. menials)	485	1277	302	263
Asiatic Employees, Posts & Telegraphs (excl. menials)	408	414	175	81
Dressers & Hospital Assistants	105	257	87	27
	1742	3181	1169	588

54. In 1938, of the total 6,681 employees in the Junior Civil Service there were 3,181 Tamils. This amounts to 47.6 per cent. Granting a generous allowance of 10 per cent Indian Tamils, the percentage of Ceylon Tamils would be 37.6 per cent.

55. M. Sheppard, *Taman Budiman* (Kuala Lumpur, Heinemann Educational Books [Asia] Ltd., 1979), p.18; W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp.113–114.

In February 1922, when a retrenchment exercise was undertaken by the Malayan Government to curb government expenditure which had exceeded revenue, the Retrenchment Commission recommended to the Government that in any future recruitment which became imperative preference be given to local-born candidates and to Malays, in particular. The Commission further stated that state-aided schools should accept only pupils born in Malaya.[56] Following this, a scheme for the rapid absorption of Malays into the Railway and Post and Telegraphs Department was initiated.[57] Other conditions introduced to facilitate the recruitment of Malays reduced the job prospects of new arrivals from Ceylon. Posts requiring a knowledge of Malay could be filled only by Malays even though they might hold only a Standard V certificate from a Malay vernacular school.[58] In 1924 the requirement that all government servants pass the Malay Examination was strictly enforced[59] and those who failed to obtain a pass within the prescribed time had their services terminated.[60] In 1929 the Malay Appointments Committee was set up in Kuala Lumpur, Taiping and Ipoh and reference had to be made to it before filling vacancies. With a view to facilitating the entry of Malays into the Civil Service, these committees maintained a register of names of English-educated Malays waiting for government employment.[61]

News of a pro-Malay policy in government employment reached many Jaffnese and Jaffna newspapers also carried articles on the problem of obtaining employment in Malaya. Although it discouraged emigration to Malaya there was never a complete stop in emigration. Preference for local-born candidates when used as a criteria disqualified many aspiring Jaffnese as almost all of them before 1920 were Ceylon-born. Even in 1931, out of a population of 16,786 Ceylonese, 15,113 were Ceylon-born.[62] It was only in the 1930s that the

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56. *Retrenchment Commission, 1922*, Interim Report, No. 41 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1922).

57. *Proceedings of the Conference of Rulers*, 50th Conference, January 1924, Item 1.

58. *FMS Circular*, 1923, No. 53.

59. *Federal Secretariat Circular*, 1924, No. 28.

60. *Federal Secretariat Circular*, 1929, No. 29.

61. *FMS Circular*, 1931, No. 14; M. Sheppard, *Taman Budiman*, p.32.

62. *Census of British Malaya, 1931* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1932).

Ceylon Tamils became more settled in Malaya and the number of local-born Ceylon Tamils increased steadily. By 1947 only 10,222 Ceylonese out of a population of 19,802 were Ceylon-born.[63]

Before the 1920s the idea of settling down in Malaya was never given any serious thought by the Jaffnese. Almost all of them returned with their families to Ceylon on retirement. Then, as a result of a change in official policy to recruit local-born candidates for government service, the idea of settling down in Malaya was first discussed in 1925 in a series of letters to the editor of a local newspaper in Jaffna.[64] It expressed views that the Jaffnese who had contributed immensely to the early development of Malaya, should settle in Malaya and partake in its further development. It was argued that conditions in Jaffna were not sufficiently favourable to accomodate the increasing population should employment opportunities in Malaya be closed for them. However, even by 1931, there were only 1,667 Ceylonese who had been born in Malaya.[65]

A pro-Malay policy being pursued in recruitments, though it temporarily reduced the number of Ceylon Tamils entering government service in the 1920s, did not effectively put a stop on the intake of Ceylon Tamils. Subsequently, despite the pro-Malay policy, in practice, the clerical service, especially, remained the domain of the Jaffnese. Since the 1880s senior appointments, like that of Chief Clerk or Office Assistant, were held predominantly by Jaffnese. These two appointments were important posts as far as recruitment to fill junior vacancies were concerned. The Office Assistant at the State Secretarriat and the Chief Clerk in the various government departments often exercised their discretion in the selection of candidates and presented the letter of appointment, only as a formality, to the Secretary to the Resident (head of the State Secretariat) or the head of department for approval.[66] If the head of the Secretariat

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63. *Census of Malaya, 1947* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1948).

64. *Hindu Organ*, 4 April 1925, p.3.

65. *Census of Malaya, 1931* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1932).

66. M. Sheppard, *Taman Budiman*, p.32; Personal interview with Mr. K. Ponniah, retired Office Assistant, Seremban in Jaffna, 18 April 1981. M.C. Sheppard (now Tan Sri) came across such practices by Jaffnese Office Assistants when he was an Assistant Secretary to the Resident in 1929 in Taiping. He wrote that though the waiting list of candidates had three Malay names at the top, the Office Assistant chose a Tamil far below on the list.

or the head of department, invariably a British, became too dependent on his Office Assistant or Chief Clerk in the management of the office, it made the Asian subordinate inevitably select from among his own kind for vacant positions.[67] This preferential treatment exercised by the Office Assistants and Chief Clerks contributed to the continued recruitment of Jaffnese into the clerical service.[68] The same applied to recruitment into the technical services.

Though the Ceylon Tamils managed, on the whole, to circumvent the pro-Malay policy in recruitment they were helpless in the face of the retrenchments which came during the Great Depression years of the 1930s. Both the public and private sectors were affected. Thousands of labourers lost their jobs and many plantations were "either closed down or functioned only on a care-and-maintenance basis."[69] Ceylon Tamils who worked as clerks and conductors were heavily retrenched. In the public sector, thousands of government servants were retrenched and the Malayan Railways was one of the many departments badly affected. The Ceylon Tamils who had almost monopolised this department found themselves out of work in the depression years. In 1931 the Federated Malay States Railways retrenched 901 junior officers, 7618 daily-paid staff and 32 European officers.[70] In 1932, 467 junior officers, 1,603 daily-paid staff and 45 European officers were affected.[71] Their position created alarm among Jaffnese who appealed to the Government of Ceylon to give assistance to the retrenched Ceylon Tamils to prevent them from being stranded in Malaya. A plea was made that something had to be done to prevent Ceylon from "becoming a dumping ground for the unemployed subordinates of the Malayan Government."[72] Many of the retrenched Ceylon Tamils returned to Jaffna,

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67. Personal interviews with Mr. K. Ponniah; Mr. K. Nagaratnam, retired Office Assistant, Seremban and Financial Assistant, Public Works Department, Negri Sembilan and Malacca in Jaffna, 21 April 1981.

68. Despite a pro-Malay policy, Mr. K. Nagaratnam claims to have employed in 1925 no less than 300 Jaffna Tamils for the Public Works Department for all ranks. The expansion of the department needed such a large force and the Resident Engineer did not question this large number of recruitment of Jaffna Tamils.

69. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya. Immigration and Settlement*, p.106.

70. *Annual Report of the Federated Malay States Railways*, 1931, p.31, para.275.

71. *Ibid.*, 1932, p.39, para. 204–205.

72. *Morning Star*, 22 September 1933, p.4.

some to return after the depression years but, many, to settle in Jaffna permanently. Remittances from Malaya fell drastically and this brought adverse effects in the hitherto good standard of living in Jaffna.[73] Prospective emigrants to Malaya were discouraged by the turn of events during and after the depression years. Strong emphasis on the recruitment of only local-born persons for government service, with particular preference for Malays, became a well-known fact in Jaffna and educated youths turned to cultivating the land.[74]

After 1933 when the economic position improved, recruitment into government service continued but many Ceylon Tamils found themselves not being reinstated. Instead, the intake of Malays was intensified. Except for local-born Ceylon Tamils, the others found difficult in procuring government employment. In the plantation sector also the Ceylon Tamils faced stiff competition from the Malayalis from Kerala in South India who offered themselves to work for much lower salaries.[75]

As a result of both the retrenchment and subsequent pursuance of preferential treatment for Malays, the number of Ceylon Tamils began to dwindle in the 1930s. In 1936 and 1937, the total number of clerks recruited for the General Clerical Service was 63 Tamils (Indian and Ceylonese), 58 Chinese and 102 Malays; for the Railway Clerical Service, 71 Tamils (Indian and Ceylonese), 18 Chinese and 39 Malays; and for the Post and Telegraph Clerical Service, 21 Tamils (Indian and Ceylonese), 19 Chinese and 51 Malays.[76] By 1938 there were only 385 Ceylon Tamils in the FMS General Clerical Service as compared to 363

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73. *CAR*, 1933. *Report of the Government Agent of Northern Province*,

74. *Ceylon*, D6. The Government Agent reported that as a result of the difficulty of finding suitable jobs, the Jaffnese educated youths had realized the necessity of turning to the land. A few young men of this type had already shown their enterprise by taking up land for cultivation under the Iranamadu Irrigation Scheme.

75. K.S. Sandhu, *Indians in Malaya: Immigrant and Settlement, 1786–1957*, p.123. Especially after the Second World War the Malayalis came in such large numbers and monopolised the civilian clerical and junior officer grades of the British War Department's installaitons in Malaya. In the plantations they were able to supplant the Ceylon and Indian Tamil conductors, clerks and supervisors.

76. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings*, 1938.

Chinese, 160 Malays, 77 Eurasians and 110 Indians; in the Post and Telegraph Department Clerical Service there were 147 Ceylon Tamils, 46 Malays, 95 Chinese, 36 Eurasians and 104 Indians; and in the FMS Railway Clerical Serivce there were 878 Ceylon Tamils, 224 Malays, 196 Chinese, 27 Eurasians and 321 Indians.[77] But the higher echelons of the Clerical Service were being held predominantly by the Ceylon Tamils and in 1940 there were 173 Ceylonese and Indians out of 226 Class I clerks and 41 out of 63 Special Grade clerks in the FMS Clerical Service.[78] Despite various measures proposed and undertaken to restrict the number of Ceylon Tamils, Indians and Chinese and increase the number of Malays, the Ceylon Tamils formed a substantial proportion due to their entry into the service before definite steps were implemented.[79] Thus, it was only during the post-war years with the retirement of the early recruits and Malayanisation of the public services that the Ceylon Tamils no longer predominated.

3.4 The Japanese Occupation

By 15th February 1942 the Japanese had occupied the whole of Malaya and taken over the administration of the government. During the early months of 1942 the Japanese attempted to restore, to a large measure, the British administrative system to avoid serious disruption in the functioning of the various government departments.[80] The significant change during this period was at the higher levels of administration where Japanese officials replaced or filled vacan-

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77. *Ibid.*

78. *FMS Clerical Service List, 1940* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1940). In 1937 alone there were 11 Ceylon Tamils out of 22 Special Grades clerks and 33 out of 76 Class I clerks in the FMS Clerical Service.

79 *Report of Committee appointed by High Commissioner to investigate the extent of Unemployment in Selangor*, 6 July 1937 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1937). The committee proposed for "prohibition by legislation of the immigration of the educated classes (particularly the clerical classes) from India, Ceylon and China" and "the repatriation of all unemployed persons who are not Malaya-born or not domiciled in Malaya, or who have not lived in Malaya for a period of years (10, 15 or 20 years)."

80. Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Social Impact of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya (1942–1945)" in Alfred W. McCoy (ed.), *Southeast Asia Under Japanese Occupation* (Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series No. 22), p.100.

cies left by British civil servants.[81] To maintain the smooth functioning of the administration through conventional channels very few changes were made in the remaining pre-war personnel. There was, however, a general disinclination, initially, amongst the government servants, including the Ceylon Tamils, to serve the Japanese Military Administration. Many of them left temporarily and the Japanese operated in most departments with a skeletal work force.[82]

Difficulty in recruitment for the administration only gave added incentive to the pro-Malay policy of the Japanese in training them for government service. They wanted to equip the Malays, through education and training, for leadership and for superseding the hitherto dominant Chinese and Indians.[83] With this objective, special training schools called **Koa Kunrenjo** were established in Singapore, Malacca and Penang though other races were also admitted. Youths between the ages of 19 and 25, predominantly Malays, were recruited and trained in will-power and self discipline and exposed to the virtues of labour. This training was directed at eradicating the characteristic "laziness and enervateness"[84] of the Malays which the Japanese found most undesirable.

The Malacca Koa Academy, started in May 1942, had by the middle of 1944 trained about 650 youngsters, 70 per cent of whom were Malays, with some Ceylon Tamils, to be officers in the State government departments. Supported by recommendation letters from the Japanese Governor, graduates of these schools were given relatively high appointments in the State and Federal Government departments.[85] Other training schools for producing Malay teachers, policemen, seamen, agriculturists and language instructors were also established.

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81. About 500 Japanese civilians, among them former residents of Malaya, were recruited to accept positions in the Japanese Military Administration as technical experts, heads of departments, Mayors, Governors etc.

82. Personal communication with Mr. S. Kulasingam, 25 Jalan Gasing, Petaling Jaya, 6 May 1985.

83. Y. Akashi, "The Japanization Program in Malaya with particular reference to the Malays." Paper presented at the *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association* (Chicago, 1971), pp.8–9.

84. *Ibid.*,

85. Y. Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1042–45", in *Malaysian Journal of Education*, Vol. 13, No. 1/2, December 1976, pp.18–20.

While the period of training at these schools varied from one month to three years, the result of the training invariably infused in the trainees Japanese spiritual education, physical exercises and military training, together with vocational education.

Graduates of these training schools who were absorbed into the government departments did not displace serving officers. Since the entire work force of the pre-war period was not available to the Japanese administration the staff who remained, who were still largely Ceylon Tamils and Indians, proved indispensable in the smooth running of the administration during the Japanese occupation. The new Malay recruits merely supplemented the existing work staff.

Technical departments, too, continued to be dominated by the Indians and Ceylon Tamils. This is attested by their high enrolment in the technical schools or the **Koto Kogyo Gakko** (College of Engineering), set up in 1942 in Kuala Lumpur by the Japanese.[86] Government students sponsored by the various government department such as public works, railways, electricity, survey and telecommunications constituted one-third of the trainees while the rest were private students. Malays and Chinese each comprised one-sixth of the student body but significant was the fact that two-thirds were Ceylonese and Indians. Graduates of this institution were also absorbed into government service. Similarly, the Railway Training School set up at Tanglin, Kuala Lumpur had an enrolment of 600 to 800 students from various communities.[87] Here, too, the Jaffnese comprised a good proportion of the students. The instructors were also predominantly Ceylon Tamils.[88]

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86. L. Horner, *Japanese Military Administration in Malaya and the Philippines* (Ph. D. Thesis University of Arizona, Arizona, 1973), p.146.

87. Interview with Mr. P. Selvanayagam, Petaling Jaya, 3 March 1986.

88. Interview with Mr. T.S. Mahesan, Kuala Lumpur, 15 March 1986. Five out of the seven instructors were Ceylon Tamils. They were T. Sinnadurai, V. Viswalingam, T.S. Mahesan, V. Kandiah and V. Kanapathypillai. S.V.J. Ponniah taught at the school for a short period.

Despite the larger proportion of Indians and Ceylon Tamils than Malays who continued to be employed in the technical field, the training schools set up by the Japanese produced enough government officers amongst the latter who demanded from the British during the post-war period that steps be taken to offset their unfavourable pre-war position in government service. This is evident when immediate pre-war and post-war figures of government servants are examined. In 1938 there were 1,742 Malays, 3,181 Tamils (Indians and Ceylonese), 1,169 Chinese and 588 others in the various government departments;[89] but by 1956 there were 12,376 Malays, 4,353 Indians, 6,165 Chinese and 1,305 Ceylonese in government service.[90] The Japanese occupation had in fact, successfully turned the tide against the non-Malay dominance of the public service in Malaya at least in so far as the non-technical departments were concerned.

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89. *Federal Council Proceedings* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1938), B21.

90. R.O. Tilman, *The Public Services of the Federation of Malaya* (Ph. D. thesis, Duke University, Durham, 1961), p.371.

CHAPTER FOUR

MIDDLE CLASS STATUS AND EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

4.1 The Middle Class: A Definition

It is generally acknowledged that a satisfactory definition of 'middle class' is difficult to arrive at, for seldom can exactly similar interests and characteristics be identified amongst members of the middle groups in a society. Even the two well-known students of the English middle class, Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, have refrained from a general definition of the middle class.[1] Thus, there are what could be termed as 'middle classes' in any society, and whatever the definition adduced to them, this class is important for it possessed certain advantages. Namely, its members generally command incomes and enjoy consumption levels higher than the working class but lower than the propertied class.

The division of society into propertied and propertyless might subsume under strictly orthodox Marxian classification of society, but the emergence of the middle classes mentioned above concedes more readily to the Weberian concept of class which states that "market positions" (the different levels of income which individuals can command on the employment market) are important in a consideration of class position. Max Weber stated that the factor that creates 'class' is unambiguously economic interest, with classes stratified according to their relation to the production and acquisition of goods.[2] Thus, if class is linked with a person's economic position, then occupation serves as its primary index. In other words, a person's class is indicated by his approximate location in the economic hierarchy.[3]

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1. R. Lewis and A. Maude, *The English Middle Classes* (Bath, Portway, Cedric Chivers Ltd., 1973). The difficulty arises because of the presence of commercial, industrial, landed and educated classes within the middle orders in a society, as well as the tendency to stratify a particular middle order into the lower, middle and upper classes.

2. H. Gerth and C.W. Mills, *Form Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 183.

3. W.G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp.44–45.

However, an alternate way to overcome the problem of definition and determine whether an individual belonged to a particular class, is to consider a wide range of factors including income, occupation, education, spending habits, residence, culture, leisure pursuits, clothes, accent, moral attitudes and relationships with other individuals. Studies on the development of middle class in the various countries in Asia, Africa and Europe have indicated that the above considerations are essential for a classification of what constitutes a middle class.[4] But it must be borne in mind that failure to conform to any one or more of the criteria need not exclude the individual from membership of a particular class. In fact, these studies also make it clear that the notion of middle class is primarily economic and social, rather than political, though the rise of a middle class in any society soon becomes a fact of considerable political importance.

In the case of pre-British Malaya it is quite impossible to talk of society having its middle orders between the propertied ruling class and the propertyless common people.[5] It was the rapidly changing economy of British Malaya that ushered in a new stratum called the middle class. Its members ranged from high professionals to shopkeepers and included the commercial, industrial, landed and educated classes in Malaya. Similarly, in India, Indonesia and Indochina, too, the advent of the European powers had led to the emergence of such middle classes.

Generally, while all other Malayan communities showed an even spread of membership over the different classes, that is, lower, middle and upper classes, the Ceylon Tamil community alone can lay claim to nearly all its members bearing of middle class status, though many belonged to lower middle status during pre-war Malaya. Subsequently, however, they moved substantially into the upper middle class through securing more professionals jobs. An interesting feature of the development of the community is that, unlike the other communities, their development was almost exclusively within the middle class. This factor alone should enable us to understand the social status that this community enjoyed in pre-war and post-war Malaya vis-a-vis the other communities. In other words,

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4. *Development of a Middle Class in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Countries* (International Institute of Differing Civilizations, Brussels, 1956); R. Lewis and A. Maude, *The English Middle Classes*, p.14.

5. See J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (London, 1958), p.65; F.A. Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, (London, 1942), p.48; Khoo Kay Kim, *The Western Malay States, 1850–1873* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1972), p.15.

they formed a good proportion of the middle class despite their numerical weakness.[6]

There ought to be certain motivating factors involved which assisted the Ceylon Tamils in their upward mobility from the original peasantry class in Ceylon to a predominantly lower middle class in pre-war Malaya and, finally, to an upper middle status in post-war Malaya. These motivating factors are values or value-related factors. Despite the many differences in the community based on caste and religion they possessed certain common social, material and personal values which clearly and conspicuously reflect their middle class status.

In his writings of late nineteenth century Malaya, Swettenham was able to identify a tripartite class structure in the communal divisions of society in the Malay States. He mentions a society consisting of upper class Malay aristocracy and chiefs, a lower class of Malay peasants and other Asian cultivators and labourers and artisans and middle class comprising mainly of an urban and predominantly Chinese business community.[7] It is not surprising that Swettenham failed to mention the English-educated middle class because this class was just making its appearance in Malaya at the time of his departure, in 1904, from the Peninsula. Only in the second decade of this century and thereafter did this middle class, comprising a substantial proportion of Ceylon Tamil government servants, begin to acquire prominence. Other ethnic groups had begun to realise the importance of English education and the concomitant advantages that went along with it, but it was the Ceylon Tamil middle class who emerged as a consequence of economic, administrative and educational changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Malaya. They consisted primarily of members of the learned professions, of public servants and other salaried employees who laid the foundations of an English-educated middle class in Malaya.

The Ceylon Tamils in pre-war Malaya filled predominantly the rungs of the clerical service and the status they derived was determined according to their specific rank, the pay they received, their attainment of promotion and entitlements for their pension. All this often depended on their relationship with the

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6. Their predominance in the clerical and subordinate services in the pre-war period and their ability to enter into the professions both in the public and private sectors in large numbers in the post-war period substantiates this argument.

7. F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya: An Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya* (London, John Lane, 1906).

employer, the British, which to a great extent smacked of paternalistic overtones. In this process the Ceylon Tamil subordinates valued their relationship with their British officers to such an extent that they became Anglophiles in orientation. Some tried to imitate their superiors in manner, dress, speech and character while others merely adopted the gentlemanly qualities of the English described as "self reliant and correct, courageous and abstemious, inexplicit and taciturn, responsible but amateurish, and always displaying loyalty and respect for tradition."[8]

The sum total of this reference group behaviour produced in the Ceylon Tamil community typical values, attitudes and qualities identified within English-educated middle class, whether in England[9] or America.[10] As a typical English educated middle calss the Ceylon Tamils displayed achievement values which stressed the importance of education and career. These qualities have made the Ceylon Tamils stand apart from the other Malayan communities in terms of status, achievement and distinctiveness.

4.2 Education and Career

Achievement values dominated child rearing in Ceylon Tamil families because all parents wanted their children to be better than themselves. As such they regarded provision of an education as their primary social responsibility to their children. This was because the English education not only secured them employment but also came to represent "a worthy embodiment of values they wanted for their children, namely discipline, sportsmanship, alertness, responsibility, integrity and realibility."[11] The struggle parents underwent to give their children the education they believed they should have, though likely to have been "the Waterloo of many a middle-class parent's budget,"[12] was procured with unflinching efforts so that such an education confirmed their economic and social status within the middle class.

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8. J. Raynor, *The Middle Class* (Longmans Green & Co., 1969), p.20.

9. *Ibid.;* R.H. Gretton, *The English Middle Classes* (London, 1911); R. Lewis and A. Maude, *The English Middle Classes* (1973).

10. H.M. Hodger, *Social Stratification: Class in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Schenkman Publishing Co., 1964).

11. *Suggestions for Inspectors, Principals and Staffs of English Schools in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, 1928* (Singapore, Government Printing Office, 1928), pp.4–5.

12. R. Lewis and A. Maude, *The English Middle Classes* (1973), p.244.

This achievement motive as a psychological value was important. It involved "the willingness to work hard, plan and make sacrifices [such that] an individual child should be able to manipulate his environment so as to ensure eventual success."[13] There was a projection of parental ambition in the child, providing him with a definition of goals and the means of achieving them. It followed, therefore, that middle class parents, especially those in the lower occupational categories lived out their own, often frustrated, ambitions through imposing them on their children. In this sense the Ceylon Tamils in the pre-war period, who comprised largely the clerical rungs and other subordinate ranks of the bureaucracy, often strove to provide their children with an education so that they were able to pursue a professional career.

It is true that the government bureaucracy had been the vehicle for upward mobility for the Malays as it was for the Ceylon Tamils. However, there is a marked difference in the manner this mobility was attained. For the Malay it was 'sponsored' mobility[14] where they depended on government assistance for the education necessary to gain entry into the higher ranks of the civil service, whereas in the case of Ceylon Tamils it was 'aspired' mobility. A puritanical and moralistic set of values which they used to sustain themselves, coupled with the essential value of achievement which dominated child rearing in Ceylon Tamil families, contributed to their success. Furthermore, at least during the turn of the century, they found ample employment opportunity in government service with little competition from any other group or race. This is an important factor as to why the Ceylon Tamils began to prosper unhindered as a middle class.

When the practice of looking for educated men overseas took a reverse trend in the initial decades of this century, the Malayan Government promoted English education locally to facilitate their motive of economy and administrative expediency and to satisfy the needs of the public services in Malaya [15] Success in examination constituted the only passport for admission to these and

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13. B.C. Rosen, "The Achievement Syndrome", *American Sociological Review* (1956). Quoted in J. Raynor, *The Middle Class* (1969),

14. For a discussion on the efforts of the Malayan government in the moulding of selected Malays into suitable administrative officers in pre-war Malaya, see Khasnor Johan, *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite* (Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1984) and W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967), pp.91–157. For post-war developments in the education of Malays, refer Nordin Selat, "Mobiliti Melayu Melalui Pelajaran" ("Mobility for Malays Through Education"), *Dewan Masyarakat* (Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, December 1971), p.40.

15. See Chapter Two for a statement on this policy.

other services and the main task of the schools in Malaya was to fit students for the pruposes of these examinations, so that they might share in the administration of the country or enter the independent profession. Education of the local population was oriented towards training clerical workers for governmental work and a majority of these students were absorbed into the clerical services of the Malayan government departments. Even parental expectations about English schools were of a similar tone as they "expect their sons to be given such an education as will prepare them for immediate employment as clerks in offices and banks . . ."[16]

In the initial phases of the history of British Malaya, English education in the FMS took a rather slow development. It was only in 1893 that a major English school in the form of the Victoria Institution of Kuala Lumpur was established. Being a pioneer educational institution in Kuala Lumpur the enrolment of the school increased manifold within a short period. By 1900 the figure was 423, representing almost a quarter of the total enrolment of the English schools in the FMS[17] and many amongst them were Ceylon Tamils.[18] Though most of the Ceylon Tamils who came to Malaya in the late nineteenth century had acquired their education in Ceylon and their enrolment in English schools in Malaya had been comparatively less, with the advent of the twentieth century the situation changed. With the introduction of new regulations pertaining to employment opportunities which demanded "local born" and "local educated" status from applicants for government jobs, the Ceylon Tamil enrolment in the English schools in Malaya rose sharply. Many of the Ceylon Tamil boys came

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16. *C.O. 717*, Vol. 600, "Comments on the Report of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies" by J. Watson, Acting Director of Education, FMS and SS, 13 September 1934.

17. P. Loh, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya 1874–1940* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1975, p.52.

18. School records before 1932 are not available. But the only available source, the school magazine, *The Victorian*, indicates that there were a large number of Ceylon Tamil students in the Victorian Institution in the pre-war period. The numerous names of Ceylon Tamils in *The Victorian* as prefects, award winners, participants in sports and associational activities and as contributors of articles to the magazine attests to their numerical preponderance and their outstanding school performance in the pre-war years. Some of the prominent Ceylon Tamil teachers who taught at the Victoria Inntitution include C. Candyah, R. Thambipillay, M. Vallipuram, V.K. Chinniah and H.V. Ponniah.

over to Malaya, enrolled themselves in the schools, often sitting again for the Standard VII Certificate, before availing themselves for government jobs. In 1922, about 25 per cent of the boys attending English schools in Kuala Lumpur were foreign born[19] and of these a large number were Ceylon Tamils.

Besides the Victoria Institution, the Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur was another institution through which many of the Ceylon Tamil boys obtained their education. It was founded in 1897 as theAnglo-Tamil School by Dr. William Kensett, a missionary from America assigned to Kuala Lumpur to begin missionary work. In 1899, Rev. S. Abraham,[20] a Jaffna Tamil, was appointed the first headmaster, assisted by a staff of four teachers. In 1902 when the site of the school was shifted to Malacca Street in Kuala Lumpur, it was called the Methodist Boys' School.[21] The enrolment was predominantly Tamil and in 1902 there were a total of 60 boys. In 1904, E. Foster Lee, another Jaffna Tamil, arrived from Ceylon to take over from Rev. S. Abraham and he built up a good reputation for scholarship. In 1919 about 50 per cent of the pupils in the Methodist Boys' School were Tamils direct from Jaffna.[22]

There were many Jaffna Tamil pastor-teachers and headmasters of Methodist mission schools who contributed to the advancement of English education in pre-war Malaya. While the bulk of the Chinese and Indian children went through

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19. *Federal Council Proceedings, 1923.* Interim Report of the Retrenchment Commission, 1922. Report No. 41. Council paper No. 13 of 1923, pp. C126–131. In view of the large number of foreign born students it was proposed in the report that state aided schools should not admit pupils not born in Malaya unless in the case of lack of enrolment from local boys.

20. Rev. S. Abraham, a brother-in-law of Dr. E.T. MacIntyre of the Federated Malay States Medical Service, was invited as a pastor for the Tamil Congregation of the Methodist Church and teacher for the Anglo-Tamil School. Before this appointment he worked as a pastor at Nunaville in Jaffna under the American Mission but the meagre salary of Rs25 forced him to secure this appointment through Dr. E.T. MacIntyre. As pastor he was paid $35, with a wife's allowance of $10 and free quarters. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane* (Singapore, University Educational Press, 1973), p.17.

21. Ho Seng Ong, *Methodist Schools in Malaysia,* (Petaling Jaya, Methodist Education Centre, 1964), p.75.

22. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings,* 1919, C57, C60.

vernacular education, the English schools which remained elitist in orientation, catered for those Chinese, Indian and Ceylon Tamil children resident in urban areas.[23] The mission schools were important institutions that provided basic education to the Ceylon Tamils of the twentieth century and by 1914 "some three-quarters of the boys receiving education in the English language were at these schools."[24]

As discussed earlier, clerical occupations among the Ceylon Tamils rose dramatically in relative importance to any other service. It was the most-admired and sought-after of the government services because clerical work held a relatively high white-collar status, was opened to the literate few without requiring high educational qualifications and, in comparison with other services, was better paid. Before 1920 those who joined the Railways or Public Works Department received $840 per annum and $756 per annum, respectively, after four years of training and those who joined the Survey Department received $480 per annum after two years of training. But clerks who joined the service with a Standard VII qualification were paid a basic salary of $420 per annum and received $720 per annum after five years at no risk or training period involved.[25] For various reasons, therefore, the Ceylon Tamils flocked to the clerical service in large numbers, to the point of virtually monopolising this area of employment. The prestige and status accorded to members of the clerical services were, in fact, responsible for creating for the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya the image of the educated middle class.

As a permanent cadre of junior administrators and clerks familiar with government regulations and procedures they provided the necessary continuity in a bureaucracy where British officials came and went. The Ceylon Tamils, after years of service, were in a position to give the British officer advice, a function well appreciated by the British.[26] Further, their function as chief clerks which

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23. P.Loh, *Seeds of Separatism* (1975), p.65.

24. *Federation of Malaya Year Book, 1962*, (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1963), p.346.

25. *Federated Malay States. Report of the Committee on Technical and Industrial Education in the Federated Malay States.* Federal Council Proceedings (29 April 1919).

26. Interviews with K. Ponniah and K. Nagaratnam (retired Office Assistants), Jaffna, 21 April 1981.

involved supervision and control in terms of disciplinary functions over subordinate staff on behalf of the British administration, earned them an element of mutual trust and confidence with the colonial government. As a consequence, the Ceylon Tamils developed a sense of importance, influence and pride which, together with their middle class image, reinforced their social prestige and status.

4.3 The Rise of Professional Education

By the 1920s the demand for English education had reached such a point that the Malay community had become increasingly aware of its value particularly when seeking government employment. Officially, too, at the end of 1923, the government declared that "every effort is being made to bring forward the people of the country to take part in the various departments of Government."[27] In 1924 non-urban English schools were set up at Bagan Serai and Lenggong in Perak.[28] Official policy made it possible for Malays to obtain free English education after only three, instead of four years, at a vernacular school.[29] Special Malay classes were started in English schools to facilitate the transition from one language medium to other. As a result the number of Malays enrolled in English schools in the Federated Malay States rose from about 800 in 1923 to 2,464 in 1933.[30] This development coupled with the introduction of an avowedly 'pro-Malay' preferential policy in the early 1920s began to affect the racial composition of the clerical service. For example, in 1922, the clerical service of the Postal Department had 215 Jaffna Tamils, 101 Indian Tamils, 63 Chinese, 22 Eurasians, 26 other nationalities and 11 Malays but by 1930 there were 414 Tamils (Jaffna and Indian), 175 Chinese, 408 Malays and 27 others.[31] Thus, the

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27. Despatches, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, No.682, December 11, 1923, in *Federal Council Proceedings* (1924), pp.C94–95.

28. *Federal Council Proceedings* (1924), p.B57.

29. H. R. Cheeseman, "Education in Malaya, 1900–1941", *Malayan Historical Journal*, No. 2 (July 1955), p.37.

30. *Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States for 1933.*

31. *Federal Council Proceedings* (1924), p.B98; *Abstract of Proceedings of the Conference of Residents*, 50th Conference 24 January 1923. Item 1; *Federal Council Proceedings* (1938, p.B21. According to the Report of the Committee on General Clerical Service Salaries, there were only 10.5 per cent of Malays in all grades of the General Clerical Service in the Federated Malay States in 1920. *Federal Council Proceedings* (1919), p.C215.

Ceylon Tamil notion of permanency in the clerical and railway services had been eroded and many Ceylon Tamil parents began to commit their children at a young age to higher education, both technical and professional. The fluid environment and the availability of ample opportunities in the 1930s made it possible for an ambitious young man with perseverance to find easier access to a growing array of professions in Malaya.

With the decreasing opportunities for easy employment in the clerical and technical services the aspirations of the Ceylon Tamils rose towards educational advancement in pursuit of professional employment. Furthermore, as a subordinate technical or semi-professional government servant who could not attain the status of the professional for whom he worked, the Ceylon Tamil tried to see his son attain that position and for this he was prepared to sacrifice his own material and personal comforts.[32] From young the parent infused in the son the prospect of a good status and a home, of a high social position to be won with clean hands and unsoiled garments. He imparted to his son the concept of educational achievements as a pipeline to the occupational world which would determine both his status and that of the family. Interestingly, it was a view shared even by the Chinese community that "a good English education is no doubt the best legacy a Chinese or any other parent in the British Empire can leave to his children."[33] The trauma that over-anxiety of parents about education could create is vividly related by S.C. MacIntyre, the first Malayan High Commissioner to India, in his autobiography'[34]

> In June 1917, sister Gladys was admitted to the Singapore Medical College. Earlier in the year, I was promoted to Standard VI but father, impatient at my slow progress, had withdrawn me from school to be coached for the Cambridge Preliminary Examination. I was expected to achieve proficiency within a few months in English Literature, English History, Geography of the United Kingdom, Algebra and Geometry . . . subjects which I had not studied before. I had to accompany father daily to the Empire Dispensary and to study

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32. Personal interview with Mr. V. Selvanayagam, late retired Personnel Officer, Malayan Railways, Brickfields, 2 January 1980.

33. *The Straits Chinese Magazine*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Singapore, 1897), Cited in P. Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p.55.

34. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane*, p.43.

> the subjects myself under his general supervision. The inevitable result was that I failed to pass the examination. However, after seeing the detailed results father insisted that I should sit in the following year for the Junior Cambridge Examination. Again I found myself beyond my depths and failed. In January 1919, I was sent back to school and joined the Junior Cambridge class where my erstwhile classmates of Standard VI had just arrived.

Equipped with an English education that assisted them in acquiring professional qualifications in the teaching, technical, medical and legal fields, the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya emerged among the early members of the incipient professional class in Malaya. As early as 1905 provision for teacher training or Normal Classes started where Asian students, who had completed a Seventh Standard or Junior Cambridge, were employed as pupil-teachers for a period of two years. In 1926 this was extended to three years. During this period they were expected to teach in a school, attend classes after school with qualified European instructors and sit for an examination at the end of each year.[35] On successful completion of their second year they were classified as trained teachers. Many Ceylon Tamil boys who found the clerical services saturated with Ceylon Tamils opted for the teaching profession. Despite attempts to set up a proper teacher training college, it was only in 1928 that the concept materialised with the founding of the Raffles College. It was established with the intention of "a college for Higher Education . . . the nucleus of a future University"[36] to provide diploma graduates in the liberal arts and sciences to take advantage of the employment opportunities that had developed in the service sector of the society. In actual fact, it was founded largely as an English teacher training college supplying teachers for the higher forms of the English schools in the Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements.[37] Though, between 1931

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35. *Annual Report on Education in the Federated Malay States* (1920), p.2.

36. *Report by the Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor to advise as to a scheme for the advancement of education preparatory to a university in Singapore* (Chairman, H.W. Firmstone, 1918). Cited in P. Loh, *Seeds of Separatism, p.63.*

37. *Straits Settlements Proceedings of the Legislative Council,* 6 March 1933. Council Paper, No. 14.

and 1941, the graduates rarely exceeded 35 in any one year, the Ceylon Tamils formed about 12 per cent of those who graduated from the College.[38]

During the 1930s trained teachers were paid a starting salary of $130 per month which rose to a maximum of $300 per month in 17 years. Compared to clerks who earned between $50 and $140 per month and chief clerks who earned $200 to $300 per month, teachers received a significantly higher salary. This was, in fact, higher than the average salary earned by about 90 per cent of the working male population in Malaya.[39] Raffles College graduates in the teaching service began with $180 per month. Thus, members of this profession automatically acquired middle class status.

Other avenues of employment in technical services in which the Ceylon Tamils were employed were as apprentices in the Public Works, Survey and Railway Departments. As apprentices they received training at the technical schools set up in Kuala Lumpur. In 1931 the Federated Malay States had only one English school, the Victoria Institution, which was equipped to teach science subjects.[40] The Ceylon Tamils who studied in this school and who were absorbed as probationary technical assistants in the various government departments, received training at the Technical School organised by the Public Works Department in 1931[41] Others with proficiency in science subjects enrolled as fee-paying students and acquired the City and Guilds Institute of London Certificate which qualified them for entry into government service. As the need rose to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding industrial sector in Malaya the Jaffna parent saw in technical education good prospects for his children.[42] In addition to the above training available at the Technical School, the Education Department had organised evening classes in three or four large urban centres to teach commercial and technical subjects which qualified students for the London City Council Certificate. Of an estimated 600 successful candidates

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38. Teh Tuck Soon, *Register of Graduates, University of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, 1963), pp.31–85.

39. P. Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p.115.

40. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings* (1931), p.B36.

41. *FMS, Report of Education in the Federated Malay States 1931*, p.2.

42. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings* (1919), pp.C36–C41.

between 1923 and 1937 only about 5 per cent were Malays.[43] The Ceylon Tamils, Chinese and Indians formed the rest.

The fees paid for the technical education must have weighed heavily upon many of the Ceylon Tamil parents, especially during the post depression years. A clerk spent about five per cent of his salary per child on average on fees for primary school education excluding other expenses.[44] These fees were increased by 25 per cent in English primary school fees and, between 50 and 100 per cent, in English secondary school fees in an attempt to reduce state expenditure on education. However, the Jaffna parent was never daunted by the fees increase, as to him the children's education was paramount.

Besides teaching and the technical professions, medicine, too, was popular among the Ceylon Tamils, especially after the establishment in Singapore in 1904 of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Medical School. This college which attracted many Ceylon Tamils offered two courses of study to meet the need for doctors and hospital assistants in the Medical Department. A two-year course was run to produce hospital assistants, qualified dispensers and pharmacists, and a five-year course to qualify students for the Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery.[45] Though before the establishment of this school there were already some Ceylon Tamil doctors in the Federated Malay States Medical Services, like Dr. E.T. MacIntyre for example, who had obtained his medical qualifications in Ceylon and England, after 1910 their number was on the increase. The hospital assistants, dispensers and pharmacists served the paramedical service, while the doctors were appointed as Assistant Surgeons in the Medical Service. From the time of its inception till World War Two, out of a total of 240 medical graduates, about 110 or 46 per cent were Ceylon Tamils.[46] They did indeed constitute a large percentage for a small community and it could be said that in British Malaya the Ceylon Tamils formed the major local community in the medical profession. They had exposed themselves to the dangers of killer diseases like beri-beri, cholera, malaria and pneumonia in introducing western medicine among the local population, particularly in the more remote areas.

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43. *FMS Report of Education in the Federated Malay States 1923–1937.*

44. *FMS Federal Council Proceedings* (1933), p.B40, B46.

45. A. Viswalingam, *Pioneer Preventive Social Medicine in British Malaya* (Surrey, Dimbleby Printers, 1977), p.4.

46. Teh Tuck Soon, *Register of Graduates, University of Malaya* (1963), pp.1–87.

However, the absence of a law school in Malaya reduced, on the whole, the number of Asian lawyers in the pre-war period. As a law degree was obtainable only abroad, only a few Ceylon Tamils could afford to send their children to England. Nevertheless, by 1965 the community had produced about 92 lawyers or 15 per cent of the Asian advocates and solicitors practising in Malaya.[47] About twenty Ceylon Tamils received their law degree in the pre-war period while the rest entered the legal profession during the post-war years. Many of these lawyers, besides fulfilling the need for judicial business, also served on the Bench as judges and magistrates and as civil servants. Prominent among them were R.P.S. Rajasooria, S. Chelvasingam MacIntyre and E.E.C. Thuraisingham.[48]

4.4 The Post-War Period

With the end of the Second World War, the process of Malayanisation of the public services coupled with industrial growth in Malaya called for many new middle class occupations. The emergence of agriculture, mining and manufacturing industries brought into existence a whole range of new professions and trades to administer. The Ceylon Tamils, having become part of the established middle class through joining the government service or entering the professions, particularly the legal and medical, found themselves exposed to new opportunities within the framework of post-war developments to fulfil higher occupational aspirations.

At the beginning of the post-war period following the war, the British found the entire administration in disarray. Many government servants had returned to their country of origin or had died. So short-staffed were the British that they found it imperative to re-employ many pensioners still residing in Malaya on a month-to-month basis to ensure the smooth running of the various departments under experienced staff. Of the pensioners re-employed the Ceylonese formed a substantial proportion.[49]

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47. *Role of Advocates and Solicitors of the Supreme Court of Malaya, 1900–1965* (High Court Library, Kuala Lumpur).

48. See Appendix F for details of their activities in Malaya.

49. *Federal Legislative Council Proceedings*, 22 December 1949, pp.569–570. There were 272 Malays, 93 Chinese, 166 Indians, 222 Ceylonese and 57 Eurasians.

Posts which were held by Europeans before the war and which fell vacant after the war were filled by Asians. For example, there were seven appointments of Traffic Inspectors in the railway service filled by members of the Railway Clerical Service among whom there were no Malays.[50] Greater opportunities for promotion into the higher echelons of the Malayan establishment awaited the Ceylon Tamils when efforts to Malayanise the public services were intensified in the 1950s.

For at least a decade after the Second World War government service in Malaya remained a colonial preserve where expatriate officers dominated the higher echelons of administration. For example, in 1956 there were 1,319 Europeans out of 1,851 Division I officers serving in federal posts. While some efforts were made since the end of the war to recruit local officers, especially Malays, to fill administrative posts, those who met the necessary qualifications were few. Under these circumstances the British were obliged to resort to Section 12(vii) of the General Orders which allowed local born non-Malays to fill the posts. This provided the means for non-Malays, including Ceylon Tamils, to gain entry into the higher grades of the civil service. Even as early as 1947 many of the 103 Asian officers in Division I posts in the Medical Department were Ceylon Tamils who were promoted from the subordinate service of the pre-war days. So it was the case in most other departments.

The slackness of Malay appointments particularly to senior posts in the government service caught the attention of the post-war Malay nationalists. They began to question the lack of participation of Malays in the public service. They argued that the interpretation of Section 12(viii) of the General Orders allowing preference for the recruitment of Malays was unsatisfactory. According to them a Malay with the minimum qualifications should gain preference even over better qualified non-Malays.[51] This was the only way to ensure that more Malays secured higher appointments in government service.

Following this request from the Malay community the British began to intensify the intake of Malays into the bureaucracy, at times waiving the merit criteria for recruitment. By 1956 there were 190 Malays in Division I, 881 in Division II, 5706 in Division III and 5,599 in Division IV out of 27,315 Federal

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50. *Ibid.*, p.573.

51. *Letter from Zainal Abidin bin Hj. Abas, Secretary General UMNO to Deputy Chief Secretary, Malayan Union, 12 January 1948*, UMNO/SG/79/47 (Arkib Negara, Kuala Lumpur).

Officers serving in Federal posts. In the process of recruiting more Malays the British did not overlook the position of the non-Malays. However, in preparation for independence, the British wanted the non-Malays, too, not to feel excluded from the administration of the country. Between 1948 and 1951 they improved the opportunities for more non-Malays to be absorbed into the higher grades of public service by providing for Asian officers in the public service who were not already Federal citizens to obtain citizenship. Almost all the Ceylon Tamils took advantage of this provision except those who were bent on returning to Ceylon after retirement.

As a result of the Malayanisation of the public service the number of expatriate officers in the Malayan Civil Service decreased from 220 in 1957 to 26 in 1962, as against the number of Malays which increased from 128 persons to 219 persons. (See Table 4.1). The Malays were found largely in the administrative and police services while the non-Malays gravitated towards the technical and professional services. In 1956 there were 46 Ceylonese in Division I posts, 187 in Division II, 1,019 in Division III and 53 in Division IV. (See Table 4.2).

As a result of the Malayanisation policy many senior Asian officers of the subordinate services and junior civil service gained rapid entry into the Malayan civil service and the senior bureaucracy of the various government departments, hitherto monopolised by European expatriate officers. In an effort to hasten Malayanisation, locally-domiciled Malayans were constantly being promoted or appointed to higher posts, in or leading to Division I in all the branches of the public service.[52] This process of Malayanisation was a windfall for many non-Malays, including the Ceylon Tamils, who regarded government service as their source of livelihood. Members of the clerical services also, as a result of such developments, rose to superscale and special grade appointments and served as Office Assistants, Financial Assistants and State Treasurers.

Based on the intake of officers into government service after 1956 it appears that the Malayanisation scheme was meant to substantially increase the

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52. *Report of the Committee on Malayanisation of the Public Services* (1956), (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1956), pp.10–11, para. 12. Entry qualification for the civil service was an Honours degree from a recognised university which led to direct recruitment to Division I, but officers who had entered the service of Division II or performed exceptionally well at Division III "may mature with experience into suitable candidates for Division I appointments."

Table 4.1

Communal Representation in Selected Major Services of the Senior Bureaucracy in Malaya, 1957 and 1962

	Civil Service		Medical		Police		Education		Public Works	
	1957	1962	1957	1962	1957	1962	1957	1962	1957	1962
Expatriates	220	26	130	31	374	52	133	54	207	71
Malay	128	219	38	78	92	171	9	74	11	35
Chinese	9	17	151	347	50	124	47	131	11	75
Indians and Ceylonese	3	15	72	144	37	80	22	64	6	27

Source: R.O.Tilman, *Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya* (Durham, Duke University, Commonwealth Studies Center, 1964), pp. 73–74.

Table. 4.2

Federal Officers Serving in Federal Posts 1956

Ethnic Group	Division				
	I	II	III	VI	Total
Malays	190	881	5,706	5,599	12,376
Indians	106	450	2,477	1,502	4,535
Chinese	157	818	4,309	881	6,165
Eurasians	28	90	587	61	766
Europeans	1,319	602	139	–	2,060
Ceylonese	46	187	1,019	53	1,305
Others	5	12	54	57	108
TOTAL	1,851	3.040	14,291	8,133	27,315

Source: R.O. Tilman, *The Public Services of the Federation of Malaya*, (Ph. D. thesis, Duke University, Durham, 1961), p. 371.

number of Malays in the public service irrespective of qualification, as noted in the 1956 Report of the Committee on Malayanisation of the Public Services. By this time Malays formed the majority of the Federal Officers though most of them held Division III and Division IV posts. Gradually, however, they began to increase their stake in Division I and Division II posts though, again, the concentration was in the services requiring no technical or professional qualifications. The non-Malays continued, therefore, to dominate the technical and professional bureaucracy which required a scientific background.

Realising the constraints of over-dependence on government employment, especially that which required a general educational background where the Malays had flocked in great numbers, the Ceylon Tamils turned their attention mainly to acquire a professional qualification in the field of law and medicine. The parents infused in their children the need for a professional education which would reduce the over-dependence on public sector employment where competition was becoming stiff with more Malayans acquiring higher educational qualifications.

The establishment of the University of Malaya in 1949 by the process of amalgamating the Raffles College and King Edward VII College of Medicine (formerly Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Medical School) resulted in the establishment of the Faculties of Arts, Science and Medicine. Obtaining an academic qualification, both professional and non-professional, which became almost an obsession among the Ceylon Tamils in post-war Malaya was greatly assisted by the establishment of the University of Malaya. Since its establishment hundreds of Ceylon Tamil boys and girls obtained their degrees in the arts, sciences and medicine. They entered the University far exceeding their ratio of population in Malaya and formed nearly 10 per cent of the student population between 1949 and 1957. In addition to a large number of Ceylon Tamils who graduated from the University of Malaya[53] many returned from India and overseas. A large percentage of these graduates fulfilled the needs of the developing Malayan economy in the administrative, technical, medical and legal sectors. Some took post-graduate qualifications both locally and overseas to pursue an academic vocation at the higher institutes of learning and research.

Higher education during the post-war period emerged as a seminal institution within the Ceylon Tamil community who had already established them-

53. Refer Table 4.3 for figures on Ceylonese in the University of Malaya.

Table 4.3

Ceylonese in the University of Malaya, 1949–1965

Academic Year	Ceylonese	Total	Percentage
1949/50	74	645	11.4
1950/51	87	830	10.5
1951/52	92	859	10.7
1952/53	98	875	11.0
1953/54	112	954	11.5
1954/55	112	1,220	9.6
1956/57	125	1,574	9.0
1957/58	140	1,825	9.0
1958/59	113	1,615	7.0*
1959/60	110	1,600	6.9
1960/61	37	367	5.7
1961/62	62	1,010	6.1
1962/63	82	1,341	6.1
1963/64	75	1,736	4.3
1964/65	100	2,225	4.5
1965/66	103	2,835	5.6

Source: *Annual Reports of the University of Malaya*, 1949–1965.

Note:* The drop in percentage of Ceylonese after 1957 is explained by the increase in the total intake of students to cater for the increasing demand for higher education among the various races. The demand for English education in the post–war period increased by 50 per cent amongst all races. The number of Malays, for example, in the Government and Government–aided schools increased from 6,535 at the end of the war to 21,584 in 1952. *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council* (5th session) (February 1952 – February 1953), pp. 491 – 492.

selves as a permanent middle class by then. Through possessing English education, they secured important careers in the professions and the public sector which gave them considerable social influence. The professions became the nucleus around which the Ceylon Tamil upper middle class of modern Malaya emerged. They claimed the largest number of professionals in proportion to the size of the community in Malaya. Not surprisingly, they resembled the Jews in many ways who, wherever they went, showed a fierce passion to have their children educated and become professionals.[54]

54. See N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1967), pp.155–159. The Jews in England, United States, Argentina and South Africa were no different. In fact in the 1930s, in America, medical schools set tight quotas limiting the entry of Jewish students which was far out of proportion with their 3 per cent population size.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PRESERVATION OF RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religion was an important component of the cultural life of the Ceylon Tamils, be they Hindus or Christians. All the Hindus were Saivites who worshipped Siva, Murugan and Vinayagar and their different manifestations, while the Christians were mainly Methodists and some were Anglicans and Catholics. The Hindus constituted a larger proportion of the Ceylon Tamil community in Malaya.

5.1 Temples and Organisations

Being a community given to piety and devotion they continued to preserve the Hindu heritage brought from Ceylon in its pristine form in Malaya. The persistence of the religious element in their cultural tradition is seen in all the major towns in Malaya where they settled. They made determined efforts to establish temples to cater to the religious needs of the community. Just like the Indian Tamils who conformed to the ancient Tamil adage, "do not settle in a land where there is no temple" the Ceylon Tamils, likewise, established religious institutions wherever they went.[1] In almost every large town in Malaya where the Ceylon Tamils settled in the pre-war days, they were able to lay claim to having established at least one Saivite temple.[2]

As an educated middle class community, the Jaffnese managed these temples in an organised manner. Worship and ceremony were in line with scriptural uniformity and, in order to preserve the distinct identity of their temples as compared to those established and managed by the Indians, the Jaffnese employed **brahmin** priests from Jaffna. Though non-Ceylon Tamils were allowed

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1. Such temples included the Kandasamy Temple in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur; Pillayar Temple in Old Pudu Road, Kuala Lumpur; Aathi Eeswaran Temple in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur; Paranjothy Vinayagar Temple in Jalan Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur; Pillayar Temple near Railway Station, Ipoh; Krishnan Temple, Taiping; Sithi Vinayagar Temple, Taiping; Subramaniam Temples in Kuantan, Bentong, Kuala Lipis, Raub, Temerloh, Seremban and Pekan and many others in other towns in Malaya.

2. Interview with Dr. K. Kanagasingam of Jalan Wayang Gambar, Taiping, 14 March 1982.

to worship in these temples the management was reserved to Ceylon Tamils. The unity of the Ceylon Tamils Hindu congregation also contributed to the emotional emphasis of their identity and separateness. However, with the increased settlement of educated Indians in the urban areas from the 1930s onwards, the hold that the Ceylon Tamils had on these temples gradually weakened. In the course of time, the management was, in fact, taken over by the Indians. Only the Kandasamy Temple in Scott Road, Brickfields and Aathi Eeswaran Temple in Sentul continued in the hands of the Ceylon Tamils even after independence under the management of the Selangor Ceylon Saivites Association and Malayan Saiva Siddhantha Sangam respectively.

Located in the heart of Sinnayalpanam or 'Little Jaffna', the Kandasamy Temple emerged as one of the leading Saivite institutions in the early decades of this century. The Ceylon Tamil community in Kuala Lumpur patronized this temple where various Hindu festivals were held.[3] Unlike many Indian temples where worship and ceremony was in keeping with the diversified tradition of folk religion and lacking in scriptural uniformity and universality, the Ceylon Tamils paid particular attention to the observance of worship according to scriptural religion. In order for the devotees to understand and practice scriptural religion, they were exposed to fundamental religious texts such as the **Puranas, Tevaram, Tiruvacakam,** and **Tirumurukattrupadai** in the temple. The temple premises were used for regular religious classes and weekly prayer meetings where recitals of Saivite texts like **Periyapuranam, Kanthapuranam** and **Thiruvathvoorarpuranam** dominated the teachings. In fact, the temple, besides fulfilling the supplicatory needs of individuals, also helped to impart and enhance religious knowledge among them.

The significant feature of the Kandasamy Temple was the emphasis it placed on conducting ritual and ceremony in accordance with the Hindu **agamas** or religious texts. In line with this aim the community even modelled the temple after the architectural style of the famous ancient Kandasamy Temple in Nallur, Jaffna. Nallur was the seat of administration for the ancient Tamil kings of Jaffna and Nallur Kandasamy Temple had often been a place of pilgrimage for Jaffna Tamils in Ceylon and Malaya. Thus the Scott Road Kandasamy Temple

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3. *Selangor Ceylon Saivites Association Kandasamy Temple Kumbabishekam Souvenir*, 1978, p.3. These festivals included *Maha Sivarathri, Vaigasi Visagam, Kantha Sastri, Soora Sangaram, Thirumanavala Kolam, Valli Thirumanam, Mahanoombu, Aipasi Fridays, Vinayagar Caturthi, Thaipongal,* Tamil New Year, *Ani Uthiram, Thirukartigai* and *Thiruvempavai Navalar Pooja* which were celebrated here with much pomp and devotion.

was replete with a number of deities[4] installed over a period of thirty years. In order to ensure that the **Maha Kumbabishegam**, or consecration ceremony to enhance the divinity of the newly installed deities, were conducted according to Hindu **agamas** or scriptures, the Management Committee of the Temple invited two Brahmin priests from Jaffna. Many Jaffnese who wish to begin each day with prayers at a temple prefer now, as they did then, to go to the Pillayar Temple in Old Pudu Road where they were able to receive the **vibhuti** or holy ash faster than at the Kandasamy Temple where elaborate ceremonies were observed in the daily ritual. Nonetheless, on all other religious and auspicious occasions most Jaffnese Hindus made it a point to offer prayers at Kandasamy Temple.

As a community bound by old traditions and an unshakeable faith that sacred verses and hymns uttered in the Sanskrit language will have profound effects on the worshipped and worshipper, the Ceylon Tamils continued with the use of Sanskrit in temple rituals and prayers by the priests. It was for this purpose that they adhere closely, even till today, to the original clause in the constitution of the Kandasamy Temple that the priest must always be a **saiva kurukkal**.[5] Siva Sri Somaskantha Kurukkal served as the temple high priest from 1928 (till 1975) and was assisted by Siva Sri Shanmuga Rasa Kurukkal and Siva Sri Kamatchy Sundareswara Kurukkal, all **brahmins** from Jaffna. Engaging a **brahmin** priest was in adherence to the temple constitution but recruiting them from Jaffna smacked of communal sentiments. The same applied to other temples in Malaya managed by Ceylon Tamils which engaged priests from Jaffna.

The Pudu Pillayar Temple was another important religious institution for the Ceylon Tamils. Worshipped even before the Kandasamy Temple was founded, its origins remain obscure although certain claims indicate that one Murugesar Vythilingam, Head Overseer attached to Public Works Department, Kuala Lumpur, found an image of Pillayar somewhere in the course of his duty and installed it at a temple near his residence at Court Hill Road (now Jalan Bukit Mahkamah) around 1898, and in the course of time, its popularity grew. Residents in the vicinity began to worship the deity. This was due to the existence of only one

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4. The deities included *Ganeshar, Muthukumarasamy Arumugasamy, Vairavar, Saneeswarar* and *Kolu Sandeswara. Navagrahas* are also installed there.

5. Personal communication with Mr. C.S. Moorthy, Secretary SCTA, 28 October 1983. *Saiva Kurukkals* were temple priests in Jaffna who had undergone formal training in the priestly profession. They were invariably of *brahmin* descent by caste.

deity in the temple which required less elaborate ceremonies, patronage by non-Ceylon Tamil worshippers and the occasional utilisation of the temple's divinity by the nearby law courts.[6] The Kandasamy Temple and the Pudu Pillayar Temple became the two most prominent and frequented temples for the Ceylon Tamils residing in Kuala Lumpur for the first three decades of this century.

In 1923, under the initiative of Dr. A. Viswalingam,[7] a prominent Ceylon Tamil doctor, the Malayan Saiva Siddhantha Sangam was founded for the study and propagation of the Saiva faith and philosophy. This association attempted to spread among the Hindus the Saiva Siddhantha philosophy which was based on the twenty-eight **Saiva Agamas** and the canonised text of **Tirumanthiram** by Saint Thirumoolar, supplemented with religious texts like **Tevaram, Tiruvacakam, Periyapuranam, Sivajnanabotham** and works of **Umpathi Sivachariar** which were all regarded as the essence of Vedantic philosophy popular in South India and Ceylon. Though basically the doctrines and dogmas were Vedic in character, the practical manuals of divine worship in Saiva Siddhantha have Lord Siva as the central God.

In accordance with its philosophy, the association felt the need to implement certain reforms in the ceremonies and forms of worship existing among the Hindus. For, it was noted that though all the other existing temples in Malaya enshrined minor deities of the Hindu pantheon or one of the various manifestations of the Supreme Lord Siva, such as Ganesa, Subrahmanya, Amman and Vairavar, none of them were specifically dedicated to Lord Siva, the Supreme Deity of the Saiva faith. It was hoped that the form of worship observed in the new temple would serve as a model for other temples. With this purpose in mind, the association procured a piece of land in Sentul in February 1930 as a gift from the Government of Selangor[8] and built, in 1937, the Aathi Eeswaran Temple, at a cost of $50,000 out of money raised and partially funded by Dr. A. Viswalingam.[9] It became the only Sivan temple in Malaya built on orthodox concept and the first Hindu temple in Malaya to have its original rules and regulations safeguarded by special legal enactment, the Aathi Eeswaran Temple Enactment, State of Selangor, No. 8, of 1941.[10]

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6. It is said that magistrates at the nearby courts sometimes asked Indians and Jaffnese brought to justice swear upon the Pillayar Temple of their innocence.
7. See Appendix F for biographical details on Dr. A.Viswalingam.
8. *Selangor State Government Gazette*, Notification No. 1606 of 1930.
9. *State of Selangor Bill No.8 of 1941*, p.1.
10. *Ibid.*, A. Viswalingam, *Pioneer Preventive Social Medicine in British Malaya* (London, Dimbleby Printers Ltd., 1977), p.53.

Details concerning the enactment of the Bill reveals that while, on one hand, it helped the Board of Trustees of the temple to uphold tenaciously the original principles for which the temple was erected, on the other hand, it became a source of ill-feelings and constant bickerings amongst members and finally led to the construction of another temple, the Sri Paranjothy Vinayagar Temple in Jalan Ipoh in Kuala Lumpur.[11] Problems arose when two tablets were installed in the shrine of the Aathi Eeswaran Temple, containing injunctions to be strictly adhered to by the members of the Board of Trustees. They were required to take an oath not to depart from the principles in connection with the administration of and the conduct of religious ceremonies in the temple. Dr. A. Viswalingam, as founder of the Malayan Saiva Siddhantha Sangam and the person responsible for the Aathi Eeswaran Temple, seemed to have been apportioned undue rights and privileges as attested in the tablet inscription and the proposed bill.[12] It gave rise to much controversy and opposition within the community which requested for postponement of the Bill.[13] But Dr. Viswalingam's close relationship with the Legal Adviser of the Federated Malay

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11. Personal communication with Mr. C.S. Moorthy, Secretary SCTA, 28 October 1983.

12. *State of Selangor Bill No. 8 of 1941.* p. 3. The five members of the first Board of Trustees were Dr. Arumugam Viswalingam, Tambimuttoo Sivaprakasam, Appapillai Shivagurunathan, Appacuttee Mahalingam and Vallipuram Seeniappah, all Ceylon Tamils. Dr. Viswalingam alone reserved the right to remain as President of the Board for the duration of his residence in Malaya unless he undertook to voluntarily resign. The provisions also accorded the right to Dr. Viswalingam as President not only to nominate a person if the vacancy arose in the Board but also the right to nominate one of the remaining four members to the Board of Trustees. The very special privilege which Dr. Viswalingam accorded to himself, which hurt the sentiments of other Ceylon Tamils who were also actively involved in the setting up of the Sangam and the temple, was conspicuously evident in the inscription in Tablet I which read as follows: "On the 18th day of April in the year Ishwara equivalent to Salivagana Sagam 1861, Doctor Arumugam Viswalingam, born in Urela, Ceylon, of old *Vellala* descent, Ophthalmic Specialist in the Malay States, Founder of Malayan Saiva Siddhantha Sangam and its President ever since, jointly with his wife, laid the foundation of this Temple and had this Holy of Holies *(moolasthanam)* built on his sole responsibility, and hereby lays down irrevocably that the worship and ceremonies in this shrine shall be carried out in strict accordance with the principles laid down in Tablet II."

13. A. Viswalingam, *Pioneer Preventive Social Medicine in British Malaya,* p.53.

States, Adrian Clark, who helped draft the Bill and the former's ability to communicate favourably with the British Resident of Selangor overcame the obstacles and the Bill was passed in November 1941. The image of Siva alone was kept for worship within the precinct of the main temple while the request by devotees to install the images of Nataraja, Vinayagar, Subramaniam and Navagraha was met by accomodating these images outside the walled precincts of the main temple. The temple, the only one of its kind in Malaya, was patronised by devotees of all communities, especially South Indians, who lived in the vicinity of the temple, but the management was tenaciously held by the Ceylon Tamils.

Interest in devotional activity was evident in the founding in 1918 of the Young Men's Hindu Association in Taiping, by Dr. A. Viswalingam. It was founded in the firm belief that the faith of a people was the pivot on which all other activities were hinged.[14] It brought together, for the first time, the Tamil Hindu youths, both Indian and Ceylonese, to participate in common activities for the benefit of society. As founder and president of the association, Dr. Viswalingam, with the assistance of members of the Hindu community, obtained from the State government a commodious site for a temple, a reading room, library and a Tamil school. The Sithi Vinayagar Temple served the religious needs of the Hindus in Taiping while the Young Men's Hindu Association Tamil School provided Tamil education for the community.

Another religious institution of prominence founded by the Jaffnese in the early decades of this century was the Vivekananda Ashrama. It was established in 1904 in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, to spread among the Hindus the Vedantic teachings as propounded by Swami Vivekananda, a great Hindu sage and philosopher who lived in India during the second half of the last century.

Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) was basically a social and religious reformer who stressed on social action for the benefit of mankind. Not only did he condemn caste and its concomitant features of inequality, he also criticised the Hindu emphasis on rituals, ceremonies and superstitions which he regarded as having contributed to the backwardness of Indian society. He urged the Indians to imbibe the spirit of liberty, equality and free-thinking and propagated the teachings of his teacher, Swami Ramakrishna Paramhamsa (1834–1886), that service to man was service to God, for man was the embodiment of

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14. Personal communication with Dr. A. Viswalingam, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 25 April 1980.

God.[15] Though proclaimed the essential oneness of all religions, Vivekananda was convinced of the superior approach of the Indian philosophical tradition to which he finally subscribed through his missionary activities. He began to spread the Vedantic philosophy not only in India but also in America, England and Europe and the success of his foreign tours in spreading the message of India's spiritual heritage won him instant fame in India. On his return he founded, in 1896, the Ramakrishna Mission which established branches in different parts of the country to carry out social service by opening schools, hospitals, dispensaries, orphanages and libraries.[16] Branches of this Mission were also established in Singapore and Malaya in the first decade of this century, to teach the basic ideas of Hinduism, and to manage orphanages, children's homes and schools.

Ceylon Tamils were attracted by the religious teachings and popularity of Swami Vivekananda and it was this which led them to establish the Vivekananda Ashrama in 1904, two years after the death of the Swami, to understand, practise and propagate his spiritual ideals and teachings. Regular lectures on Vedantic philosophy and comparative religions were held at the institution which attracted large crowds of Hindus in Kuala Lumpur. Intensive religious activities were carried out which included the celebration of the birthdays of Swami Ramakrishna Paramhamsa and Swami Vivekananda. The Ashrama was visited by monks from the Ramakrishna Mission in Singapore and the Ramakrishna Order of India.[17] Though not affiliated to the headquarters of the Order in India, the Ashrama scrupulously followed the ideals of the Mission in disseminating the teachings of the Swami. Regular attendance at the lectures on religion at the Ashrama had induced many Hindus to study the Saiva Siddhantha philosophy

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15. C. Heimsath, *Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1964), pp.331–336.

16. According to Marie Louise Burke who compiled a fully documented account of Swami Vivekananda's visit to America, she concludes that the practical purpose of his visit was to collect funds for his constructive educational and social service work in India: "In the course of this visit he spread the Indian philosophical tradition. The two most remarkable discoveries made by Vivekananda in America was the position and influence of women in American society and the voluntary organisation of hospitals and welfare services. It was probably these discoveries that influenced him to set up the Ramakrishna Mission in India to carry out social service." See M.L. Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries* (Calcutta, 1958).

17. *Vivekananda Ashrama Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1974, p.10.

and other Tamil religious works.[18] In fulfilling its purpose of religious indoctrination the Ashrama had contributed greatly towards educating the Hindu public in Malaya, particularly those in Kuala Lumpur. But one feature typical of all institutions founded by Ceylon Tamils which characterised also the Ashrama was that, though the activities catered to the religious needs of the Hindu public in general, the management of the institution remained with the Ceylon Tamils throughout.

After the Second World War as the community began to acquire a settled status, many other religious institutions were formed to cater to their religious needs. Some were modelled on the basis of institutions founded in India, some were branches, while others evolved independently, professing to spread a particular aspect of Hindu philosophical tradition. The Hindu philosophy which was divergent in nature inevitably led to the establishment of separate religious societies propagating the respective branch of the Hindu philosophy. For example, in 1936 the Divine Life Society was founded in Sivanandanagar at Rishikesh in India by Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj[19] which aimed at the spread of spiritual knowledge by training aspirants in Yoga and Vedanta branch of philosophy. In so doing they hoped to enlighten humanity on the vital ethical and spiritual ideals so as to lead a life of divine virtues, right conduct, selfless service and universal brotherhood.[20] The society was non-sectarian in nature, embodying in its perspective the fundamental principles of all religions of the world, thus according equal place of honour to all faiths and religious traditions. The popularity of this Society spread to Malaya when the Malayan branch of the Divine Life Society was established in 1953 in Kuala Lumpur.

The founder of this movement in Malaya was N. Ponniah, an Administrative Assistant in the Rubber Research Institute of Malaya who, on retirement, was initiated into the monastic order of the Divine Life Society in India. He was attracted by non-sectarian principle and the universality of the religious ethics which he regarded as ideal for the cosmopolitan Malayan environment. He was ordained into sainthood by Swami Chidananda Maharaj, the spiritual leader and successor of Swami Sivananda Maharaj. The latter had given the name of Swami Pranavananda Saraswati to N. Ponniah on his initiation into the monastic order.

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18. *Vivekananda Ashrama Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1954, p.3.

19. Swami Sivananda was born as Kuppusamy into a *brahmin* family in South India before being initiated into sainthood. He was a medical doctor who served in Malaya between 1913 and 1923.

20. *Divine Life Society Souvenir*, 1975, p.9.

During the initial years after its founding the society had its meetings and congregations on borrowed premises of the Vivekananda Ashrama. It was possible that many Ceylon Tamils who frequented the Ashrama could have come under the influence of the Society's teachings and message. That is why there seemed to be a predominance of Ceylon Tamils in the movement although there were many Indians who were also attracted to the divine life philosophy. It catered to the needs of the spiritual aspirants by conducting prayer meetings, lectures, study classes, yoga asana classes, retreats, celebrations of auspicious occasions and promoted the study and practice of the Yoga philosophy.

At this point in our discussion it is necessary that the existence of another institution, a statutory body called the Pure Life Society,[21] needs to be taken into account for two reasons. First, because the founder of the Pure Life Society was a Ceylon Tamil, and Ceylon Tamils actively participated in its activities and contributed to the popularity of this institution and, second, because Swami Pranavananda was for some time associated with this society until a clash of views[22] with the founder led him to seek initiation into the monastic order of the Divine Life Society. Before his initiation he was the first secretary of the Pure Life Society established in 1949, in Puchong, Selangor by Kailasapillai Chellathamby, a former postmaster in Teluk Anson, Perak. The latter took the title of Swami Satyananda after his initiation in India.

The Pure Life Society was an organisation set up by Swami Satyananda also with non-sectarian, non-communal, spiritual, cultural, educational and humanitarian aims. It sought to spread the idea of a practical religion whereby society is led to peace and prosperity through wisdom, non-violence, self-sacrifice, loving service and spiritual influence.[23] This was what the Swami envisaged and thought ideal for the multi-racial and multi-religious Malayan society. He wanted to spread the message of Universal God through humanitarian work which he thought could bring out the finer feelings in people, devoid of religious bigotry. To a great extent he succeeded in his aim of bringing together people of diverse cultures for a common cause. The orphanage managed by the Society

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21. The Pure Life Society has been gazetted as a statutory body according to *Federation of Malaya Government Gazette*, 1 July 1957, No. 15.

22. Personal communication with Sister A. Mangalam, Life President, Pure Life Society, 8 January 1984. As founder member of the Society, she had devoted her entire life to the organisation.

23. *Pure Life Society Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, 1974, p.8.

became the focus of cooperation and welfare activities by people of all races who patronised the institution. Even in its cultural, welfare and educational programmes, the Society laid no emphasis on any particular religion and exposed inmates of the orphanage, who came from different religious and ethnic backgrounds, to all faiths.

Swami Satyananda was himself orphaned at an early age, but it was the personal experience of witnessing the conditions of orphans in Malaya during the Second World War which prompted him to carry out humanitarian service. He became the secretary of the Indian Relief Committee in Malaya and assisted thousands of war orphans and destitutes who sought the Committee's help. His continued desire to serve humanity materialised in the founding of the Pure Life Society[24] where the orphanage functioned as the focal point of the Society's welfare activities. The Temple of Universal Spirit, as part of the Society, provided a venue for the dissemination of the spiritual message about a universal God and universal ethics which the Swami hoped would restore the spiritual consciousness in a man.

The educational needs of the orphans at the Pure Life Society were provided by the Dharma Institute, a school for primary and secondary education situated in Petaling, Selangor; the Kishan Dial School situated in Puchong; Sri Aurobindo Library and the Pure Life Society Motor Workshop and Printing Press located at the Pure Life Centre. In catering to the various needs of the orphans who came under its care, the Pure Life Society acquired recognition as the premier orphanage in Malaya. It also became the common venue for multi-racial cooperation and humanitarian service. Besides being the major donors with the Chinese, Ceylon Tamils and Indians jointly staffed the establishment and managed the committee of the Society since its inception.

The other post-war organisation that to some extent satisfied the religious needs of the Ceylon Tamil community was the Malaya Arulneri Thirukkootam formed in 1955 through the efforts of K. Ramanathan Chettiyar and Swami Satyananda.[25] This organisation aimed at propagating Hindu religion in general

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24. Events that contributed much to the thought and development of the Pure Life Mission was his attendance at the First Asian Relations Conference in 1947 which inspired the idea of inter-racial understanding and the World Pacifists' Conference in 1949 which gave further impetus to his thought.

25. *Malaya Arulneri Thirukkoottam Silver Jubilee Souvenir*, 1980, p.52.

and Saiva Siddhantha philosophy, in particular. Regular religious classes, religious talks and prayer meetings were conducted to disseminate the philosophy of Saiva Siddhantha. Swami Pranavananda of the Divine Life Society also played an important role in assisting Ramanathan Chettiyar in the activities of the organisation. Ceylon Tamils and Indians regularly attended and participated in the activities to gain religious knowledge.

For the Hindus, constant exposure to religious knowledge engendered a tenacious inclination to keep in touch with spiritual matters. In this regard, the Ceylon Tamils, being a people of piety and devotion, subscribed to Hindu religious philosophical traditions and its concomitant institutions in Malaya with much alacrity. The many religious institutions in Malaya constantly provided for their religious needs such that their religious belief system, though supplicatory in nature, was reinforced by philosophical indoctrination. This lent clarity to their religious beliefs and expressions.

5.2 Church Activities

For the Ceylon Tamil Christian community in Malaya the churches and the Young Men's Christian Association served their religious needs. The church, like the temple, was an important meeting ground for the Christians in generating ethnic sentiments and solidarity. While the Tamil Methodist Church catered for the Methodists, the Catholics patronised the St. John's St. Anthony's, and Holy Rosary Churches in Kuala Lumpur. St Mary's Church was the venue for Anglicans where R.V. Vethavanam, a Ceylon Tamil,served as the first Tamil pastor in 1899.

In the spread of Christianity in Malaya, the Ceylon Tamil Christians played a significant role. Whether as Methodists, Anglicans or Roman Catholics they showed, wherever they resided a profound interest in the practice and preaching of the gospel. As ardent churchgoers the commitment that they had towards developing the Church and organising various activities was evident in the history of any church they were associated with, such as that of the Methodist Tamil Church in Kuala Lumpur.

Prior to the founding of any formal religious institution the Methodists met regularly in their homes and conducted prayer meetings and bible study. Regular gatherings of this nature soon brought home the need for founding a Tamil church. The idea was first mooted at the Malaya Annual Conference of

Methodists in 1897 by a group of eight Ceylon Tamils led by Dr. E.T. MacIntyre.[26] As a result, the first Methodist Tamil Church was founded in June 1897 in Kuala Lumpur by Dr. W. T. Kensett of the American Methodist Mission, who held services in English with the aid of a Tamil catechist. Immediately thereafter an Anglo-Tamil school was also established. But it was with the arrival of Rev. Samuel Abraham, a brother-in-law of Dr. E.T. MacIntyre, from Jaffna in 1899 that the church began to play a significant role for the Tamil Christians. As pastor of this church and headmaster of the Tamil School till 1918, the Tamil church was developed into an important and popular religious institution for the Tamil Christian community who lived in Kuala Lumpur and its surrounding areas. Evangelical services were held between 1900 to 1917 in the Kandang Kerbau, Brickfields, Bangsar and Sentul areas of Kuala Lumpur and efforts were also made to cater to the needs of the Christians in the rubber estates in the vicinity of Selangor.[27] For the latter task the pastor recruited assistance of Ceylon Tamil lay stewards. In appreciation of his work he was appointed the first Asian District Superintendent of the Methodist Mission covering Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Malacca, a post which he held till his death in 1918.[28]

He was succeeded by Rev. J. A. Supramaniam, another Ceylon Tamil, who was largely responsible for the establishment of a branch church in Sentul. It was during his tenure that preaching centres were established in Kuala Kubu Bahru, Rawang, Serdang, Banting, Carey Island, Sungai Way and Puchong.[29] Occasionally, revival meetings were held at the Kuala Lumpur Tamil Church where Lutherans and Anglicans were invited to participate. In all these activities the assistance of lay stewards, predominantly Ceylon Tamils, needs special mention as their competence in English and Tamil provided them the necessary facility to communicate and spread the gospel among the largely Tamil educated Indians.

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26. *Methodist Tamil Church Annual Conference Souvenir*, 1981, The eight people were Dr. E.T. MacIntyre, Daniel Poore, R.S.V. Muthuthamby, J.A. Barnabas, J.S. Appadurai Arianayagam, Sittampalam and Knight.

27. *Ibid.*, p.4. Interview with Dr. A.R. Kandiah, 17 April 1982. Some of the lay stewards include N. Barnabas, M.W. Navaratnam, D.V. Kandiah, A.C. Lawton, J.R. Seevaratnam and Dr. S.S. Rasanayagam.

28. *Ibid.*, p.4.

29. Interview with Dr. A.R. Kandiah, 17 April 1982.

In this period between 1900 and 1930 and, also thereafter, the social activities of the Ceylon Tamil Christian community were centred around the church, but they also participated and took an active interest in the social activities of the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association, of which they were also members. For example, the Ladies Aid Society served the function of a social club for Christian women;[30] the Tamil Women's Christian Temperance Union formed in 1919 had as its aim the strengthening of family life and the bonds between family and community;[31] and the Sunday School, with other church festivities, provided the opportunity for the children to develop their histrionic talents. Dr. E.T. MacIntyre as an outstanding senior steward of the church, often directed dramas based on the Bible to spread the teachings of the faith and also to provide educational entertainment to the audience.[32] The Tamil Epworth League, formed in 1923 through the efforts of Rev. J.A. Supramaniam, Dr. E. T. MacIntyre, D.V. Kandiah and B.T.S. Naysadorai was meant to provide an outlet for Christian youths with Tamil culture as its background. The League was noted for its outstanding youth work in Malaya. Many of the youths associated with and trained in this League later became active leaders of the Methodist Church.[33]

Since its inception the Methodist Tamil Church of Kuala Lumpur remained within the domain of the Ceylon Tamil community. A large number of Indian Christians attended the church activities and festivities but the Ceylon Tamils covertly prevented encroachment of Indians into the management of the church. A perusal of past records reveals a predominantly, and even entirely, Ceylon Tamil membership of the various executive committees like the Tamil Epworth League, Ladies Aid Society, Tamil Women's Christian Temperance Union and the executive committee of the church itself. This was not surprising because, apart from the fact that the entire Ceylon Tamil Christian community of Methodist denomination attended this church most had English education which proved essential for leadership.

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30. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane* (Singapore, University Education Press, 1973), p.39.

31. *Malay Mail*, 8 March 1920, p.3.

32. A.R. Kandiah, "Reminiscences" in *Methodist Tamil Church Annual Conference Souvenir*, p.5.

33. *Ibid.*

Similarly, the Anglicans and the Catholics who attended the St. Mary's and the St. John's and St. Anthony's churches, respectively, played a significant role. As pastors and stewards of these churches they contributed to the continuance and development of this denomination in Malaya. In this connection it is imperative to note that as Christians of the various denominations they were able to gain easy employment as pastors and teachers in schools managed by the missions and also as government servants. Among the many pastors who contributed to the growth of the church in Malaya were Ceylon Tamils, several of whom served the Methodist Mission.[34] Notable among those who served the Anglican church was R.V. Vethavanam, the first pastor of St. Mary's Church in Kuala Lumpur, while D.A. Vendargon served the Catholic Mission. The latter rose to be the Archbishop of Malaya. So significant was their involvement in church activities in Malaya that the role of Ceylon Tamils cannot be overlooked in the church history of Malaya.

A common meeting place for all Christians, irrespective of denomination, including Europeans, Ceylon Burghers, Anglo-Indians, Chinese, Indians and Ceylonese was The Young Men's Christian Association, established in 1905 in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. Though religious activities were the main concern of this association, sporting and social activities began to overwhelm this institution's objectives. As a meeting place for Chrsitians of all communities it augured well in one sense, for the well-being of many Ceylon Tamils who found the occasion to socialise with the British, who would have maintained utmost formality when on duty. Many Ceylon Tamils have contributed towards the management of this institution and, amongst them, J.R. Vethavanam and V. Rajaratnam were associated with it for a long time.

By and large the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya, whether professing Christianity or Hinduism, adhered closely to their faiths and helped to support and maintain the institutions associated with their religion. They shared a number of common cultural characteristics with the Indian population in Malaya, particularly in religion, yet there always existed an air of distinctness in the former's mode of worship as compared with the latter. This was due largely to the relatively better economic standing and education of the Ceylon Tamil community.

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34. Ceylon Tamil pastors of the Methodist Mission included David Underwood, Samuel Abraham, Stephen Viswalingam, J.W.A. Kadirgamar, J.A. Supramaniam, J.V. Ayaduray and S.M. Thevathasan.

5.3 Puritan Attitudes

Be it within the confines of the home or outside, the Ceylon Tamil was a puritan in his attitude towards work, religion and behaviour. Such puritan attitudes attained significance as an important value among the Ceylon Tamils. The influence of these psychological sanctions which emerged, partly due to English education from Christian missionaries and its concomitant characteristics and, partly, from within their own culture, gave a direction to their conduct and behaviour.

The work ethics of the Ceylon Tamils was one of the important factors which contributed to their achieving success in their careers. British officers freely acknowledged the hard-working and industrious traits of their Ceylon Tamil employees.[35] In direct contrast with members of the host community who were alleged to have displayed a "rooted disinclination to steady work of any kind,"[36] the Ceylon Tamils' puritan idea of work dictated images of rectitude, righteousness, sternness and duty. Though it is not the intention here to argue that each and every Ceylon Tamil was endowed with such an attitude towards work, it may be contended that their diligence helped them earn the respect of their employers. No wonder that even as a small community they occupied important posts in the government service in pre-and post-war Malaya.

The development of high work ethics among the Ceylon Tamils can be traced to their religious doctrines. For the Christians who were largely Methodist by faith, Protestant ethics emphasised that success in one's worldly calling was willed by God.[37] Though not directly sanctioning vocational prosperity,

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35. There is mention of such characteristics of Ceylon Tamils in the speeches and writing of British civil servants like Sir Frank Swettenham (Governor of Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of Federated Malay States, 1904), Sir George Maxwell (Chief Secretary of FMS 1926), Sir Hugh Clifford (Governor of SS and High Commissioner of FMS, 1928), E.J. Brewster (British Resident Pahang, 1915), Arthur Furley Worthington (British Resident Perak, 1929), Gerald Hawkins (retired civil servant) and Col. J. Calder (Senior Civil Affairs Officer, Negri Sembilan 1946). See D.R. Singam, *A Hundred Years Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore, 1867–1967* (Petaling Jaya, 1968), pp.56–61.

36. F.A. Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London, J. Lane, 1907), p.136; *Resident-General of the Federated Malay States, Administrative Report, 1902* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1902), p.23.

37. See M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, Unwin University Books, 1974); J.E.T. Eldridge (ed.), *Max Weber: The Interpretation of Social Reality* (London, Michael Joseph Ltd., 1970), pp.166–177.

their religious tenets encouraged industriousness, sobriety and perseverance as being essential for success. The inculcation of steady work habits was favoured,[38] and the attainment of wealth through a career was regarded as a sign of God's blessing, thus obviating any inhibitions about accumulating wealth. Similarly, the Hindus, who constituted a substantial majority of the Ceylon Tamil population in Malaya, were schooled in their work ethics through the religious doctrine of karma yoga[39] or path of action whcih called for complete dedication to work. It was believed that by performing one's vocation as an intrument of God the path to salvation would be assured. Thus, what the Hindu scriptures and Christian faith respectively infused in the Ceylon Tamils were achievement values through one's vocation.

5.4 Learning the Tamil Language

Just as religion was important to the Ceylon Tamil, the learning of the Tamil language, too, was considered a necessity. Nearly all Jaffna parents, particularly the Hindus, made sure their children received a Tamil education. Knowledge of the Tamil language was essential for Hindu as well as Christian worship and the emphasis on religion automatically brought the Ceylon Tamils to emphasise the appropriate language for its enhancement. Furthermore, as the Tamils, on the whole, took great pride in their cultural tradition they felt that only through a knowledge of the Tamil language could their children learn about the Tamil culture, tradition and religion which could then be passed on to their descendants. They also realised that the ability to speak and write one's language meant the preservation of one's ethnic culture. It was realized that the perpetuation not only of religious practices but also the fine arts could only be achieved through formal training in the Tamil language. In this context it was common for a Jaffnese child to attend an English school in the mornings and a Tamil school in the afternoon. Sometimes the associations ran Tamil classes for the children. Tamil education also provided a career for some as Tamil school teachers. In fact, the Ceylon Tamils formed the pioneer batch of Tamil school teachers in Malaya and, by virtue of this fact, they were subsequently appointed as education officials responsible for the formulation of Tamil education and

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38. J. Bensman and B. Rosenberg, *Mass, Class and Bureaucracy* (New Jersey, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1963), p.478.

39. In Hindu religious philosophy the path to salvation could be attained through *bhakti yoga* (devotion), *karma yoga* (action), *jnana yoga* (knowledge) and *raja yoga* (meditation). A devotee could follow one or more of these disciplines.

overseeing the functioning of Tamil schools in Malaya. In most of the major towns where the Jaffnese settled they founded, besides a temple, a Tamil primary school catering to the needs of their children, the benefits of which extended also to the children of Indians.[40]

Among the oldest was the Vivekananda Tamil School established in 1914 by the Vivekananda Ashrama in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur to cater for the primary school education of the Tamils in its vicinity. Under efficient management and generous grants of land by the State Government the school gradually grew in size.[41] By 1957 it had become the largest Tamil school in Malaya with an average attendance of over seven hundred pupils and was a model educational institution of its kind in Malaya. The management committee of the Ashrama also ran in the same premises in the afternoon an English school for those attending the Tamil school in the morning. It managed other schools as well including the Klang Road Tamil School, the Vivekananda Tamil School in Petaling Jaya (opened on 6th January 1958) and the Tamboosamy Pillai Tamil School, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur (opened in 1906).[42]

In 1958 the Ashrama authorities organised a secondary section in the Tamil medium as a forerunner of the first Malayanised Tamil High School in Malaya.[43] This was followed by the establishment of a hostel to provide accomodation for children coming from rural areas and who studied in the schools. The welfare and educational activities of the Ashrama left a lasting impact not only on the Ceylon Tamils but the Indians as well and helped the latter, in particular, in the process of urbanization. In fact, these schools which were the earliest venues for Indo-Ceylonese cooperation and activities, were gradually overwhelmed by Indian enrolment.

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40. The Vivekananda Tamil School in Kuala Lumpur; the Young Men's Hindu Association Tamil School in Taiping; the Ganesa Vidyalaya in Simpang Ampat in Sitiawan, Perak; the Kuala Lipis Tamil School, Kuala Lipis, Pahang; Tamboosamy Pillai Tamil School in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur; Navalar Tamil School in Kajang; Rawang Tamil School, Rawang; and Kuala Kubu Bahru Tamil School were some of the schools managed by the Ceylon Tamils.

41. *Vivekananda Ashrama Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1954, p.33. The State Government granted land in 1917 (Gazette No. 2181 of 20 July 1917), in 1937 (Gazette No. 907 of 1 February 1937) and in 1941 (Gazette No. 3282 of 21 July 1941).

42. *Ibid.*, p.39.

43. *Vivekananda Ashrama Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1974, p.16. In 1958 the Ashrama had 90 children in the kindergarten, 360 in the primary

5.5 Preservation of the Fine Arts

As a community who took great pride and interest in their cultural traditions, the Ceylon Tamils laid great emphasis on the fine arts like music, dance and drama. Because of their higher educational achievement and social background they displayed greater enthusiasm than the South Indian Tamils in the learning of classical music and dance, particularly of the Carnatic School. Many of the Malayan Jaffnese who had learnt music in their native villages in Jaffna saw the need to impart their musical knowledge to Ceylon Tamil children born in Malaya. Furthermore, in their community a knowledge of the fine arts served as a good pastime for the young men, while it was considered an asset for women. For the parents it brought pride and happiness if their children could give a stage performance of either music, dance or drama.[44]

When the SCTA was formed, a music and drama section was duly formed. Lessons in music and drama were given and it was not uncommon for the SCTA to stage performances of plays during the early years of this century. In 1906 the play, **Harichandra**, was staged and, in 1915, **Thamayanthi** and **Kandyan King** were staged in Kuala Lumpur in aid of the War Fund. Due, in fact, to the number of students who enrolled for the dance and music classes of the SCTA, it was decided that a separate association be formed to cater to this need.[45] This thirst for cultural activity, though not uncommon in Jaffna, was a symptom, due partly to increased material prosperity, and partly the search for identity. As a migrant community with middle class status and aspirations they had both a genuine interest and the wherewithal to preserve the essential features of their cultural tradition like religion, language and fine arts. Compared with the Indians who were predominantly a working class population with no proper leadership to emphasise the cultural needs of the community,[46] the Ceylon Tamils enjoyed the advantage of able leadership and patronage. Thus, the rich cultural revival known among the Ceylon Tamils as of the turn of this century was only a post-war phenomenon among the Indian Tamils.

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section and 98 in the secondary section. The idea of establishing a Tamil secondary school did not materialise and, in fact, there is none in the whole country.

44. Interview with D.R. Singam, Petaling Jaya, 20 February 1982.

45. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1972,p.54.

46. The leadership of the Indians were then engaged in more pressing issues, social and economic, affecting the community that they gave little importance to the cultural aspect. Ceylon Tamils lacked urgent problems of this nature.

In June 1923 the Ceylon Tamils established the **Sangeetha Abivirthi Sabha** to teach music and the associated arts. The **Sabha** began classes with Ghouse Miyam Sahib, the first teacher of Carnatic music in Malaya, and S. Kumarasamy as drama teacher. In February 1927 they staged, very successfully, the first drama, **Pathuka Pattapishekam**, which was followed by many other plays based on religious and cultural themes. The success of stage dramas led to the formation of the Chums Dramatic Society in 1927 under S. Rajaratnam and K. Chelliah, with membership limited to Ceylon Tamils only.[47] This organisation which devoted its efforts to the performance of dramas provided ample opportunities to members of the community to display their acting talents and abilities, while the **Sangeetha Sabha** devoted itself to the teaching of dance and music. After the Second World War the Chums Dramatic Society, in an effort to broaden its activities and increase its cultural role, included the teaching of Tamil language and music in its programme. Subsequently the name was changed to **Kalavirthi Sangam.**

However, as far as the teaching and exposition of dance and music in Malaya was concerned, it was the **Sangeetha Abivirthi Sabha** which played a dominant role. Both Ceylon Tamils and Indians, though fewer in numbers, enrolled for the classes. Following the death of Ghouse Miyan Sahib in 1928, the **Sabha** invited musical experts from South India to teach music to its students.[48] In 1931 female students joined the classes and with membership being opened to anyone with a desire to learn music irrespective of race or sex, the student enrolment increased significantly. In 1939 the **Sabha** started a branch in Sentul, Kuala Lumpur, and together with this branch enrolment, the student enrolment reached one hundred and ninety-six. Most of the students were girls as Jaffnese parents became increasingly aware that the accomplishment in music and dance enhanced the marriageability of their daughters and at the same time helped perpetuate the cultural tradition of the community. The mother who had received formal training in these arts could then initiate the children into acquiring a knowledge of dance and music. The arrival of musical experts from India and Ceylon would have also encouraged more students to take up music.

Music lessons were modelled on the basis of South Indian music centres at Annamalai where students were required to undergo the stages of **Palasitchai**

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47. Interview with M. Kandiah, Brickfields, 2 March 1982.

48. *Tamil Nesan Merdeka Souvenir*, 1957, p.108. Some of the musical experts invited to teach at the Sabha include T. Ponnusamy Iyenger (violinist), V. Rathakrishnan (violinist), S. Ramalingam Iyer (violinist), K. Nadesa Pillai (flutist) and S. Harihara Iyer (harmonica).

(1 year), **Varnam** (2 years), **Kirthanam** (2 years) and **Sangeetha pushanam** (3 years). Thereafter, examinations were held with the assistance of experts from India and certificates were granted to students who performed well. Having completed eight years of training at the **Sabha** there were many students who wished to further their interest and knowledge in music who went to India for advanced lessons. Of those who returned to Malaya from India and became music teachers almost all of them were Ceylon Tamils.[49] Some of the students of the **Sabha**, like Vijayaletchumy Kanagaratnam and Yogeswari Nagalingam, emerged as the main exponents of South Indian music for the South Indian community as a whole. Among the male students, M. Kandiah,[50] who was successively student, teacher, supervisor and patron of the **Sabha**, was associated with it since its inception and contributed enormously to the spread of Carnatic music in Malaya.

During the post-war years the **Sabha** held special functions to popularise and sustain Indian music. Music festivals were held in rememberance of music experts like Thiyagaraja Bhagavathar, Shyma Sastri and Muthusamy Dikshitar, and much importance was given to the **Navarathri** festival.[51] Members of the **Sabha** also rendered regular medical recitals for Radio Malaya. Students of the **Sabha** who subsequently served as government servants in other parts of the country also made their contribution towards perpetuating the musical tradition by founding musical associations in these towns. Such efforts led, for example, to the establishment of **Sabhas** in Seremban and Perak.[52]

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49. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1972, p.17; *TNMS*, 1957, p.108. Ceylon Tamils who emerged as music exponents in Malaya included Mageswari Selvanayagam, Vijayaletchumy Kanagaratnam, Yogeswari Nagalingam, Jnanambikai Ponniah, Jnanaletchumi Kanagaratnam, Kanagambikai Ratnasabapathy and Saraswathi Selladurai.

50. M. Kandiah, who is still alive and actively involved in the activities of the *Sabha* is the father of Kamahl, the popular Australian singer of international fame.

51. *Navarathri* festival is devoted to the worship of the Godhead in its various female forms. It is observed for nine days in the Tamil month of *Purattasi* (September–October). See S. Arasaratnam, *Indian Festivals in Malaya* (Department of Indian Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1966), pp.34–37.

52. In Seremban, N. Thambythurai and M. Arumugam established the *Bala Sangeetha Sabha* while the Perak *Sangeetha Sabha* was established in Ipoh by M. Senaka Ratnam and K. Sinnathurai.

Post-war developments in the Indian community contributed to a revival of Indian music and dance in which the **Sangeetha Sabha** contributed in an effective way. The emergence of a new class of leadership among the Indians resulted in social and political ferment in Indian society within which featured Tamil cultural revival. Tamil language, literature and an emphasis on Tamil music and dance were the main features and this ferment led to the establishment of new cultural organisations like the Malayan Tamil Pannai and the Young Men's Indian Association. The Malayan Tamil Pannai, as an active literary and cultural body, staged a three-day cultural festival in 1949 and proposed an ambitious plan to hold annually a Tamil Festival of Arts in every town in Malaya.[53] In this climate of cultural activity it was the **Sangeetha Sabha** which functioned most effectively by propagating Tamil classical dance and music. Students of the **Sabha** were invited to perform at the cultural festivals. The activities of the **Sabha** and the constant stream of artistes arriving from India boosted interest in Indian classical dance and music. Furthermore, influenced by the activities of the **Sabha**, the Young Men's Indian Association of Kuala Lumpur, for example, took an active interest in spreading the fine arts among the Indians by engaging music teachers to provide free lessons for its members' children. Through the initiative and example set by the Ceylon Tamils, classical South Indian dance and music and the whole corpus of Tamil culture, including religion and culture, was effectively preserved in Malaya.

As intensity of religious commitment and nature of religious worship are not random affairs entirely divorced from an individual's socio-economic position,[54] the Ceylon Tamils, being an English-educated middle class, subscribed to a scriptural religion where a rational interpretation dominated their religious beliefs, as opposed to working class Indians who gravitated towards a ritualistic

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53. It was carried out for a few years but later fizzled out.

54. J. Benton, "Ascetic Protestantism and Political Reference", *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 26 (Spring 1962), p.40. Quoted in M.H. Hodges, *Social Stratification Class in America* (1964), p.152 (footnote). The author noted that the 'modernist' denominations (Congregational, Methodist, Presbyterian and Unitarian), were essentially middle class denominations, while the 'fundamentalist' (Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Nazarene, Free Methodist, Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventist, Latter Day Saints and Foursquare) were more lower class in complexion.

religion.[55] Weber was also convinced of this connection when he wrote that:[56]

> . . . it is still true in theory that the middle class, by virtue of its distinct pattern of economic life, inclines in the direction of a rational ethical religion, wherever conditions are present for the emergence of a rational ethical religion . . . The economic foundation of urban man's life has a far more rational essential character . . .

Thus the Ceylon Tamil's religion, divorced of sacrifices and complex rituals, revolved around the higher deities of the Hindu pantheon for whom they built temples. The community had, as a priority, the establishment and maintenance of their religious congregation wherever they domiciled. The temples and churches became focal points of the community not only to impart religious education based on the scripture but also a symbol of ethnic identity, a common meeting place, a generation of sentiments of solidarity and a custodian of their folk tradition.

So immersed were they in the philosophical aspect of the religion that the concomitant ethics produced in the Ceylon Tamil a personality who valued righteousness, sobriety, non-violence, inner purity, devotion, discipline and a simple life. Every child was exposed to the merits of an ethical life through moral education as expounded in the **Thirukkural**,[57] a Tamil treatise on ethics. Such rigid insistence upon accepting the ethical code of behaviour and conformity with accepted standards of goodness and honesty were expected features of Ceylon

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55. See earlier section for discussion on their religious beliefs and temples.

56. M. Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Methuen, 1965), p.97.

57. See H. Chakravarti, *Tirukkural* (Madras, Diocesan Press, 1953); K. Appadurai, *The Mind and Thought of Tiruvalluvar* (Madras, Sekar Pathippagam, 1966). The *Thirukkural*, written around the beginning of the Christian era, is considered an ethical work par excellence by the Tamils. It concerns itself with the fundamentals of life and provides instructions in the form of couplets. It is divided into three major sections, namely, *aram* (ethics), *porul* (polity) and *imbam* (love), each discussing in detail the overriding theme of an ethical life. In all the Tirukkural contains 133 chapters (38 on ethics, 70 on polity and 25 on love) and each chapter has ten couplets. The section on *aram* alone, which delves into ethics, ranges in its discussion from adoration of God, potency of a virtuous life, right speech, self-restraint, abstinence, patience, giving alms, benevolence, right conduct, and

Tamil individuals. This criterion, no doubt, produced a community of law-abiding citizens and social deviance and criminal offences involving Ceylon Tamils were rare in Malaya.

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non-violence expressed in the practice of vegetarianism. The author of the *Kural* shows the inextricable relationship between the concept of God and leading an ethical life when he states in one of the couplets that "Those who walk the faultless path or righteousness ordained by the Lord who conquered the five senses will live forever in happiness". *(Kural* 6).

CHAPTER SIX

THE GROWTH OF SECULAR ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

It is common to find in any community individuals with a greater social awareness than the average member. Often it is these people who organise assistance to individual members as well as to the community as a whole. In the case of the Ceylon Tamils who migrated to Malaya in search of employment, the problems of adaptation, security and identity began to affect both the newcomers from Ceylon and those already settled here. There was conscious fear that the absence of the traditional environment with its social structure and concomitant features might lead to deviations from cultural traditions. Those in the government services who were posted to remote outstations found themselves among people with a totally different cultural background. Cultural shock was, in fact, a common experience among new immigrants.

Realising the dangers faced by members of their community, some of the community-conscious older members began to cooperate and provide for the social, cultural, religious and economic needs of the Ceylonese. Cooperation as practised by the Ceylon Tamils in early Malaya refers to the act of organising themselves into associations, partly for the social betterment of the community and partly to provide a sense of identity and belonging to a group through the activities of the association. This particular phenomenon may be identified as "a process by which a community identifies its needs or objectives, gives priority to them, develops the confidence and will to work at them, finds resources – internal and external – to deal with them, and in doing so, extends and develops cooperative and collaborative attitudes and practices within the community."[1]

6.1 Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association (SCTA)

The Ceylon Tamils of the early twentieth century felt above all, the necessity for organising themselves into associations to cater to the needs of their community members. In almost all the major towns in Malaya where the Ceylon Tamils settled in large numbers, they had their respective associations "motivated essentially by the desire to preserve the cultural distinctiveness of their group."[2] The associations provided typical immigrant institutional facilities of general

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1. M.G. Ross, *Community Organisation: Theory and Principles* (New York, Harper & Bros., 1955), pp.39–40.

2. R. Ampalavanar, "Class, Caste and Ethnicism among Urban Indians in Malaya, 1920–1941," (No. 2, July 1972), p.225.

social and welfare services to ease the shock of the immigrants' initial adjustment. These institutions were, in fact, a local variaton of the protective and mutual aid rural development societies found in the Jaffna villages. For example, the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association (SCTA) in Kuala Lumpur in 1900 represented the interests of the Ceylon Tamils in Selangor while there were Ceylon Associations in Penang, Taiping, Ipoh, Seremban, Muar, Segamat, Batu Pahat, Kluang and Johore Bahru. Most of these associations were established to assist the local Ceylon Tamils in their socio-cultural sphere through their activities, unlike the village unions that were formed primarily to promote material and educational facilities in their respective villages in Jaffna.

In the case of village unions, usually the advisory committee in the villages in Jaffna recommended their local needs to the union in Malaya which, in turn, made efforts to collect funds to be sent to Jaffna. The Ceylon Urumpirai Union, established in 1919, for example, conducted a High School and two or three other primary schools besides introducing a conservancy system in their village. The Vaddukkoddai Union of Malaya was formed in 1927 with similar objectives.[3] By 1935 they were about fourteen Jaffnese village unions functioning in the Federated Malay States and it was observed that "all of them have funds and efficient organisations much better than some of the Indian associations in Malaya."[4] Their patriotism and indebtedness to the natal village, to which they hoped to return on retirement from government service, was exhibited in their efforts in making generous contributions to the many educational institutions,[5] either through such villages unions, through visitors from Jaffna who came to Malaya to collect funds[6] or through Old Boys' Association, like the St. Patrick's (Jaffna) Old Boys' Association in Malaya. In fact an interesting development took place in 1934 in Kuala Lumpur which indicated the interest of Ceylon Tamils in contributing towards the development of Jaffna. In response to an

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3. *Malayan Daily Express*, 6 July 1927, p.5.

4. M.N. Nair, *Indians in Malaya* (Madras, The Koduvayur Printing Works, 1937), p.111.

5. *Malayan Ceylonese Association Souvenir Publication* (Jaffna, 1962), p.74. Some of the Jaffnese institutions that had received benefactions from Malaya include the Jaffna Hindu College, Tinnevelly Teachers' Training College, Karainagar Hindu College, Urumpirai Hindu College, Kokuvil Hindu College, Tellippallai Mahajana College, Vaddukkoddai Jaffna College and St. Patrick's College.

6. *Ibid.*, p.74. *Jaffna Catholic Guardian*, 30 April 1910, p.3.

invitation by the SCTA a special conference was convened in Kuala Lumpur on 23 July of the various Jaffna village unions in Malaya. Its purpose was to discuss questions pertaining to unemployment, educational problems, agricultural difficulties and other problems prevalent in Jaffna villages and to find ways and means of contributing more positively towards the development of Jaffna, to which place most members expected finally to return. The outcome of the conference was a list of beneficial recommendations pertaining to the above problems in Jaffna.[7] It was intended that these recommendations would be presented for further action to the representative from Jaffna on the Ceylon State Council.

The significant feature of the conference was the clear desire on the part of the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya to contribute significantly to the development of their natal villages. These actions attest to the strong bonds that bound the Jaffna man in Malaya to his past, to his kin group members still living in the villages and his responsibilities to them.

Among the many Ceylon Tamil community organisations that emerged in Malaya, the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association estalished in 1900 was the oldest and most popular. Compared to the other Ceylon Tamil associations it had the largest membership and was most active in organising social, cultural, religious, economic and sporting activities for the benefit of the Ceylon Tamils who settled in Selangor. Its popularity was due to the fact that it served almost half the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya who were settled in Selangor. In representing therefore the Jaffnese in Selangor it, to a large extent, articulated the interests of a large section of the Ceylon Tamils of Malaya. For example, in 1917, it was this

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7. *SCTA Annual Report 1934*. Minutes of the First Conference of Representatives of the Villages of Jaffna, 23 July 1934. As certain problems in Jaffna needed the efforts of groups of villages it was proposed in the conference that the representatives be divided into four divisions according to the four electoral areas of Jaffna and to constitute a committee to promote and further the interests of each district. The activities of these four committees were to be guided and controlled by a Central Committee composed of three representatives from each of the electoral district committees. The duties of the district committee included organising a quarterly conference of village committees and of village headmen and an annual conference of cooperative societies. The committee would also undertake measures pertaining to education, agriculture, unemployment, floods, health and malaria besides surveying all land property in Jaffna and issuing plans to land owners. This was to reduce problems that might arise during time of inheritance and dowry.

association which submitted a memorandum to the **Tesavalamai**[8] Commission in Ceylon requesting for provisions to be made for including Ceylon Tamils who were working in Malaya within the provision for the inheritance of intestate properties in Ceylon.[9]

In December 1900 some of the community-conscious members of the Ceylon Tamil community in Kuala Lumpur initiated the idea of forming a Selangor Ceylon Tamil Saivite Association (SCTSA) to promote and safeguard the general interests of the community. However, the Christians in the community who felt that they would not be eligible for membership to this association put forward a proposal for an organisation to represent all Ceylon Tamils irrespective of religious affilation. In response to their request the name of the SCTSA was changed to Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association.[10] Despite the change in name, the predominance of Hindus both within the community and the Association inadvertently geared its activities to the needs of the Hindus leaving the Christians to participate only in the secular activities of the Association.

Initially the SCTA had two definite objectives: first to build and maintain a Kandasamy Temple and, secondly, to maintain the cremation ground, off Circular Road (now Jalan Pekeliling) in Kuala Lumpur, obtained from the State Government some years earlier.[11] The Kandasamy Temple was built in 1909 at Jalan Scott, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur and it served as the main temple for the Ceylon Tamil population in Kuala Lumpur. However, with the passage of time, the objectives of the association became manifold and, besides religious activities, it sponsored sporting and cultural activities. In its efforts to implement some of these objections the SCTA gave rise to many subsidiary associations like the Selangor Ceylon Saivites Association for religious activities, the Tamilian Physical Culture Association for sports and the Sangeetha Abivirthi Sabha for the study of classical dance and music. In their respective spheres these associations contributed substantially to the development of religion, sports and music in Malaya.

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8. The *Tesavalamai* is a collection of laws and customs of the Jaffna Tamils. It deals with inheritance, adoption, property rights etc. and the laws were accepted by the British administration in Ceylon as customary law applicable to Jaffna Tamils under any court of law in Ceylon. Refer Introductory Chapter for more details.

9. *Ceylon Sessional Papers*, No. 10, 1920, p.17.

10. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1972, p.53.

11. *Malayan Ceylonese Association Silver Jubilee Publication*, Jaffna, 1962, p.53.

The SCTA aimed at carrying out a number of beneficial activities, as for example, in 1934 an economic committee was proposed to advise on economic conditions and changes in Ceylon for the benefit of those intending to return to Ceylon. The Association also attempted to serve the interests of those who proposed to settle in Malaya. It proposed to approach the government for land for those intending to settle here, though this proved unsuccessful, and organised classes in Malay for association members and their dependants because there was an increasing awareness that proficiency in the language was a social, economic and political necessity. These classes especially enabled new arrivals to adapt to life in Malaya and qualify for posts for which a knowledge of Malay was a pre-requisite. The SCTA also decided to set up a Chamber of Commerce to assist Ceylon Tamils to venture into business activities. An important organisation of the Association was the Social Service Volunteer Unit which assisted in social work, like visiting Ceylon Tamil patients in hospitals. A Ceylon Health and Maternity Board was established which divided Kuala Lumpur into areas, each with a doctor to look after Ceylon Tamil patients. All of these activities were aimed at the betterment of the community.[12] Most of these activities were meant for a population who showed clear tendencies towards settling down in Malaya, as compared to the activities of social organisations in the first and second decades of the century which had made efforts merely to provide a home environment for new arrivals. On 6 December 1934 the SCTA even organised a conference of officers and members of the Committees of Management of twenty-three associations and societies in which Ceylon Tamils shared membership to discuss ways of assisting the community. They resolved to submit a memorandum to the government outlining the community's needs.

The SCTA also infused among its members public spiritedness and a sense of charity and humanitarianism. In the pre-World War Two period, the association made liberal contributions towards the Indian Earthquake Fund, the China Distress Fund and the Ceylon Relief Fund besides, from time to time, entertaining distinguished visitors from India and Ceylon.[13]

In their expression of patriotism towards the government, during the First World War, the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya supported the British government's war effort to the extent of contributing a fighter plane named "Jaffna". Through the efforts of some prominent members of the community like Dr. E.T. MacIntyre, Dr. Isaac Thambyah and W. F. Vijayaratnam, contributions were

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12. *SCTA Annual Report, 1934.*

13. *Malayan Ceylonese Association Silver Jubilee Publication,* 1962, p.75.

collected throughout Malaya from Ceylon Tamils to purchase the plane.[14] Besides the presentation of this plane, the Jaffnese also organised themselves into a Tamil Volunteer Corps under R.V. Karlakandan, and this formed a separate unit of the Malayan Volunteer Infantry, to assist the government in the First World War.[15] Many Ceylon Tamils who had studied at the Victoria Institution and who were members of the school cadet corps at the time volunteered for service in this Tamil platoon. Prominent among them were R. Thambipillay, Dr. R. Vaithilingam, V.K. Chinniah and V. Thambiah.

Again, just before the Second World War, at the request of the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, the SCTA recruited men required for the formation of the Engineering Unit of the Second (Selangor) Battallion.[16] With the outbreak of the war, Jaffnese males organised a Victory Fund as their contribution to the Allied war effort, while the women on their part formed the Selangor Ceylon Women's War Work Party to perform stage shows to collect funds in aid of the Malaya Patriotic Fund.[17] Their efforts, however, were interrupted when the war reached Malaya in 1942 and the money was handed over to the British Military Administration after the war for welfare work.[18] Besides being loyal citizens, they also saw the necessity of establishing close rapport with the British when the occasion arose. SCTA activities in support of the government in times of crisis, which signified a pragmatic approach to winning the favour of the British, paid off in the course of time. The government duly recognised the association as representing the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya and invited its President, among other communal representatives to public functions[19]

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14. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, 1972, p.54.*

15. *Ibid.*, p.34.

16. The Malayan Volunteer Infantry expanded and became Federated Malay States Volunteer Force. In 1939 this force became a functionary with various supporting units such as transport, signals, artillery, etc. and as such the Tamil Platoon of 1915 was disbanded. The members were transferred to other units. Notable among them were R.V. Karlakandan, K. Ponnampalam, V. Selvanayagam, T.S. Mahesan, K. Vaithilingam, C. Muthuthamby, T.S. Nathan and V.T. Sivasampu.

17. *Malayan Tribute*, 4 October 1940.

18. A. Viswalingam, *Pioneer Preventive Social Medicine in British Malaya* (London, Dimbleby Printers, 1977), p.52.

19. The Ceylon Tamils were represented at the Coronation Ceremony of King George V (1911), the War Declaration Anniversary Celebrations (1918), Treaty of Peace Celebrations (1919) and Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Coronation of King George V (1936). The President was

6.2 Sports and Games

Many Ceylon Tamils who entered government service in the early days of the twentieth century had some record of sportsmanship which served as an added qualification for joining government service. The British officers under whom they worked were themselves good sportsmen who regarded sportsmanship as an important criterion when recruiting men for service. Ceylon Tamils who had represented their colleges and schools in cricket, soccer, hockey or athletics in Jaffna had an advantage when they applied for appointments in Malaya.[20] These men, influenced by this British tradition of training for the civil service, appreciated the value of sports and its usefulness for physical as well as mental and emotional development in childhood and its recreational and disciplinary value even in adult life.

In 1906 members of the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association formed the Ceylon Tamil Athletics Club to provide an outlet for those interested in sporting activities. This Club grew to become the Ceylon Tamil Union. In 1914 another association, the Tamilian Physical Culture Association (TPCA), was formed with membership opened to all Tamils, Indians and Ceylonese, but it was invariably predominated by the latter.[21] Both associations encouraged sports by organising tournaments, long-distance runs and athletic meets. By 1924 a growing feeling among the Ceylon Tamils that the two associations rivalled each other in their aims and divided talent led to the absorption of the Tamil Union by the TPCA. This was achieved in 1925, through the efforts primarily of Dr. A. Viswalingam, R. Vaithilingam, C.A. Vellupillai and C.A. Subramaniam.[22] By this means the Ceylon Tamil community was able to field the best talent available in all games and athletic meets.

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also appointed a member of the Organising Committee when Prince of Wales visited Kuala Lumpur in 1922.

20. Of the many British officers from Ceylon, Oliver Marks, a tea planter, who came to Malaya in 1890 with a cricket team had a particular influence on many Ceylon Tamils. He was offered a career in the Malayan Civil Service and became the Superintendent of Plantations in 1891 from which he rose to become the British Resident of Selangor in 1910. He brought in his own Ceylon cricketers and absorbed them into the service. Many of the Jaffnese interviewed agreed that in the early years a man's fitness for a job was sometimes gauged by his ability to play cricket.

21. S. Kulasingam, "Tamilian Physical Culture Association, Kuala Lumpur, Fifty Years of Progress" in *TPCA Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1964, pp.9–23.

22. *Ibid.*, p.15.

The success of the Ceylon Tamil teams in the various competitions since 1925 and their participation in sporting activities in the country were important contributions in the development of sports in Malaya. The TPCA Stadium built in 1957, the only private stadium in the country at that time, had been the venue of many national and international matches played in Kuala Lumpur till the opening of the Merdeka Stadium. Over the years many of the members of this association emerged highly successful in the field of sports while others made their mark as organisers of games and athletic meets, or as coaches of local, state and national teams.[23] The TPCA, which flourished as the representative club of Tamil sportsmen, was one of the leading sports club in the country.

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23. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, 1972, pp.61–78. Some of the notable sportsmen produced by the Association include A.L. Henry (elected Malaya's most brilliant footballer in 1934); Edwin Dutton (voted one of Malaya's two most popular footballers in 1954); S. Vellupillai, T. Nadarajah, S. Vijayaratnam and V. Vijendran who represented Selangor in hockey just before and after the War; C. Paramalingam, M. Shanmuganathan, S. Thuraisingham and G. Vijayanathan, who were important names in post-war Malayan hockey; G. Sinniah, V. Ponniah, A.L. Henry, B.J. Dionysius, A.V. Canagasabai, S. Nalliah and K.K. Pillai who were state and national cricketers between 1930 and 1941; and T. Sivagananam and M.C. Kailasapathy who captained the Malayan cricket teams. In the field of athletics there were M.K. Sundaram, N.M. Vasagam and his two sons, M. Balakrishnan and M. Harichandra, and later another son, Dr. M. Jegathesan (who represented Malaysia in the 1960, 1964 and 1968 Olympics, besides dominating the Malaysian and Asian athletic scene for sometime. He was voted "Sportsmen of the Year, 1968"); M. Thomas, M. Nadarajah, L. Sittampalam, S. Kanniaseelan, S. Balasingam and the Rajaratnam sisters, Juliet, Neela and Betty who broke several records during the height of their fame in the 1950s. M. Rajamani, the Sportswoman of the year 1966 and 1967, is also a Ceylon Tamil.
Ceylon Tamils who contributed to the development of sports in Malaya during this period as promoters and organisers of athletics and games associations include N.M. Vasagam (First Secretary of Olympic Council of Malaya and President of Selangor Annual Athletics Association); E. Singham (President of Football Association of Selangor and Council Member of Football Association of Malaya); Manickam Saravanamuthu (President, Penang Cricket Association and Vice President Malayan Cricket Association; R.P.S. Rajasooria (Founder President of Selangor Cricket Association and First President of Malayan Cricket Association) Dr. R. Vythilingam (President of Selangor Badminton Association) and G. Vijayanathan of the Malayan Hockey Federation.

The enthusiasm shown by Ceylon Tamils in sporting activities besides contributing to Malayan sports in general and the personal development of individual Ceylon Tamils, helped foster amicable relationships with the other communities in Malaya. As promoters and organisers they worked closely with members of other communities in the development of sports and, as participating sportsmen, they were brought into constant contact with other ethnic groups. The number of Indo-Ceylonese sports meets held stand as testimony of their keenness to promote sports in the country.

6.3 Economic Ventures and Endeavours

The material well being of the community was not neglected either. There was a general awareness of the economic welfare of the community amongst its leaders who realized that, despite the fact that most Ceylon Tamils were government servants, they constituted a lower-middle income group with a very modest average income. A large percentage who were attached to the clerical service, either in the public or the private sector, with an average monthly salary of twenty to twenty-five dollars, found it difficult to balance their monthly budget.[24] They were expected to remit a proportion of their income to Ceylon to

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24. .D. R. Singam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore, 1867–1967*, pp.94–95. Extracted from the diary of his late father, the author lists the income and expenditue for a period of nineteen months from 9th April 1892 to 31st October 1893 as follows:

Income (including overtime)	$466.95	
Expenditure :		$144.99
Donations		15.50
Raffle		9.10
Misc. living		9.10
Remittance		90.00
Kootu		75.00
Repayment to Chetty		28.50
Payment on behalf of other people		25.00
Loan		20.00
Chetty on behalf of Thuraippah		12.20
Total		$492.61

As a bachelor his expenditure had exceeded income for that period partly because of loans and other commitments and partly because of his remittance to Ceylon which easily constituted about 20% of his salary. Almost all Jaffnese bachelors remitted to Ceylon for the education and subsistence of family members.

educate their siblings though due to their low income many who married reduced the amount of remittance and, in some cases, terminated their contributions altogether. In addition to their remittances it was also customary for a local employee to bring out a brother or a close relative to Malaya and to provide him with the necessary education to acquire a government job. Encumbered with these routine responsibilities, additional expenses incurred through illness, or other special events in the family, such as a marriage or funeral, pushed many an individual into borrowing so that indebtedness was not uncommon. The sense of shame and fear of losing his job if the employer knew of his debts frequently forced the Jaffnese male to pay one moneylender by borrowing at high and exorbitant rates from another.[25] Many Ceylon Tamils, however, found some measure of relief by subscribing to the system of tontine or **kootu** which assisted enormously in meeting exigency expenses, especially at the beginning of the school year when money was needed to pay for books, uniform and fees for the children.

In order to prevent indebtedness and to encourage thrift among the Jaffnese, leading members of the community resident in Kuala Lumpur met on 3 June 1924 "to establish a cooperative society at Kuala Lumpur limited in membership to Jaffnese community resident in the Federated Malay States."[26] It was called the Jaffnese Cooperative Society Limited and, through the enthusiastic support and service of honorary workers, the society showed rapid growth. By the end of 1924 there were 564 members and this number increased to 2,000 by 1926.[27] This overwhelming support and interest shown by the Jaffnese to such a cooperative venture was due partly to the fact that cooperation for economic ends was not something new among them. The concept of cooperative societies had already developed so well among the predominantly peasant population in Jaffna, that the Government Agent for the Northern Province remarked in 1931 that "cooperation is almost embarrassingly full of vigour and initiative."[28] Jaffna alone had the highest number of cooperative

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25. Interview with Mr. V. Selvanayagam, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, 30 January 1980.

26. *Jaffnese Cooperative Society Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1974, p.16.

27. *Ibid*, 1974, p.17.

28. *CAR*, 1931, "Cooperative Societies", pp.E15–E16.

societies as compared to any other province in Ceylon.[29] In 1932, Jaffna had 181 cooperatives which increased to 194 the following year.

Thus, the Jaffnese who came over to Malaya brought the idea of cooperatives with them. The Jaffnese who comprised a relatively large proportion of the railway staff in the Federated Malay States spread this idea of cooperative movement among the railway employees and formed the United Railway Employees Benefit Society in 1914. Though it began with the object of providing death benefits, it extended its scope by assisting members in urgent financial need by offering loans at low interest rates. Later, at the encouragement of Sir George Maxwell, Chief Secretary of the Federated Malay States, who ushered in the idea of cooperative movement in Malaya, the railway employees formed the Railway Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society in 1923.[30] The management and membership of this society comprised largely of Jaffnese who utilised its services for their benefits.[31] Because this society catered for the needs only of the railway staff, the Jaffnese employed in other types of government service felt the necessity to organise a similar one and led eventually to the formation, in 1924, of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society.

Since its inception the Jaffnese Cooperative Society concentrated on improving the welfare of the Jaffnese in Malaya. It encouraged members to invest in the Society and loans at reasonable rates of interests were granted to clear

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29. In 1931, of the 195 cooperatives in the Northern Province, Jaffna alone had 166, with 7 in Mannar and 22 in Mullaitivu. The Western Province had 165, Central Province 120, Southern Province 38, North Western Province 77, Eastern Province 10, North Central 31, Uva 9 and Sabaragamuwa 20.

30. *The Railway Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society Limited Bye-Laws* (Kuala Lumpur, 1965), p.60.

31. *Malayan Railway Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1973, pp.84–91. J.R. Sabaratnam was Vice President (1927–29, 1932); J.R. Vethavanam was Vice President (1930–31); M. Chellaiya was Treasurer (1927–30, 1932); S. Chelliah was Treasurer (1933–34); V. Selvanayagam was Vice President (1955–57) and K. Kandiah was Vice President (1933–45). There was also a predominance of Jaffnese as committee members, not to mention the membership. Of the many Jaffnese who held responsible positions in the Society, K. Kandiah was honoured for his contributions when the Society set up the "K. Kandiah Scholarship Fund". In memory of the apostle of the cooperative movement in Malaya the Sir George Maxwell Scholarship Fund was operated.

debts. To discourage borrowing from outside at high interest rates, loans were also granted for a whole range of purposes including educational expenses, medical treatment, the purchase of cars and other luxuries, funeral expenses and the passage fare to Ceylon. Two scholarship funds, the Sir George Maxwell Scholarship Fund and the Thamby Thurai[32] Scholarship Fund were also set up in 1953 and 1957 respectively. The Society, generally, took care of most of the economic needs of the community.

As discussed earlier, post-war developments both in Malaya and Ceylon made the Jaffnese reconsider the trend hitherto to return to Ceylon on retirement. Social constraints, in particular, encouraged the idea of permanent settlement in Malaya as more family members and friends gathered in Malaya. The intention of many to settle in Malaya found incentive in the relaxation of rules governing property ownership by government servants and added another dimension to the activities of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society. A significant addition to their original objectives took place when, in 1953, the Society resolved to found the Jaffnese Cooperative Housing Society, with a loan of one million dollars granted by the parent society, for the construction of houses. A housing estate, named Taman Kanagapuram, was established along Old Klang Road in Kuala Lumpur.[33] A similar development took place in Johore when the five Ceylonese associations of Johore Bahru, Batu Pahat, Muar, Segamat and Kluang met in August 1949, under the leadership of S.C. MacIntyre, to form the Central Council of Ceylonese Associations of Johore. This organisation sponsored the formation of the Lanka Realty Company, in 1954, to develop residential areas for the Ceylonese.[34] Ventures of this nature greatly assisted the Ceylon Tamils in becoming house owners in pre-independent Malaya. Acquisition of property and wealth through such institutional ventures as well as individual initiative was a further factor which assisted community members to establish themselves as a modern middle class population. Soon, in the absence of agricultural lands comparable to Jaffna, urban dwellings substituted for dowry.

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32. R.N. Thamby Thurai (Office Assistant, Chief Secretary's Office, Federated Malay States), was founder member and President of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society from 1926 till 1946.

33. *Jaffna Cooperative Society Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, 1974, p.19.

34. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane* (Singapore, University Education Press, 1973), p.149.

One other cooperative venture undertaken by the Jaffnese Cooperative Society to improve the economic position of its members was the Jaffnese Cooperative Stores Society founded in 1957. Besides providing employment for a few members it spread the knowhow and benefits of cooperative undertakings to others outside the community. Thus, even today, it continues to manage a provision shop in Petaling Jaya where a large concentration of Ceylon Tamils have settled in the post-independence era.

Banking and insurance contributed also to the economic well-being of the community. With a number of foreign banks with branches in Malaya the country was not lacking in banking facilities during the pre-war era but, significantly, the only locally established bank during the pre-Depression period was the Bank of Jaffna founded in 1928. It was the brain-child of Karthigesu Arumugam,[35] popularly known as Planter Arumugam, who also indulged in a diversity of economic ventures including the short-lived Malayan Daily Express newspaper in the 1930s. The bank had its premises at Clarke Road (now Jalan Raja) in Kuala Lumpur and drew its clientele from among the Ceylon Tamils. In 1936 another bank, the Oriental Bank of Malaya Limited at Foch Avenue (now Jalan Bandar) in Kuala Lumpur, was founded by Bastiampillai Paul Nicholas, a Ceylon Tamil. Like the Bank of Jaffna, at least in the initial years of its founding, all the staff and customers were invariably drawn from the Ceylonese community with a sparkling of Indians who patronised the bank. It opened up branches in Klang and Seremban to cater for the Ceylon Tamils there and, to facilitate remittances from Malaya, a branch was established in Jaffna itself. As a one-office financial institution, dependent on Ceylon Tamil patronage alone and with competition from the Oriental Bank, the Bank of Jaffna, not surprisingly, failed to flourish. The ownership was, therefore, relinquished and the bank was amalgamated with the Oriental Bank of Malaya which was run more as a family concern, with the eldest son, E.T. Nicholas, holding the reins after the death of the founder. The other sons served as directors. Up till the Second World War the Oriental Bank

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35. Karthigesu Arumugam came to Malaya in 1905, joined the Land Office in Seremban and served in various departments notably the Marines and Customs Office at Port Dickson. On retirement he took up rubber planting and owned several rubber estates which earned him the name "Planter" Arumugam. He was active in Asian Estate Owners Association, Rubber Restriction Committee, the Rubber Board and the Rubber Research Institute and Malayan Planters Estate Owners Association. He also served several years on the Seremban Sanitary Board. He was the father of A.P. Rajah (lawyer, former Speaker of Singapore Assembly and later Singapore's High Commissioner in London); A.C. Rajah of the Singapore Education Service and A.D. Rajah, a lawyer in Kuala Lumpur.

and the Kwong Yik Banks were, in fact, the only Asian-owned banks in Malaya, with one catering for the Chinese and the other for the Ceylonese and Indians.[36]

The responsiveness of the Ceylon Tamil community to the benefits of insurance schemes was another factor which contributed to their emergence with relative affluence in Malaya. As government servants they were eligible to contribute to the Widows and Orphans Fund, set up by the British, but it provided for beneficiaries only in the event of the death of the contributor while in service. The insurance company, in contrast, offered endowment policies allowing the contributor to withdraw sums of money at specific intervals before retirement or, on retirement. Apart from offering additional security, the insurance scheme provided the contributor opportunity to receive money to meet educational expenses for his children and settle outstanding debts. Seeing the benefits of the insurance scheme the Ceylon Tamils initiated, in 1902, an agency in Kuala Lumpur of the Oriental Government Security Life Assurance Company of India. The pioneer managers of the industry in Malaya were A.C. Lawton and S.S. Ramalingam who served till 1926 until V.W. Thambaiah took over from them.[37] Clients were sought from among the educated Ceylon Tamil population who readily seized the opportunity. Being thrifty by nature they allocated a portion of their small incomes to insure themselves in addition to maintaining their four per cent salary contribution towards the Widows and Orphans Fund. Agents and clerical staff of the Kuala Lumpur office were also Ceylon Tamils who were responsible for recruiting more policy holders from their community. A reasonable estimate would place Ceylonese in the region of ninety per cent of the policy holders of this company before the Second World War. Their enthusiasm and support for the industry, besides bringing greater economic security to families provided additional employment opportunities for individuals.

The economic ventures of the Ceylon Tamils, in the form of cooperatives, banks or insurance, improved the financial and investment opportunities of the

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36. Interview with E.T. Nicholas, 3rd January 1984, Brickfields. In 1969 the Nicholas brothers sold the bank to a local Chinese entrepreneur, Cho Jock Kim.

37. Initially there was only an agency in Kuala Lumpur with a branch office in Singapore. S.S. Ramalingam was the first agent operating in Malaya till 1912 when A.C. Lawton of the Colombo Branch was sent to assist the former. In 1915 a Chief Agency was opened in Kuala Lumpur and business prospered which resulted in a raising of status to Branch Office.

community at large and provided, in the long term, employment for a few. The managers of these various ventures, like the chief clerks in government service, ensured that available employment was reserved for community members. The community feelings thus assisted to no small degree in the emergence of the Ceylon Tamils as an economically stable and well-to-do community in Malaya. Malaya.

6.4 Community Service

The strong sense of community service had been a significant characteristic of many Jaffnese in the pre as well as post-war period. They had regarded this sort of involvement as part of an individual's life in addition to the conscientious, dedicated and efficient performance of career duties. It was not uncommon for Jaffnese to lead many community services in Malaya from a genuine interest in the welfare of the community and as a means of enhancing personal status. Although, initially, they began organising religious and cultural activities in the interests, specifically, of the community, their participation in more general economic, sporting and welfare activities soon led them to interact with other communities. It was not long before they fostered the community's role as an important component of society at large by participation in the rotary, guide and trade union movements in Malaya.

Towards the beginning of the third decade of this century the British in Malaya started a rotary club with a secular and non-political approach. The club stressed on unity within communities through joint efforts of social service without regard to members' origin. Through a quota system all major trades and professions came to be represented. Sir Andrew Caldecott, Chief Secretary to the Government, became the first President of the Kuala Lumpur Club. Being exclusive its membership was drawn mainly from the English-educated middle class. The professional and middle class status of many Ceylon Tamils gave them easy access into this Club and they contributed invaluably to the development of the movement in Malaya.[38] The Kuala Lumpur Club, for example, supported a house for vagrant boys who were trained in useful work and were visited by priests from their respective racial group. With the husbands as active rotarians the womenfolk also became members and served in various capacities in the movement.[39]

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38. Notable among them include Dr. A. Viswalingam, Dr. Arthur Thevathasan, T. Sivapragasam and R.P.S. Rajasooria of the Kuala Lumpur Club; R. Muthu Ramalingam of the Seremban Club and Dr. T. Markandu of the Taiping Club.

39. Mrs. Nesamani Rajasooria and Mrs. Iris Jesudasan were active Inner Wheel Presidents of the Kuala Lumpur Club.

In the field of organised labour, too, the Jaffnese took an active interest in nurturing the trade union movement in Malaya, especially during the post-war period. The trade union movement in the urban areas actually took firmer roots among middle class wage earners, especially those in the public service. As many Ceylon Tamis were employed in the public service they devoted greater energy in the movement to safeguard their economic interests.[40] The contribution of Ceylon Tamils to the development of the trade union movement in the various branches of public service and their involvement in the Thrift and Loan Cooperative Societies, indicated the community's close and direct affiliation with national movements striving for the economic betterment of the populace at large. In middle class communities struggles of this nature to safeguard their socio-economic status was common.

The women of the Jaffnese community, besides assisting and participating in the various community and inter-community activities along with their husbands, also played a prominent role in building up social, welfare and girl guide movements on the inter-racial and national level. As teachers and housewives they organised exhibitions, rallies, cultural activities and other social functions to guide and train enthusiastic females to play a leading role in their respective communities and as individuals. Among the Ceylon Tamils there were a number of ladies who held responsible positions as District Commissioners and Presidents of State Girl Guide Associations.[41] There were others who organised a

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40. Some of the Jaffnese who played an active role in trade unionism include D.S. Ramanathan (Teachers Union of Penang and later first Mayor of Penang); V. Selvanayagam (Malayan Technical Services Union); N. Padkunan (National Union of Teachers, Malayan Trade Union Council and for sometime Deputy Mayor of Penang); K. Duraiappah (National Union of Telecoms Employees and Malayan Trade Union Council); T. Narendran (Congress of Union of Employees in Public Services and Malayan Trade Union Council); V.G. Lingam (Amalgamated Union of Employees in Government and Allied Services); K. Ayadurai (General Clerical Services Union); T.F. Xavier (Railway Senior Officers Union); C. Tharumalingam (Railway Trade Union); T.S. Mahesan (Malayan Railway Junior Officers Union); V.T. Sivasambu (Malayan Meteorological Employees Union) and S.S. Nayagam (National Electricity Board Junior Officers Union and Kuala Lumpur Municipal Councillor 1948–54).

41. Some of the Ceylon Tamil ladies who led the guide movement in Malaya included Mrs. Mahalakshmi Natarajan, Mrs. A.E. Duraisamy, Mrs. Param Ponniah, Mrs. Jeyasothie Devadasan, Mrs. F.S. Muthu, Mrs. E.S.R. Alfred, Mrs. S. Sinnadorai, Mrs. Grace Rasaratnam and Mrs. S. Selvadorai in Selangor; Mrs. E. Selvanayagam in Pahang and Mrs. Edith MacIntyre in Johore.

number of welfare activities beneficial both to the Jaffnese and other communities. For example, even as early as 1920 they had established the Tamil Women's Christian Temperance Union of Kuala Lumpur including Ceylonese and Indians and modelled on similar lines as those found in many American countries, to strengthen family life and the relationship between family and community.[42]

In the pre-war years, noted for organising the women's activities, was Mrs. J.R. Vethavanam who was greatly influenced by her husband's social work. She assisted her husband in entertaining children of railway workers occupying quarters in Bungsar Road[43] (now Jalan Bangsar) and, later, formed the Street Boys Club,[44] in the same area. This organisation was opened to homeless boys, aged between eight and fourteen, of all races and religion, in an effort to make a 'street arab' into a self-respecting citizen. The Club was maintained entirely on donations. Mrs. J.R. Vethavanam's major contribution, however, was the formation of the League for Maternal and Child Welfare, Malaya, later called the Women's Service League.[45] She was able to extract the services of the members of the League who agreed to devote one or more mornings a week for voluntary work to improve the lot of impoverished women. This organisation had often been regarded as the forerunner of the Social and Welfare Department set up many years later in Malaya. Activities of this nature need to be viewed in the context of the Jaffnese woman's primary responsibilities as a housewife and a mother. While the husband spent more of his time after work in activities related to community development and sports activities, the Jaffnese wife conscientiously divided her home responsibilities and outside activities, related mainly to cultural activities and welfare service.

It was not uncommon to find Jaffnese individuals involved simultaneously in religious, sport, social, cultural, economic and political activities, often making a mark in a number of them.[46] Some of them even went beyond their community organisations and established themselves as able leaders and organisers of various activities that benefitted all communities. The cultivation of a well-

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42. *Malay Mail*, 8 March 1920.

43. *Malay Mail*, 16 January 1923.

44. *The Malayan Daily Express*, 17 January 1931.

45. *Malay Mail*, 10 March 1931.

46. Notable among them include S. Selvanayagam, V. Selvanayagam, V. Saravanamuthu, R. Nagaratnam, S. Kulasingam, J.R. Vethavanam, V.K. Chinniah, T. Rajasundram, Dr. A. Viswalingam, S.C. MacIntyre and Dr. A.E. Duraisamy. See Appendix F for details of their activities.

rounded personality through extra-mural activity and achieving excellence became hallmarks of individuals in the community. Could these qualities be the ingredients of the middle class values of the community? It was apparently the middle class status and its concomitant values which gave the Ceylon Tamils the edge in many respects over others in community activities. It would appear that the success of the Ceylon Tamils as a minority ethnic group in Malaya lay mainly in the high institutional completeness of the community, its ethical philosophy enchanced by its capitalization of English education with its accompanying advantages and the acquisition by the community of something akin to what Weber has defined as the "protestant ethic".[47]

The organisations as a whole provided the milieu for the Ceylon Tamils to meet and know one another, to participate in sports, and to secure and enhance their middle class economic status. Through associational activities the community manifested itself as an organised group. It was natural, therefore, that in the course of time the associations sought for official recognition of the Jaffna Tamils as a community and for requesting to be enumerated separately in the various censuses.[48]

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47. The progressive qualities of protestant ethics had been clearly outlined in Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London, Unwin University Books, 1974, 12th ed.), where he notes that Protestants were attracted to a large extent into the factories in order to fill the upper ranks of skilled labour and administrative positions, while Catholics showed a stronger tendencey to remain in their crafts (become master craftsmen). He argues that Protestants both as a ruling class and ruled, as majority and minority, have, as opposed to Catholics, shown a special tendency to develop economic rationalism. This is because they find their principle explanation in the permanent intrinsic character of their religious beliefs (pp.38–40) and that is why Protestant asceticism has the psychological effect of freeing the acquisition of goods from the inhibitions of traditionalistic ethics.

    It broke the bonds of the impulse of acquisition in that it not only legalised it, but looked upon it as directly willed by God (p.171). Even with regard to work, Protestants often feel that as long as their moral conduct was spotless and the use to which he put his wealth was not objectionable, he could follow his pecuniary interests as he would and feel that he was fulfilling a duty. In addition, the power of religious asceticism had provided the Protestants with sober, conscientious and unusually industrious workmen who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God (pp.176–177).

48. *Memorandum in connection with the Proposed Decennial Census of Population in British Malaya, 1940* (Submitted by various Ceylonese associations in Malaya).

Though they spent their early years devoting themselves exclusively to community interests, once a stable cultural and economic base was established the Jaffnese began to transcend parochial interests to participate and contribute to the country as a whole. Among the Malayans who won British awards for their contribution to the development of this country, a large number were Ceylon Tamils.[49] In fact, the important mark which the Ceylon Tamils left on the overall development of Malaya is reflected in the many roads named after Ceylon Tamil individuals.[50] The achievements by individual Jaffnese, which gave pride to the respective families and kinsmen and the community,[51] soon manifested itself in a growing political awareness within the community.

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49. Those who received M.B.E. awards included Thomas Abraham, John A. Thuraisingham, S. Kulasingam, E.T. Joseph, Vaitialingam Ponniah, V. Muttucumarasamy, S. Selvadoray, S.T.V. Lingam, S. Rajaratnam, Candiah Karthigesu, T. Kandiah, Kandiah Subramaniam, G.S. Proctor, Sangarapillai Murugesu, S. Eliathamby, T. Sivapragasam, Punniyamoorthy Ponnambalam, Dr. A.C. Karthigesu and Thambapillai Magasu. Those awarded O.B.E. were Dr. A. Viswalingam and Dr. A.E. Duraisamy while S.K. Ramanathan, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, R.P.S. Rajasooria, R. Thambipillay, S. Rajaratnam, K. Muttucumaru and Dr. S. Sivagnanam were made Justices of Peace.

50. Roads named after Ceylon Tamils include Jalan Moorthy in Bukit Mertajam; Ceylon Avenue, Jalan Rajaratnam, Seenivasagam Street and Jalan Sybil Karthigesu in Ipoh; Jalan Proctor in Klang, Jalan Rasadurai in Kuala Kubu Bahru; Jalan Abraham, Jalan Manickam, Jalan Selvadurai, Jalan Thambapillai and Jalan Vethavanam in Kuala Lumpur; Jalan Ponniah in Mentakab, Pahang; Jalan Elyathamby in Taiping; and Jalan Sabapathy in Teluk Anson. D.R. Singam, *A Hundred Years of Ceylonese in Malaysia and Singapore 1867–1967.* pp.266–267.

51. Among the Jaffnese in Ceylon and also in Malaya, personalities like Sir Mutu Coomaraswamy (Member of Ceylon Legislative Council 1862–77 and the first Asian to be knighted in 1878), and the Ponnambalam brothers Sir Arunachalam (Solicitor General of Ceylon 1897–1906 and Member of Ceylon Legislative Council) and Sir Ramanathan (Registrar General of Ceylon 1887 and Member of Ceylon Legislative Council), had become household names. Their role and contribution to the development of Ceylon had been the pride of the Jaffnese.

CEYLON TAMIL PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

7.1 Political Attitudes in the Pre-World War Two Period

Pre-war Malaya has often been described as a country with no active politics and displaying a "tranquil and complacent atmosphere of public life."[1] This was because the Malays and the non-Malays had not developed a committed sense of common nationhood. While the Malays were bogged down with regional loyalties,[2] the non-Malays displayed characteristics of sojournhood and were not too seriously concerned about constitutional political affairs apart from communal politics. They felt that so long as administrative power rested in the hands of the British, citizenship privileges and participation in government was of little practical consequence. No immigrant community ever expressed fear of Malay dominance or a fear of being deprived a status in Malaya. Perhaps they were confident that the British would take care of their political status which, indeed, the later did till the advent of World War Two. Within such a climate the political activities and involvements of the Jaffnese in pre-war Malaya was almost negligible, except for a number of State Council appointments which the British gave the Ceylon Tamils. These few appointments, however, gave sufficient impetus to communal consciousness, and led, gradually, to their seeking separate political representation towards the pre-independence era.

The lack of interest in politics during the pre-war period was mainly because a vast majority of them, being government servants, felt that their first duty was to serve the interests of the employer and they did not, therefore, involve themselves in political activities which might jeopardise their job status. In addition, having always cherished the hope of returning to Ceylon on retirement, they had, initially, no definite plans of settling down in Malaya.

The Ceylon Tamils, as a conspicious minority because of their importance in government service, were indispensable to the British who were, therefore, well disposed towards them. Anglo-Ceylonese relations based on mutual dependence was further enhanced by positive gestures made by the Ceylon Tamils through the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association, aimed at winning the favour of

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1. G.L. Peel, *Political Questions in Malaya* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1965), p.11.

2. W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1967), pp.1–11.

the British. Significant efforts to support the British cause were the formation of the Tamil Volunteer Force in 1914 on the outbreak on the First World War, the presentation of a fighter plane named 'Jaffna' to the British Government in 1914, the contribution of manpower to equip the Federated Malay States Volunteer Force, and the Victory Fund and the organisation of a Selangor Ceylon Women's War Work Party in support of the Malayan Patriotic Fund.[3] Through their support to the British they, implicitly and constantly, reminded their colonial masters not only of their continued loyalty but also of their distinct status as a separate ethnic group, never to be confused with the Indians. The British, on their part, reciprocated readily by according due recognition to the representation of the community by inviting the Presidents of the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association to attend public functions. The Coronation Ceremony of King George V in 1911, the War Declaration Anniversary Celebrations in 1918, the Treaty of Peace Celebrations in 1919, the appointment of the President of SCTA as a member of the Organising Committee for the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1922 and the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of King George V in 1936, were some of the occasions when the Ceylon Tamils were represented separately. There was no doubt about the tacit acceptance by the British that the Jaffna Tamils wished to have separate representation though this was not conceded politically and administratively.

In agreement with the official policy, Ceylonese were appointed frequently only as Indian representatives on various medical boards. In 1925, for instance, there were M. Cumarasami, J.R. Vethavanam and Dr. E.T. MacIntyre on the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board; M. Nagamuthu on the Kuala Selangor Sanitary Board; S. Ponniah on the Temerloh Sanitary Board and Dr. E.T. MacIntyre and M. Cumarasami on the Kuala Lumpur Mosquito Destruction Board.[4] The SCTA's plea for separate status in public administration through direct representation on the various State Councils and the Federal Council was unsuccessful. At the Federal Council meeting of 1928, the High Commissioner, Sir Hugh Clifford, merely assuaged the fears of the Ceylon Tamils about their status vis-a-vis the Indians with the assurance that "though the community which is represented by Mr. S. Veerasamy on this Council is called the Indian community, we regard it as including the Ceylonese."[5] The Ceylon Tamils,

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3. See Chapter Six for details on such efforts.

4. *Federated Malay States Government Year Book*, 1925 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1925), pp.15–33.

5. *Federal Council Proceedings*, 27 February 1928.

however remained dissatisfied and, in 1932, submitted a memorandum to the Permanent Under Secretary of State for Colonies, Sir Samuel Herbert Wilson which drew no response.[6] When the matter was again brought up at the Selangor State Council meeting on 19 February 1935, it was dismissed with the clarification that the word 'Indian' appearing in Sections 1, 2 and 4 of the State Council Constitution, as approved on 16 October 1933, included persons of Tamil race whose fathers or more remote ancestors were born in Ceylon.[7] This assurance appears to have cleared part of the misgivings prevalent amongst the Ceylon Tamils about their lack of status. For on 9 March 1935, the SCTA invited the new British Resident of Selangor, Mr. W.D. Barron, for a social gathering at the Majestic Hotel in Kuala Lumpur and expressed the community's readiness to provide all cooperation to the British and the hope that, "if any member of our community happens to be invited in due course to serve the Government in its councils under the recent interpretation of the term 'Indian' we have no doubt that the confidence so placed will be found to be completely justified."[8] Following this, when a suitable candidate was sought to act for S. Veerasamy, the Indian representative on the Selangor State Council, during his periods of absence, the Ceylon Tamils submitted to the State Government the name of six prominent people.[9] Of the candidates nominated, five had experience in serving community organisations, while J.R. Vethavanam, alone, was active in a number of non-communal organisations, like the Young Men's Christian Association, the Rotary Club and the Institute of Architects. He was also a member of the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board, Assessor of Supreme Court and an Imperial Service Medalist. Though no deputy was actually appointed for Veerasamy, the aspirations of the Ceylon Tamils for representation on legislative and administrative bodies was partly fulfilled later in 1935 when a number of appointments were made to jointly represent Ceylonese and Indian interests. Vethavanam was appointed to the Selangor State Council; S. Seenivasagam,[10] a lawyer and the FMS Notary Public, appointed to the Perak State Council and Dr. S. Muthuthamby to the Johore State Council.

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6. *Memorandum submitted to Sir Samuel Herbert Wilson*, Kuala Lumpur, 20 November 1932.

7. *Selangor State Council Proceedings*, 19 February 1935.

8. *SCTA Annual Report, 1935.*

9. *Ibid 1935.* The candidates named were R.V. Karlakandan, T. Rajendra, V.W. Thambiah, R. Thambipillay, Dr. K. Thillyampalam and J.R. Vethavanam.

10. S. Seenivasagam was the father of S.P. Seenivasagam and D.R. Seenivasagam, the prominent Ipoh lawyers who founded the Peoples' Progressive Party.

The appointments met sharp reaction from the Indian community. They challenged the legitimacy of these appointments and broached the matter to visiting dignitaries during the 1930s, like the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri (Agent of the Government of India) and Jawaharlal Nehru (Indian Freedom Fighter and later first Prime Minister of Independent India). Neither of them took up the matter seriously as they did not consider it of sufficient importance. In fact, Nehru advised the two communities to bury their differences and work together. The unwillingness of the Ceylon Tamils to identify and interact freely with Indians socially only aggravated the strained relations culminating in animorsity and mutual suspicion. The Indians feared that if the new trend was not checked it would lead to the appointment of more Ceylon Tamils to represent Indians, particularly because of the good rapport they had with the British.

Ironically, the performance of J.R. Vethavanam in the State Council transcended the communal biases in which his own community was entrenched,[11] Instead of discussing Indian problems and suggesting ways to alleviate them, he often brought up general issues, like the extension of paddy planting in the state to enable the country to be self-supporting, and social problems like unemployment, juvenile delinquency, educational reforms and scholarships for technical education. This did not detract him from discussion of specifically Indian problems which were pressing, like the abolition of toddy shops in the estates and Indian settlements.[12] His evident interest in social problems affecting all communities, though originating from a generally communally introspective society, led to his appointment, after the War, to the Kuala Lumpur Town Board where he rendered exemplary service to the satisfaction of all.

With his sights on fostering a more open society for Malayans, Vethavanam campaigned for housing for the poorer classes,[13] and overtly opposed the proposal for representation on a racial basis in Kuala Lumpur Municipal Board.[14] He

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11. *Times of Malaya*, 20 June 1935. On his appointment as State Councillor, he had stated that "the good fellowship and harmony that prevails in this land of which every Malayan is proud, and justly so, can only be maintained, widened and deepened by every race not merely wishing, but also working for the welfare of each other and the state as a whole."

12. *Selangor State Council Proceedings, 1935–36.*

13. *Malay Mail*, 15 January 1947, 15 March 1941, Editorial 25 September 1947, 19 February 1948. Successful in implementing Sungei Besi Housing Scheme of 200 houses at Kampung Satu and 443 houses at Kampong Dua Jalan Cheras in Kuala Lumpur.

14. *Malay Mail*, 16 April 1947. In the pre-war days J.R. Vethavanam had requested for change of name from Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board to Kuala Lumpur Municipality. It was finally changed on 1 March 1948.

also recommended greater decentralisation of powers within the Federal Administration as a necessary prelude to the introduction of democratic self-government.[15] His general popularity was hardly surprising. An editorial of a leading daily reported that "the press and the public have become accustomed to expecting worthwhile pronouncements in the Kuala Lumpur Town Board from its doyen, Mr. J.R. Vethavanam, who usually puts up a good case for or against a matter of moment . . . "[16] His achievements in the Council did, nonetheless, fail to win the approval of the parochial Indian community who wanted their representative to delve more exclusively into conditions of the community and its attendant problems.

The appointment of Ceylon Tamils from time to time, to represent Indian interests stood the British in good stead, particularly before World War Two when Indian nationalism had begun to rear its head. At this period the British were anxious to deny recognition to Indian communal and nationalist sentiments which were fast gaining currency among Indians in Malaya and, symptomatic of this, was the refusal by the British of the Central Indian Association of Malaya's demand for settlement and citizenship rights to Indians. Instead, by 1938 they replaced all three Indian members of the State Councils with Ceylon Tamils.[17] The Central Indian Association of Malaya remained undaunted and took retaliatory measures in June 1938, whereby it successfully persuaded the Indian government, which was currently concerned about the upliftment of Indian immigrants, to ban emigration of assisted labour to Malaya. Simultaneously, the Indian government lodged a protest concerning the wages and living conditions of Indians in Malaya. The point was also made about the inadequate representation of Indians in official bodies. Their stand was endorsed by the Secretary to the Government of India who wrote that, "Jaffna Tamils should not be held in any sense to represent Indian opinion . . . Though there was a historical and racial connection between Indians from Madras and the Jaffna Tamils, the latter in Ceylon were inclined to look upon themselves as

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15. *Malay Mail*, 13 January 1948.

16. *Malay Mail*, Editorial, 14 January 1948.

17. G. Netto, *Indians in Malaya: Historical Facts and Figures* (Singapore, 1961), pp.59–60. S.N. Veerasamy was appointed to the Federal Council in 1928; Louis Thivy to the Perak State Council in 1928 and, again, in 1931; Dr. S.R. Krishnan and S.N. Veerasamy to the Negri Sembilan and the Selangor State Councils respectively. Refer also M. Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp.47–49.

wholly distinct from Indians and had in fact in many matters been in direct opposition to them. For this reason alone it was desirable that no impression should be allowed to develop that the Indian community in Malaya were content to be represented by Jaffna Tamils."[18]

Both the planters and the Malayan government, who were pressed for labour, pleaded with the Indian government to revoke the ban promising, in turn, to grant minor wage concessions, improvement in the living conditions of labourers, and the replacement of Ceylon Tamils with Indians in official councils.[19] The Ceylon Tamils' reluctance to relinquish their separate identity and merge with the Indian population merely aggravated the problem of Indian representation.

7.2 The Ceylon Tamil Reaction to Indian Nationalism

The Japanese Occupation of Malaya between 1942 and 1945 brought much economic hardship to all Malayans, especially the immigrant communities. Moreover, due to Sino-Japanese animosity elsewhere, the Chinese were victims of Japanese reprisals, while working class Indians were the target for labour recruitment for the Siam-Burma railway. Although the Ceylon Tamils as a race feared internment because of their alleged loyalty to the British, they did not, in fact, face any serious political threat. Furthermore, as a community which was potentially the most useful in running the civilian affairs of the military administration, they were less vulnerable.[20]

With the continuing political and cultural ties maintained by Malayan Indians with the Indian sub-continent, the effect of the Japanese forward policy in Asia on the independence movement in India brought important repercussions in Malaya. Two organisations set up in Malaya in association with the Indian independence struggle were the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army.[21] The Japanese overtly encouraged both organisations to

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18. *Secretary to Government of India to Colonial Secretary, Singapore* 28 March 1939, C.O.273/654, File No. 50027. The concern of the Indian Government about Indian labour in Malaya was evident when in 1936, they sent V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, a distinguished Liberal leader in the Central Legislative Council, to inquire into the conditions of Indian labour in Malaya.

19. *Malayan Government to Government of India*, 18 June 1940, C.O. 273/654, File No. 50027.

20. Refer Chapter Three on the position of Ceylon Tamils in the Japanese administration during the war years.

21. Refer G.P. Ramachandra, "The Indian Independence Movement in Malaya, 1942–45" (M.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur,

assist in driving out the British from India. The membership of these organisations, however, were drawn mainly from Indian-born working class Indians whose patriotism lay in their country of origin. Middle class Indians and Ceylon Tamils, in the main, reacted unenthusiastically and those who joined did so not out of genuine sympathy for the movement but to benefit from the various concessions the Japanese made to members of the League.[22] Those who joined were able to gain concessions like the freedom to cross the state boundaries and immunity from arrest by the Japanese. Otherwise, the sentiments of the Ceylon Tamils lay strongly with their country of origin as was attested, for example, in 1948, when they celebrated Ceylon Independence Day with much enthusiasm at the Town Hall in Kuala Lumpur. Amongst their guests of honour they entertained the Deputy High Commissioner, the Sultan of Selangor, the Resident Commissioner and leaders of various communities.[23]

The indifferent attitude of the Ceylon Tamils to the Indian nationalist movement attracted the attention of Subash Chandra Bose, the leader of the independence struggle outside India who worked closely with the Japanese. On 2 December 1943, he called upon the Ceylon Tamil community to explain their attitude. A deputation comprising R.P.S. Rajasooria, the President of the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association, K. Arumugam, a planter and prominent member of the community and M.W. Navaratnam, President of the Ceylon Association of Selangor, met Bose in Singapore. They claimed that their community, being largely government servants, owed their services and loyalty to which ever Government was in power.[24] The truth, however, was that many Ceylon Tamils remained loyal to the British in the firm belief that they would return shortly. To the Ceylonese representatives who met Bose, service in the Indian National Army was unthinkable but they agreed, all the same, to participate more actively in the Indian Independence League.[25] Bose, on the other hand, conceded to their unequivocal desire for separate status by setting up a separate

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1970); S. Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore* (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.102–111.

22. G.P. Ramachandra, *ibid.*, p.182.

23. *Malay Mail*, 11 February 1948.

24. *SCTA Platinum Jubilee Souvenir*, p.80.

25. *Tamil Nesan*, 18 June 1946; "Report on the General and Economic Conditions of the Ceylonese in Malaya," *Ceylon Sessional Paper*, No. 9, 1946.

section, at all levels of the League, for the Ceylonese community in Malaya. His suggestion that the Ceylonese give token payment to the movement to allay the suspicions of the Japanese was tantamount to political blackmail and was the outcome of failure on his part to win the genuine sympathy of the Ceylonese. The Ceylonese, however, refused to be intimidated. A majority "felt that the question of Indian independence was not their business and, therefore, they should not be taxed for contributions.[26] Some Jaffna Tamils and Sinhalese, nonetheless, took on the management of the Ceylonese sections within the League while Dr. N. Moothathamby and S.C. MacIntyre, served as Chairmen of the League proper at the Johore Bahru and Batu Pahat branches respectively.[27] Gladwin Kottlewala of Malacca, M. Saravanamuthu of Penang and Justice M.V. Pillai of Singapore were persuaded to tour Malaya and urge the Ceylonese to support the Government of Azad Hind and to take an oath of allegiance to it.[28] Despite these appeals and the commitment of a number of Ceylonese leaders, there was no widespread support from the community. Few, in fact, came forward to take the oath or join the Ceylonese sections of the League.[29]

The general reluctance of most Ceylon Tamils to contribute financially, morally and physically to the struggle for Indian independence and the existence of separate sections in the Indian Independence League for Ceylonese left no doubt about the cleavage between the two communities. The Ceylonese were treated by Indians with suspicion and dislike and Ceylon Tamil conductors in estates were accused of being mainly responsible for sending away many Indians to work in the Siam Burma Railway.[30] Strained Indo-Ceylonese relations during the pre-war years were not resolved by post-war political developments.

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26. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane* (Singapore, University Education Press, 1973), p.120.

27. *Ibid*, p.119. Others included V.K. Chinniah (President of League, Klang, M.K. Murugesu (Member in charge of Social Welfare, Education and Culture, Kampar Branch) and S.Selvanayagam (Member in charge of Social Welfare and later Education and Culture, Perak Branch). *Malayan Ceylonese Association Silver Jubilee Souvenir* (Jaffna, 1962).

28. *Syonan Shimbun*, 9 November 1943, 25 January 1944. Cited from G.P. Ramachandra, "Indian Independence Movement in Malaya, 1942–1945", p.182.

29. *Malai Sinpo*, 11 May 1945, cited from G.P. Ramachandra, *ibid*.

30. M. Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia*, p.100.

7.3. Awakening Political Consciousness during the Post-World War Two Era

During the post-war years Malaya entered a new phase in its history. It is undeniable that the Japanese Occupation and influence of nationalist activities fermented political consciousness amongst the various communities in Malaya. All communities, dominant as well as minority, domiciled as well as sojourners, contributed to increasing political activity, each in an attempt to stake a claim in the political future of the country. This new spirit was clearly evident when the Malayan Union proposals sparked off a sudden display of interest among all communities in the political future of Malaya.[31] The contents of this constitutional package ushered in a new era of hitherto unprecedented political consciousness amongst the races.[32] The Ceylon Tamils proved to be no exception.

Though the Jaffnese were primarily concerned with communal identity, security and enhancement of their status, they did not altogether withdraw from mainstream activities in Malaya. In fact, especially during the post-war period their involvement in the administrative, social, economic and even political activities was quite substantial considering that they were a small minority. This was mainly the result of more communal interaction stemming from post-war nationalism as well as the increase of a professional class within the Jaffnese community. They began to interact at the national level in cooperative movements, trade union movements, professional associations and even the girl guide movement. Important contacts, friendship and alliances were made by prominent Jaffnese with Malay political leaders, in particular, which gave them the opportunity to participate in the wider political and constitutional developments in Malaya.

The Malayan Union, introduced on 1 April 1946 to replace the British Military Administration in Malaya, was aimed at centralising power by integrating the nine Malay States and the Straits Settlements (Malacca and Penang)

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31. K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya Press, 1965), pp.43–65; Zulkifli Abdullah, "Malayan Union and Malay Reactions" (Academic Exercise, Department of History, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1965).

32. The United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), and the Ceylon Federation of Malaya were formed in 1946 while the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed in 1949.

into one political entity called the Malayan Union, while Singapore was to remain a separate colony. This meant, effectively, the loss of the pre-war priviliged positions and power of the Sultans of the Malay States since the British would be the sole administrators of the country with the Sultans as mere 'rubber stamps'. The scheme proposed abolishing communal preference and the granting of common and equal citizenship rights to any person born in the Malayan Union or Singapore.[33] This meant that Chinese, Indians and Ceylonese immigrants with inadequate residential qualifications and an 'artificial' loyalty to the country would be granted a substantial say in the policies of the government. On the whole, the Malayan Union proposal was tantamount to a surrender by the Malays of their privileged status. Hence, the proposal provoked bitterness and opposition from them. To be placed on a par with the immigrants whom they had all the while viewed as separate people was an affront to their dignity as a race. Furthermore, the economic indebtedness of the Malays to the Chinese and Indian Chettiars[34] and the monopoly of the Indians, Chinese and Ceylonese of jobs in government departments[35] had earned the latter communities an in recruitment for government jobs afforded them priority, the relative advantage that non-Malays enjoyed made the Malays view the non-Malay 'aliens' as a strong threat politically and economically. It is not surprising, therefore, that the threat politically and economically. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Malays resented the granting of equal citizenship rights to the non-Malays as contained in the Malayan Union proposal. Indeed, one Malay organisation expressed the view that not only should "citizenship for the aliens except the Indonesian Malays . . . be limited", but also "the number of aliens who may be granted citizenship in the Federation should be limited and should not be more than one quarter of the Malay population in the Federation. . . ."[36]

Current developments **apropos** the Malayan Union proposal led the Ceylon Tamils in Malaya to take a serious view of their position. This situation lent

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33. *Malayan Union and Singapore: A Statement of Policy in Future Constitution, 1946* (Colonial Office Records, Great Britain), p.2.

34. Refer P.H. Kratoska, *The Chettiar and the Yeoman: British Cultural Categories and Rural Indebtedness in Malaya* (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Occasional Paper, No.82, 1975).

35. In 1938 there were 1,742 Malays in seven key government departments as against 4,938 from the other communities. See *Federal Council Proceedings, 1938*, p.B21.

36. Federation of Malaya, *Constitutional Proposals of Malaya, Report of the Consultative Committee together with Proceedings of Six Public Meetings, Summary of Representations Made and Letters and Recommendations Considered by the Committee, 1947*, p.89 (Memorandum submitted by the Persatuan Melayu, Ulu Trengganu).

sufficient impetus to the formation in 1946 of the Ceylon Federation of Malaya (CFM). Unlike earlier organisations formed by the community, the CFM had specifically political aims. Under the leadership of Dato (later Sir) E.E. Clough Thuraisingham the association opened direct membership to individual Ceylonese. The Ceylon Tamils, who were mainly government servants, expressed through their leader their common feelings that the Ceylon Tamils always supported any government in power. As the representative of the Ceylonese in Malaya, the leader of the party was soon appointed to various official bodies. By this time community members had also been appointed to various State Councils[37] and town boards.[38] But the party as such did not gain national level recognition or play any effective role to make an impact on post-war politics in Malaya.

The Malayan Union had, in the meantime, forced the Malays to reassess their position **vis-a-vis** the other races. Though some Malays were convinced that political dominance could be achieved and maintained without non-Malay cooperation, the majority felt that non-Malay cooperation was vital for the successful administration of the country. This group realised not only the political potential of the non-Malay communities but also accepted the reality that the latter would, in time, channel their energies towards local ends. They acknowledged with pragmatism that they had either to cooperate with the non-Malays or rely on British protection indefinitely, for they could not, by themselves run the entire government of the country.[39] Amongst this group of Malays were many who worked closely with the leaders of Chinese, Indian and Ceylonese communities in post-war Malaya. The foremost were Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dato Onn bin Jaafar, with whom Ceylon Tamil leaders, like S.C. MacIntyre and E.E.C. Thuraisingham, built up a close working relationship.

Nonetheless, to anticipate the challenge posed to Malay dominance by the imminent Malayan Union proposal, the United Malays National Organisation

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37. Those who served during the period 1947–50 included E.E.C. Thuraisingham, R.P.S. Rajasooria and T. Rajendra in Selangor; S. Sinnathamby, R. Nagaratnam and M. Nadchatiram in Negri Sembilan; S.C. MacIntyre, Dr. Moothathamby, S. Ponnambalam and N. Balasingham in Johore; A. Mahendra and Dr. S. Perampalam in Perak; and Nicholas Ponnudurai in Penang and V. Eliathamby in Pahang.

38. A large number of Ceylon Tamils served in the Rent Assessment Boards, Sanitary Boards and Town Boards in Raub, Klang, Kuantan, Kuala Kangsar, Kuala Selangor, Ulu Langat, Krian, Taiping, Bangi, Cheras, Kajang etc. A number of them also served on the Board of Visiting Justices in Kuala Lumpur and Taiping.

39. K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, p.19.

(UMNO) was formed in March 1946. Dato Onn, as President of the party, was the spokesman for the community. Non-Malay leaders, though, did not condemn the Malayan Union scheme outright because of its favourable citizenship clauses, they were not unwilling, however, to support Malay opposition to the Sultans' privileged position.[40] The widespread opposition from the Malay community did, however, mean that the scheme was withdrawn, hardly three months after its proposal. In its place they worked on a Draft Constitution for Malaya by setting up a Working Committee on 25 July 1946 to submit draft proposals. This committee consisted of representatives from the Government, the UMNO and from among the Sultans. Proposals were then forwarded to a Special Consultative Committee, set up in January 1947, to obtain the opinions of non-Malays. The findings of the Consultative Committee were reported back to the Working Committee which finalised the proposals. This formed the basis of the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1 January 1948. The new arrangement conceded that Malaya was primarily a Malay country. The Sultans' sovereignty was to be upheld and the High Commissioner accepted responsibility of safeguarding the special position of Malays. New proposals were drawn regarding citizenship rights to non-Malays and a Federal Legislative Council was constituted, consisting of twenty-five official and fifty unofficial members.[41]

The Consultative Committee which invited the opinion of the non-Malays on the new Constitutional proposal was enundated with memoranda and oral evidence from all sections of the public. The Ceylon Federation of Malaya, representing the Ceylonese community in Malaya, submitted a memorandum which sought to defend its own position in the country, just as the other communities did. It stated that "A significant feature has been that Ceylonese with traditional loyalty and conservatism have given their entire lives exclusively to the service of Their Highnesses and the British Administrators, while other races ventured into vocations of great gain . . . ."[42] Inevitably, the Federation of

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40. In May 1946, John Thivy, the leader of the Indian community urged Indians not to give comments on the Malayan Union scheme to avoid embarrassment but expressed opinion that they were solidly behind the Malays. But the fact is that since the proposals favoured them the only point of grievance was that the British did not consult the Indians and Chinese but carried out secret negotiations with the Sultans and UMNO representatives in mid–1946. *Jananayakam*, 26 October 1946. See also H.B. Lim, "Malaya's 'Constitution' ", *Labour Monthly*, Vol. 28 (1946), p.381, for opinion of the Malayan Democratic Union.

41. *Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers), p.5.

42. "Memorandum from the Ceylon Federation of Malaya." *Federation of Malaya. Report of the Consultative Committee* (1947), p.123.

Malaya Agreement did not satisfy all parties involved, but it granted some recognition to communal demands. Accepted as being adequate to meet the political needs of the time, the British granted representation to each minority community in the Legislative Council on which the Ceylonese obtained a seat. Dato E.E.C. Thuraisingham, then President of the Ceylon Federation, was appointed to the Council.

E.E.C. Thuraisingham appears to have played an active role on the Federal Legislative Council where he spoke on a wide range of issues. This included the pension schemes for government service[43] and the creation of a Public Services Commission,[44] both of which were of interest to the Ceylonese community, as well as the legalising of public lotteries and premium bond issues for financing social and welfare services.[45] Thuraisingham's idea for introducing a pension scheme and Public Services Commission was drawn from the Ceylon Administrative tradition. On the question of legalising lotteries he received the support of Dato Onn Jaafar,[46] the President of UMNO, with whom he later shared many political views. There is little doubt that his popularity, earned through the interest he showed in issues affecting all Malayans, and the experience he gained on the various select committees and as Chairman of the Communities Liaison Committee, ultimately led to his appointment in 1951 as Member for Education on the Council.

With regard to the question of citizenship, the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948 granted liberal provisions for all to obtain Federal citizenship. Both Malays and non-Malays resident as British citizens in Penang and Malacca and non-Malays resident in the Malay States (for eight out of twelve

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43. *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council*, 5 October 1948, p.A95.

44. *Ibid.*, 30 March 1948, p.B74.

45. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1949, p.340.

46. *Ibid.*, 29 September 1949, p.348. For example, on the issue of legalising public lotteries there was opposition from many of the Council members, especially the Muslim members. But Dato Onn convincingly argued that no one had touched about alcohol, beer, rearing of pigs and sale of port in markets adjoining sale of mutton and beef as against Islam. He also pointed out that there were lotteries in pre-war Malaya for the benefit of Poppy Day but no one had criticised this. So for a noble cause of financing Social and Welfare Services he argued that the lotteries must be legalised.

years in the case of those born in the country, and fifteen out of twenty years for those born outside), were all granted Federal citizenship by application. The language test was also waived for those forty-five years of age and above who had resided in the country for more than twenty years. These terms were a definite windfall for the non-Malay population and qualified almost all Ceylon Tamils for Federal citizenship.[47] For those Ceylonese who wanted to return to Ceylon after retirement, Federal citizenship had no appeal, but for the majority who were born in Malaya and had children studying and working here, Federal citizenship provided a definite advantage. Furthermore, the special provision that non-Malay Federal citizens were not required to renounce any foreign nationality which they might already possess, provided the necessary loop-hole for those who could not make up ther minds immediately about their future. From the provisions of the citizenship laws it was evident that the British attitude to non-Malays was aimed at encouraging genuine and undivided loyalties and political commitment.[48]

The solution to the constitutional crisis of 1946 did not scotch the communalistic and wider political problem which the Malayan Union proposal had brought into the open. Political controversy hinged on the delicate but fundamental question of the legitimate status of the various ethnic elements in the country. Linked significantly with this new politicisation of the people was the fact that influential leaders, both among the Malays and non-Malays, were thinking in terms of eventual self-government. It became obvious to them that independence could prove an ultimate reality only if the different communities cooperated and struggled together towards the achievement of this goal.[49]

Dato Onn Jaafar as president of UMNO was fully aware of the problems of convincing the Malays to accept the existence of the non-Malays as a social

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47. According to *Federation of Malaya Annual Report* for 1950 it was estimated that since 1 February 1948 (date of enforcement of Federation Agreement), 2,500,000 Malays, 350,000 Chinese and 225,000 Indians, Pakistanis and Ceylonese became Federal citizens by operation of law. By application 150,000 Chinese and 5,000 Indians, Pakistanis and Ceylonese obtained citizenship.

48. *Straits Budget*, 15 August 1946; S.W. Jones, *Public Administration in Malaya* (London, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1953), p.145.

49. K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and Political Process in Malaya*, p.22. In 1952 the Colonial Secretary had stated that independence for Malaya was only possible until unity between the different communities could be achieved.

and political reality in Malaya. Already Sino-Malay relations[50] had taken a downward turn in the immediate post-war years and the Communities Liaison Committee was established to improve relations between the two communities. Dato Onn was apprehensive of Malay reaction; yet, convinced of the advantage of working together with the non-Malays, he decided as a first step to admit them into the UMNO. On 28 May 1949, he declared that non-Malays who were British subjects and had lived anywhere in Malaya for at least five years qualified to become associate members of UMNO.[51] Some Ceylonese responded immediately and this included S.C. MacIntyre who later stood for election on an UMNO ticket.

The bold step of admitting non-Malays to the UMNO, which was based on a non-communal approach to political questions, angered many UMNO members. Far from assuaging their fears Dato Onn took the further step of throwing open the doors of UMNO, in 1950, to admit non-Malays as ordinary members. It was intended that by this new scheme the non-Malay members would earn equal rights and privileges as their Malay counterparts in preparation for the redesignation of the UMNO as the United Malayan National Organisation.[52] Dato Onn's clear intention was to convert UMNO into a non-communal political organisation to represent all Malayans and this was more than the Malays would tolerate. Widespread opposition and scathing criticism of his attitude and views led him to his resignation on 1 July 1951 from the UMNO. He then formed, on 16 September 1951, the Independence of Malaya Party, a national non-communal political organisation to implement his political ideals while UMNO came under the leadership of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Thus, among the Malays two schools of thought prevailed. One supported a policy of multi-racial party organisation as advocated by Dato Onn and, the other, led by Tunku

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50. C.O.537/1580. *Despatches, British Military Administration (Malaya) to Secretary of State for Colonies*, London, 7 March 1946. Communist guerilla activities were rampant in the immediate post-war years and the British with the help of Malay police and soldiers tried to suppress them. This led to a strain in Sino-Malay relations and occasional racial clashes were common events during this period. Even the Consul-General of the Republic of China in Singapore concerned himself with the problem and wrote to the Chief Civil Affairs Officer in Singapore on 27 February 1946 asking for immediate action to stop the massacres.

51. *Straits Times*, 30 May 1949. Decision taken at the 11th UMNO General Assembly in Perlis held on 28 May 1949.

52. *Straits Times*, 21 November 1950.

Abdul Rahman favoured, as an alternative, a policy of political alliance and cooperation with other major non-Malay political parties like the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC). Both, however, clearly recognised the importance of striking a **modus vivendi** with the non-Malays.

In the meantime, the move by Dato Onn to admit non-Malays into UMNO had set in motion similar trends among the other communal parties, namely, the MCA and MIC to admit members of other communities as associate members.[53] While the matter was discussed at the MCA general meeting in 1951 and the decision deferred,[54] in October 1952 the MIC resolved to admit non-Indians as associate members. Non-Indians here referred not only to Malays and Chinese but also to the Ceylonese. The decision to admit the Ceylonese within the wider category of non-Indians pertained, in fact, to a problem which had vexed the MIC since its formation in August 1946.[55]

7.4 Indian and Ceylon Tamil Political Separation

During the pre-war years, the Indians had often attributed the presence of communal associations[56] among the Ceylon Tamils to be symptomatic of their unwillingness to sacrifice their separate identity. The Ceylon Tamils were separated from the Indians by class, caste, ethnic and even cultural differences. As

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53. *Indian Daily Mail*, 27 April 1950. The Bungsar Road/Brickfields Local Indian Congress resolved to admit members of other communities. They presented the resolution at the 4th Annual General Meeting of MIC in April 1950 but it was not accepted. In January 1951 the Central Working Committee of MIC adopted a resolution to admit non-Indian members but no decision was made at the quarterly Congress meeting. Only in October 1952 did MIC finally decide to open membership to non-Indians. *(Malay Mail, Straits Times*, 27 October 1952).

54. *Tamil Murasu*, 23 April 1951.

55. *Tamil Nesan*, 8 October 1947; *Jananayakam*, 23 June 1947. See Section 7.4 for details on this issue.

56. Some of the Ceylonese associations formed in the immediate post-war years include the Ceylon Federation of Malaya under E.E.C. Thuraisingham and Central Council of Ceylonese Associations of Johore under S.C. MacIntyre. Even the Ceylonese section of the Indo-Ceylonese Association in Segamat was deemed a Ceylonese association for purpose of membership in the Central Council of Ceylonese Association of Johore.

an educated middle class community holding responsible positions the Jaffnese had always observed a certain social distance between themselves and the predominantly manual class Indians, especially the Indian Tamils. As supervisory staff in the plantation sector they had stretched the rules of discipline and the observance of social distance to such an extent that they offended the South Indians. Regarding the bad treatment that they accorded the estate Indians it was recorded in 1926 that:[57]

> Those who exercise control over the labourers are Kanganis, Mandurus (mandors) and Kranis. The Kanganis and Mandurus are mostly Tamils, while 99 per cent of the Kranis are Jaffnese. The hardships to which the labourers are subjected by Kanganis and Mandurus under the instruction of Kranis, are indescribable.

Furthermore, they accepted a considerable element of social patronage from the European managers and, together with their "imitation of European social styles and their ostentious displays of empire loyalism,"[58] found themselves alienated from the Indian labourers. They found little or no identity with the Indians which contributed to ill-feeling and much misunderstanding between the two communities. The lack of goodwill between the two communities culminated in resentment against the Jaffnese who were believed to have mercilessly sent many Indians to work on the "Death Railway".[59] Restoration of authority to Ceylon Tamil staff[60] after the Japanese Occupation led to protests.

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57. C.O.273/534, File No. 11413. *India Office to Colonial Office*, 31 May 1926.

58. M. Stenson, *Class, Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1980), p.26.

59. *Ibid.*, p.100; R.K. Jain, *South Indians on the Plantation Frontier in Malaya* (New York, Yale, University Press, 1970), p.302; *Indian Daily Mail*, 24 August 1946. It was reported that about 75,000 estates workers were sent to work on the railways, of which about 45,000 died. The remaining 30,000 returned to Malaya with virulent diseases like ulcers, beri-beri etc. pre-and post-war population figures for Indians indicate a decrease of 4 per cent, partly attributed to these deaths.

60. M. Stenson, *Class Race and Colonialism in West Malaysia* (1980), p.135.

Sporadic incidents of violence against the 'Black Europeans' as they were known involved, in one case, in the death of an estate conductor.[61]

Even their relationship with the urban Indians was not cordial as the Jaffnese were alleged to look down upon local Indians.[62] Instead of using the Ceylon Tamils' good position to mobilize the Indian and Ceylon Tamil community as a whole, they were more concerned about improving their qualifications, status and economic position. For example, in the 1930s, Ceylon Tamil leaders mounted a campaign to request for greater employment opportunities for non-Malays in the Government sector when they felt threatened by the strong pro-Malay policies in staff recruitment launched by High Commissioner Sir Lawrence Guillemard (1920–1926), but paid no heed to the conditions of the Indian masses.[63] They were reluctant to identify themselves with the socially depressed and impoverished Indians and concerned themselves only with issues and problems relevant to their own community. The Ceylon Tamils had their own associations and places of worship to cater for the activities of the community[64] and they even petitioned the government that they be enumerated separately as Ceylon Tamils.[65] The sense of class superiority certainly contributed towards alienating the two communities although these feelings were never sufficiently intense to give rise to physical conflicts comparable to the

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61. *Malayan Union File 207/47*, Vol. 11. Report of the Commissioner for Labour, Kulim, 20 March 1947 (Arkib Negara, Kuaal Lumpur). It was reported that A.M. Samy, the leader of the Thondar Padai (Volunteer Corps), a lower class movement united by Tamil chauvinism and inculcated with reformist ideas, murdered a Ceylon Tamil conductor, S. Karthigesu, in December 1941. Samy's relationship with the Labour Department in Kulim was strained because the Assistant Labour Inspector for the district was a Ceylon Tamil. *[Malayan Union File 207/47*, Vol. 11, Confidential Report of the Deputy Commissioner for Labour, Kedah, 29 March 1947 (Arkib Negara, Kuala Lumpur)].

62. *The Indian*, 6 February 1937, p.11.

63. R. Ampalavanar, *The Indian Minority and Political Change in Malaya, 1945–1957* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.6; W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (1967), pp.114–118.

64. See Chapter Five.

65. *Memorandum in Connection with the Proposed Decennial Census of Population in British Malaya, 1940* (Submitted by various Ceylonese Associations).

isolated but violent outbursts of the Sino-Malay hostilities.[66] The sense of separateness between the Indians and Ceylon Tamils was reflected in all their relationship, especially in their attitude to inter-marriage.

What added insult to injury was the Jaffnese domination of official appointments to represent Indians and Ceylonese on the various official boards and committees. Relations with the urban Indians, in particular, were strained, though it was obvious that the British only used the Ceylon Tamils to hit out at the radical Indian leadership that was emerging at that time. This Indo-Ceylonese problem which had its origins in the beginning of the century was openly discussed in the various dailies during the 1920s and came to a peak in the 1930s when Indian leaders discussed the relations of the Ceylonese vis-a-vis the Indians with dignitaries from India like V.S.S. Sastri[67] and Pandit J. Nehru.[68]

When at the inaugural meeting of the MIC in 1946 the question of admitting Ceylonese was raised by John Thivy (then President of MIC) he blamed the British for dividing the Indians and Ceylon Tamils in Malaya and pointed out to the existence of Ceylon Tamils, both as members and office bearers, in the Indian National Congress in India and the Ceylon Indian Congress in Ceylon. Indeed, in Malaysia well, a number of Ceylon Tamils had and were actively involved in MIC and other Indian organisations. Notable among them were S. Ratnam (the first secretary of MIC), Swami Satyananda (founder member of MIC and Working Committee member in 1946) and N.T.R. Singam (President of Selangor Regional Indian Congress in 1949). Arguing on the principle that "the destinies of Ceylon and India are inextricably woven together"[69] and that sooner or later Ceylon would merge with India, John Thivy urged members of the MIC to welcome "every Ceylonese who, aware of his past ties and future destiny, identities himself with the oneness of the Indian race, politically, socially, economically and culturally."[70] But there was a general reluctance among members of MIC.[71] Representatives from Singapore commented with

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66. On Sino-Malay hostilities, refer *Despatches, British Military Administration (Malaya) to Secretary of State for Colonies, 7 March 1946,* C.O. 537/1580.

67. *The Indian*, 16 January 1937, p.3.

68. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1937, p.2.

69. *Indian Daily Mail*, 24 June 1947; *Malaya Tribune*, 25 June 1947.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Indian Daily Mail* (Editorial), 28 June 1947; *Tamil Nesan* (Editorial), 6 August 1947. Thivy's advice was criticised as unsound.

sarcasm, at the Working Committee meeting of MIC in August 1947, that every Ceylon Tamil who wished to join the MIC should give a written undertaking that they were prepared to lose their Ceylonese identity and take an oath that they were Indians.[72] The leading critic of Ceylon Tamil membership in MIC appears to have been R. Jumabhoy, the President of Singapore Regional Indian Congress, who wanted the MIC to remain exclusively for Indians.[73] It is clear however, that majority opposition to the inclusion of the Ceylon Tamils into the MIC was based on resentment of the social discrimination and seclusiveness of Ceylon Tamils themselves and their persistence in maintaining a separate identity.

It was in the course of the prevailing controversies pertaining to whether or not to include Ceylonese into the MIC that the Ceylonese came out openly to express their own stand on this issue. The President of the Ceylon Federation of Malaya, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, categorically stated that the Ceylonese in Malaya had already obtained recognition from the Government as a distinct minority community, as for instance in the Census Report of 1947, and this had given him reason to believe that they would, in due course, be granted separate representation when independence came. Hence he asked John Thivy, the President of MIC to quit bothering about admitting Ceylonese into the MIC.[74] In fact, they soon gained separate representation when, in accordance with the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948, a member of the community, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, was appointed to the Federal Legislative Council. Later in March 1951 the Member System, based on racial representation was introduced to head the various ministries with the aim of providing administrative experience to the future leaders. The British appointed, apart from R. Ramani to represent the Indians, a Ceylonese representative, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, amongst twelve other memebrs.[75] Thuraisingham was appointed as Member for Education and,

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72. *Jananayakam*, 4 August 1947. This view was vehemently opposed by other Working Committee memebrs.

73. *Tamil Nesan*, 17 October 1947; 13 March 1948 and 24 May 1948.

74. *Malaya Tribune*, 25 June 1947; *Tamil Nesan*, 26 June 1947.

75. There were 6 Europeans, 3 Malays, 1 Chinese and 1 Ceylonese. An Indian was not included because R. Ramani declined the offer for personal and political reasons. *(Indian Daily Mail*, 14 March 1951). R. Ramani was offered the appointment as President of Federation of Indian Organisations (FIO) at a time when MIC, FIO and Malayan Indian Association were fighting over the issue of which was the representative of Indian community. Ramani's acceptance would have led to severe criticism. The Indian community criticised Government that

like the other representatives on the Member System, he gained considerable experience in policy making.

In the meantime, while special Indo-Ceylonese political cooperation suffered a complete breakdown, wider political developments in the country forced the MIC to adopt a broader perspective. In May 1949 when UMNO under Dato Onn decided to discard communal identity by extending membership to non-Malay Federal citizens, MIC followed suit. The then President of MIC, Budd Singh, initiated a move in June 1949 to change the constitution of the MIC, first, to restrict its membership to Indians who regarded Malaya as their real home and object of loyalty, and second, to open membership to non-Indians including Pakistanis and Ceylonese.[76] To emphasize the national character of the organisation he even suggested that it be called the Malayan National Indian Congress. Although the proposal to restrict membership to citizens (Malayan Indians) brought opposition from the lower ranks of leadership, it won support from certain other quarters, especially the Selangor Regional Indian Congress whose president, N.T.R. Singham, a Ceylon Tamil, saw in the new policy room for inter-communal cooperation between the Ceylonese and Indians. The call to admit members of other communities of Indian ethnic origin began to gain currency.[77] It was at this juncture, in October 1952, that the MIC accepted non-Indians as associate members.[78] By 1953 there were about one thousand associate members in the MIC, of which the Ceylonese constituted a good pro portion.

The formation of the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) by Dato Onn, in September 1951, was an important political development in Malaya. It aimed at fostering a non-communal approach to Malayan politics and, thus, served to appease the non-Malay communities who were wary of UMNO's communal

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another person could have been offered the appointment. *(Indian Daily Mail*, 4 July 1951). In October 1953 the Member System was expanded and, again, the Indians were not appointed. It was only after the five Indian Councillors of the Federal Legislative Council representing various professions resigned in October 1953 and much criticism from the community that the Government finally appointed two Indians in December 1953. *(Sunday Times*, 11 October 1953; *MIC Annual Report 1953–54).*

76. *Indian Daily Mail*, 21 June 1949.

77. *Indian Daily Mail*, 27 April 1950.

78. *Malay Mail, Straits Times, Tamil Nesan*, 27 October 1952.

stand on political issues. Through the IMP Dato Onn hoped to unite the entire settled population in Malaya, introduce a common citizenship, lessen the authority of the Sultans and fight for the admission of Chinese and Indians into the administrative service in which the Malays had hitherto been accorded a privileged position by the British. The non-communal programme of the IMP attracted about thirty of the seventy-five members of the Federal Legislative Council who joined the new party.[79] The Malays, on the whole, however, saw it as an attempt to erode their special position and UMNO was quick to expel those who became members of IMP, though at the time several members of the MIC, the MCA and the Ceylon Federation of Malaya held dual memberships. These parties, especially the MIC and the Ceylon Federation, despite deep seated rivalries between them, saw the wisdom of supporting a non-communal approach to politics in Malaya.

On February 1952 the first Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections was held. The MCA–UMNO which had formed an Alliance contested on a communal basis, while the IMP and Labour Party campaigned on a non-communal platform. The IMP had the backing both of MIC and the Ceylon Federation, under K.L. Devaser and E.E.C. Thuraisingham,[80] respectively, as both the leaders were professed non-communalists although providing leadership for communal parties. Earlier, in October 1951, the All Malaya Indian Congress Committee had met and reiterated the decision to contest on a non-communal basis. They had urged that candidates be selected on their individual capacity and not on a communal basis.[81] MIC supported its candidates provided they stood on the IMP ticket for the elections. The President of the MIC assured that the party would encourage its members in Kuala Lumpur to register as voters to support IMP and the president himself stood on an IMP ticket.[82] Ceylon Tamils who stood on the IMP ticket included Mrs. Devaki Krishnan, who was married to an Indian Tamil, and T. Rajendra.[83] Other Ceylon Tamils who stood for the elections included S.C.E. Singham as the only independent candidate and Mr. S. Karalasingham as member of the Labour Party. Of the twelve seats contested

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79. K.J. Ratnam, *Communalism and Political Press in Malaya*, p.159

80. E.E.C. Thuraisingham was the Vice President of IMP.

81. *Indian Daily Mail*, 24 October 1951; *Straits Times*, 24 October 1951.

82. *Straits Times*, 24 August 1951.

83. The IMP fielded 12 candidates (2 Malays, 4 Chinese, 3 Indians, 2 Ceylonese and 1 Eurasian).

the UMNO–MCA Alliance won nine seats, the IMP won two and the remaining seat went to the Independent candidate. Of the Ceylon Tamils, only S.C.E. Singham and Mrs. Devaki Krishnan won the municipal elections.[84] The MIC's and Ceylon Federation's failure to bury their differences while supporting the non-communal stand of the IMP was tantamount to hypocrisy and appears to have determined S.C.E. Singham's independent stand.

IMP's inability to win the Municipal elections disheartened Dato Onn who attributed the failure to lack of Chinese support. Chinese leaders like H.S. Lee criticised the IMP's choice of Indians and Ceylonese to stand in predominantly Chinese areas[85] while others began to doubt the leadership of Dato Onn who could hardly command the support of his own people. In fact, the outcome of the elections confirmed the opinion of the Chinese that while non-communal politics was laudable in principle, elections at grass roots level should be fought on a communal platform. Many Chinese notably Dato Tan Cheng Lock and H.S. Lee returned to the MCA.[86] While the Chinese withdrew from IMP, the Indians and Ceylonese stood behind the party. Thus, by the end of 1952, Indians and Ceylonese constituted the majority of IMP members. Having failed to stimulate non-communal politics and, disappointed by Chinese attitudes, Dato Onn dissolved the IMP in 1953. With the approach of general elections in 1955 Dato Onn formed the Party Negara and thereafter championed Malay communal demands to establish Malay supremacy.[87]

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84. *Straits Times*, 18 February 1952. The other IMP candidate was K.L. Devaser.

85. *Tan Cheng Lock Papers*. Speech by H.S. Lee on 15 February 1952 at the Chinese Assembly Hall, Kuala Lumpur.

86. Prior to the formation of IMP, Dato Onn had assured himself of the support of the Chinese, and Indian community leaders, notably Dato Tan Cheng Lock, P.P. Narayanan (who led trade unionism), G.V. Thaver (President of Malayan Indian Association), K.L. Devaser (MIC), Dr. Samuel (Federation of Indian Organisations) and E.E.C. Thuraisingham (Ceylon Federation of Malaya).

87. *Straits Times*, 6 July 1955; *Straits Times* (Editorial), 7 July 1955. With regard to immigration Dato Onn made a bold statement that "if we do not want the Chinese to outnumber the Malays in this country, we must encourage more Indonesians to come here. The Indonesians – our history tells us – are our blood-brothers." Party Negara could not win over extensive Malay support because the Malay community was already divided by the extreme communalism of the Pan Malayan Islamic Party and the inter-communal policies of UMNO.

While E.E.C. Thuraisingham had, on the one hand, gained the confidence of the British and become an intimate friend of Dato Onn Jaafar, on the other had, he gradually lost the support of some of his party members. This was partly because his leadership in the Ceylon Federation smacked of dictatorial powers. It led to serious internal rivalry and general dissatisfaction among members. They alleged that he was "not working for the welfare of the community."[88] His arbitrary method of nominating Ceylonese to the State Councils, and failure to hold annual elections for office within the party in 1950 and 1951, angered some of the members. Under R.P.S. Rajasooria, a prominent Kuala Lumpur lawyer, they proposed in March 1952, to pass a vote of no confidence against Thuraisingham.[89] However, before the scheduled meeting, Thuraisingham successfully persuaded Rajasooria to withdraw his opposition and pass a vote of confidence in his leadership. Thuraisingham continued to lead the party.[90] General dissatisfaction of Thuraisingham's leadership led to the Ceylon Association of Selangor, a social organisation formed in the pre-war days, assuming in the 1950s a new political role under M.W. Navaratnam.[91] The latter's stand on non-communal politics in 1954 indicated the effort of the Ceylon Association of Selangor to accomodate to wider political developments.[92]

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88. *Tamil Nesan*, 25 March 1952.

89. *Straits Times*, 24 March 1952. R.P.S. Rajasooria claimed to have the support of 330 members out of 1104 members of the Ceylon Federation. He complained that there were no representatives of Selangor branch of the Ceylon Federation being appointed to the Selangor State Council. Nominations made by the Selangor Branch committee were blocked by E.E.C. Thuraisingham.

90. It was said by interviewees who declined to be named that E.E.C. Thuraisingham originated from Karaitivu in Jaffna and was the President of the Karainagar Union in Malaya. This union looked after the interests of the Jaffna Tamils in Malaya who came from Karaitivu. The membership of the Ceylon Federation also largely comprised Ceylon Tamils from Karaitivu. As such Thuraisingham was able to win party elections by capitalising on this primordial sentiment.

91. *Malayan Ceylonese Congress Annual Publication*, 1967, p.30.

92. *Straits Times*, 26 October 1954.

7.5 The Intra-Communal Rift

In the meantime, during the course of the crisis for political identity within the nation, the Ceylon Tamil community was divided between two schools of opinion as expressed by E.E.C. Thuraisingham and S. Chelvasingham MacIntyre,[93] based on their respective allegiance to the political views of Dato Onn Jaafar and Tunku Abdul Rahman respectively. MacIntyre, though not representing any Ceylonese political organisation, represented the Ceylonese as a whole in the Johore State Council (since 1949) and Batu Pahat Town Board (since 1948). He favoured an inter-communalistic approach by urging the Ceylonese to sink or swim with the UMNO.[94] On the other hand, E.E.C. Thuraisingham as well as M.W. Navaratnam, though serving as communal leaders in the Ceylon Federation of Malaya and Ceylon Association of Selangor, respectively, advocated a non-communalistic approach. E.E.C. Thuraisingham had been closely aligned with Dato Onn in the IMP struggle to create non-communalistic politics in Malaya and he saw in such an approach the advantage for Ceylonese being selected to contest elections. M.W. Navaratnam's stand on non-communal politics was obvious when he accused the MIC of selling the honour of the Indians for a "mess of pottage" by deciding to join the Alliance in 1954.[95]

S.C. MacIntyre's stand could not be discounted as an individual's opinion. As the Ceylonese representative in the Johore State Council and leader of the Central Council of Ceylonese Associations of Johore he enjoyed some measure of prestige in the community, though occasionally he was obliged to explain his less conservative political views to the Association. As an associate member of UMNO, he was not averse to Malay patronate. His support for the State Nationality Bill[96] in 1951, the 1954 Minority Report[97] drawn up by Tunku Abdul Rahman for introducing elections to the Federal Legislative Council, and his

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93. Both the Ceylonese leaders were lawyers, E.E.C. Thuraisingham's first wife was a cousin of S.C. MacIntyre.

94. *Straits Times*, 25 July 1956. He told a gathering of about 200 Ceylonese representatives who met to draft a memorandum to be submitted to the Commonwealth Constitutional Commission that they should toe the line of UMNO.

95. *Straits Times*, 26 October 1954. K.L. Devaser, the President of MIC retorted by asking M.W. Navaratnam to refrain from speaking on behalf of Indians and concentrate on Ceylonese affairs.

96. The State Nationality Bill was introduced in 1951 to enable members of the immigrant races living in the Federation to acquire Federal citizenship through State nationality.

97. This report is discussed in the later part of this section.

close association with Johore UMNO leaders like Dato Suleiman bin Dato Abdul Rahman (a magistrate who later won the Johore Bahru seat against Dato Onn in the 1955 elections), gave MacIntyre ample opportunity to develop a close relationship with the Tunku, President of the UMNO. He was selected to contest the Johore State Council elections in Batu Pahat constituency in October 1954 and won, in the face of an unsuccessful attempt by the Ceylonese under E.E.C. Thuraisingham to discourage him from contesting on an Alliance ticket.[98] MacIntyre's popularity in the constituency was evident because of his efforts, both in the State and Town Councils, for matters pertaining to national and non-communal issues.[99] During the course of the Federal elections in 1955 in which MacIntyre contested in the Batu Pahat constituency the Tunku came personally to Batu Pahat and travelled to remote settlements assisting the former in his election campaign. This personal touch by the President of the UMNO to the election campaign overcame any efforts by rival Ceylon Tamil leaders to undermine his popularity.[100]

MacIntyre's refusal to identify with the Ceylon Federation of Malaya's stand on non-communal politics did not incur the wrath of a large section of the Ceylonese community. In fact, after 1955 he had the support of the Ceylon Association of Selangor and he continued to enjoy the favour of the Tunku for his pro-UMNO attitude. When independence came in 1957 with the Tunku at the helm, he was appointed the first Malayan High Commissioner to India, Ceylon and Nepal. He served in this capacity from October 1957 to September 1964, and, on his return to Malaya, was appointed a Federal Judge.

On the other hand, E.E.C. Thuraisingham was the President of a party representing Ceylonese and, as such, his views needed the approval of the community. His non-communal stand in Malayan politics must have also won the

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98. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane*, p.169.

99. Of the 27,323 registered voters in the Batu Pahat constituency, 530 were Indians, 5676 were Chinese and the rest Malays. Of the 21,685 valid votes, MacIntyre polled 18,968 votes while his sole opponent, a Malay representing Party Negara, polled only 2717 votes.

100. *Straits Times*, 25 October 1954. M.W. Navaratnam, President of Ceylon Association of Selangor is alleged to have said that the Alliance cannot fully claim to be representative of the popular vote, implying that MacIntyre was not elected by popular vote in the 1954 State Council elections for Batu Pahat constituency. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane*, p.173.E.E.C. Thuraisingham addressed a rally in Batu Pahat just before the 1955 elections when he told the audience that S.C. MacIntyre was disowned by the community that he joined the UMNO.

sentiments of the British as indicated in the various appointments granted to him by the government. He was appointed to the Malayan Union Advisory Council in May 1947, and to the Federal Legislative Council in February 1948. In 1949 he was appointed Chairman of the Communities Liaison Committee (formed to ease Sino-Malay relations in Malaya), and in 1951, was made a Member for Education in the pre-independence Cabinet and later, was knighted by the British Crown. In contrast, S.C.MacIntyre's appointments were all granted by UMNO leaders. E.E.C. Thuraisingham's political strength was also drawn from his friendship with Dato Onn Jaafar. A British official noted that their friendship "was and is a political one and either party to it would be quite prepared to jettison the other at any advantageous time."[101] He further added that he saw in Thuraisingham "an unusual mixture of shrewdness and naivety."[102] But in E.E.C. Thuraisingham the Ceylon Tamil community found a leader who protected their minority interests and gave expression to their traditional stand to support whichever government was in power. The British, too, depended on the Ceylonese for continued loyalty and support. Governor Gent in his speech at the Ceylon Independence Day celebrations held in Kuala Lumpur on 10th February 1948, stated that he counted on the support of the Ceylonese "to ensure that progress towards self-government in Malaya is as smooth as it had been in Ceylon."[103]

Thuraisingham was particularly careful in nurturing the position of the Ceylon Tamils as a minority community. In 1953, for example, when the Elections Committee was appointed to consider the question of elections to the Federal Legislative Council he successfully sought nominated seats for minorities. The test for qualification was, according to the Government, ". . . whether the community in question was of sufficient size and importance to the life of the country as a whole to merit some representation in Council, but not so numerous, widespread and politically active as to ensure that its voting power must be taken into account by all political parties."[104] Obviously, the Ceylonese community met the above qualification.[105]

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101. *Letter from Whitfield, Director of Education, Malaya to Sir C. Cox, 6 April 1952.* C.O. 1022/182.

102. *Ibid.*

103. *Malay Mail*, 11 February 1948.

104. *Report of Election Committee*, 1953, p.6.

105. The other minorities were Eurasians and Aborigines.

But more important than the question and status of minorities was the composition of the Federal Legislative Council which engendered a constitutional crisis in the pre-election period. The Elections Committee submitted a Majority and Minority Report on the number of elected seats in Council. The Majority Report was signed by Dato Onn Jaafar and two Ceylon Tamils, E.E.C. Thuraisingham and Dr. A.E. Duraisamy as members of the Elections Committee. It recommended forty-four elected and forty-eight nominated seats as opposed to the Minority Report signed by UMNO–MCA members under Tunku Abdul Rahman, which proposed a Council of one hundred seats of which three-fifths were to be elected. It was apparent that Dato Onn signed the Majority Report for fear that Malay interests would be swamped by the Chinese if electoral rights were conceded indiscriminately to the non-Malays. The Ceylon Tamil members, on the other hand, supported it as provision for nominated seats was indispensible to ensure their status as a minority community. With a population of twenty thousand they could hardly demand recognition as a political party, let alone win a seat in any constituency. S.C. MacIntyre, the only Ceylon Tamil to win the 1955 general elections, did so only because he stood as an UMNO candidate with the personal backing of Tunku Abdul Rahman. Members of the Minority Report forced the hands of the British by asking all Alliance candidates in Federal, State, Municipal and Town Councils to resign. The British were thus forced to come to terms with the proposers of the Minority Report. Report.

The national elections in 1955 in many ways marked a turning point for the Ceylon Tamils who realised their political impotence as a separate communal group pursuing a non-communal approach. It made them realise which political axe to grind thereafter to ensure themselves a political status in independent Malaya. The elections showed that either extreme communalism or non-communalism did not hold water in multi-racial Malaya. What appeared feasible was inter-communal politics where each communal party cooperated with the other. The Alliance, comprising the UMNO, MCA and MIC, which won fifty-one out of fifty-two seats contested was an indication of this trend. While the Party Negara and Dato Onn went into political oblivion the Ceylonese made overtures to the Alliance.

In December 1955, following the elections, the Ceylon Association of Selangor gave a tea party in Kuala Lumpur in honour of the Tunku as Chief Minister and S.C. MacIntyre, the newly-elected Ceylon Tamil in the Federal Legislative Council. Members of the Ceylon Federation and the leader of the rival organisation, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, were not invited. Thuraisingham, too, did a complete **volte face**. Realising that Malaya was on the verge of independence and that the Ceylonese need no longer concern themselves anymore about

their image in the eyes of the British, he began to "out-champion the champion" by requesting that Tunku Abdul Rahman's demand for independence by 31 August 1957 to be brought forward to 1 January 1957. Clearly, the earlier actions and affiliations of the Ceylon Tamil leaders in support of non-communal politics had hurt the feelings of the Tunku whose displeasure with the Ceylon Federation was expressed when he refused an invitation by E.E.C. Thuraisingham to a farewell party in honour of the **Merdeka** (independence) mission.[106]

In early August 1957, with independence approaching the Ceylon Tamils expressed, too late in the day, the desire to join Alliance. Since intra-communal cooperation was fundamental to the working of the new political formula, the Tunku sagaciously demanded the reconciliation of the Ceylon Federation and the Ceylon Association of Selangor as a pre-requisite for partnership within the Alliance.[107] However, Thuraisingham who never recognised the Ceylon Association of Selangor as a political party, did not initiate any efforts at reconciliation with it. As far as he was concerned the Ceylon Federation was the only political party for the Ceylonese. Paradoxically, despite the prominent participation of Ceylon Tamil leaders in national politics and their rapport with Malay politicians, membership of these organisations was small.[108] The majority of Ceylonese remained politically apathetic and the leadership which had never treated communal politics seriously was unable to create the necessary solidarity, leave alone bury their own personal differences. The two organisations remained apart, thus depriving the community of the singular opportunity to become politically viable by qualifying for membership in the ruling party. Internal divisions within the community continued till 1958 when some Ceylonese felt the need to establish a separate political organisation. Members of the Ceylon Association of Selangor met, in January 1958, under M.W. Navaratnam and after much deliberation assumed a political status and changed its name to

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106. S.C. MacIntyre, *Through Memory Lane*, p.177. E.E.C. Thuraisingham later approached S.C. MacIntyre to use his influence to persuade the Tunku to accept the invitation which the latter did.

107. R. Ampalavanar, *The Indian Minority and Political Change in Malaya, 1945–1957* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1981), p.178, footnote 59 (based on the author's interview with the late E.E.C. Thuraisingham on 20 February 1975).

108. *Ceylon Federation of Malaya, PPM 451/49; Malayan Ceylonese Congress, PPM 66/58* (Registrar of Societies, Kuala Lumpur). In 1958 the Ceylon Federation had 1,200 members and the Ceylon Association of Selangor had 400 members.

the Malayan Ceylonese Congress, but showed a dismal membership of 26 which rose, in 1961, to 295. Not surprisingly, it failed to make any significant impact and Ceylonese political participation dissolved into inter-party rivalry in the post–1965 period.

A final but totally feeble effort was made in October 1966 by the Malayan Ceylonese Congress (MCC) as the only political party representing the Ceylonese, to increase its membership with a view to seek membership within the Alliance. The rival organisation under Thuraisingham convened a meeting, in September 1967, called the Malaysian Ceylonese Council of Joint Action, to ascertain the wishes of the Ceylonese about joining the Alliance. This action was construed by the MCC as an act of sabotage by the CFM to prevent the former from gaining membership into Alliance. In an attempt to prevent the registration of the new political body, the MCC wrote to the Registrar of Societies to take action against the office bearers of the new organisation on the grounds that they were largely government servants.[109] Their ploy was successful; the Malaysian Ceylonese Council of Joint Action was not registered and neither the MCC nor the CFM gained entry into the ruling party.

Having failed to make the right calculation and compromises, the Ceylon Tamil community faded into political oblivion. The majority turned their attention to improving their careers while maintaining some conscious communal solidarity through affiliating themselves with the MCC and the CFM which became largely apolitical. They believed that their primary concern should be to seek a living and take advantage of any opportunities available to improve themselves materially. Calculating that anti-government activities were not conducive to their personal and material well-being, the majority of Ceylon Tamils were placid and chose to cooperate than oppose the government or ruling party. Of the few who took an interest in politics only a negligible number buried communal differences and joined the Malayan Indian Congress while a handful crossed communal barriers to become members of ideologically-based parties like the Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) and the Labour Party.

7.6 Participation in Ideology-based Politics

While the political views of Thuraisingham and MacIntyre were closely related to the ideologies of the Malay leaders based on communal and inter-communal approaches, their successors among the Ceylon Tamils who had lost

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109. *Malayan Ceylonese Congress File, PPM 66/58* (Registrar of Societies, Kuala Lumpur).

their communal base within the existing political framework aligned themselves to inter-communal and ideologically-based party. The Peoples' Progressive Party and the Labour Party had predominantly Chinese and Indian support. In 1957 the Labour Party formed an alliance with Party Rakyat (predominantly Malay membership) and became the Socialist Front. It gained control of George Town Municipality in Penang and D.S. Ramanathan, a Ceylon Tamil, was appointed Mayor of Penang in 1961.[110] However, he switched over to the Alliance Party in 1964, by becoming a member of the Alliance Direct Membership Organisation.[111] But the two Ceylon Tamil leaders of the Peoples' Progressive Party who acquired national prominence through their criticism of government policies remained opposition politicians till their death.

Sons of S. Seenivasagam, a lawyer and former Perak State Councillor, D.R. Seenivasagam and S.P. Seenivasagam were also lawyers and came to public recognition through their political role in voicing the dissatisfaction of the predominantly Chinese community in Ipoh, Perak. Issues like language and education had often been a concern of the Chinese community in Malaya but, in the 1955 elections, with Malaya on the throes of independence, these issues had been overwhelmed by the independence struggle championed by the Alliance party. Initially, like the Malays, the Chinese in Ipoh, too, voted along party and not communal lines as attested by the Alliance victory there in 1955 as elsewhere. However, the situation changed by the time the by-elections took place in 1956 in Ipoh when communal issues had undermined the roots of cooperation between the Chinese and Malays. This was generally true in all parts of Malaya and the language issue and educational policies in general, became issues of discontentment among the Chinese who expected far better benefits by electing an Alliance government to power.[112] The Chinese in Ipoh saw in the highly vociferous Peoples' Progressive Party, led by D.R. Seeni-

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110. The Socialist Front won 14 out of 15 seats contested, only one going to the Alliance. The Front was in some respect an inter-communal alliance attempting to embrace all communities but it often faced the difficult task of uniting the Malay peasantry and the non-Malay industrial working class. The inability of the leadership to satisfy communal demands was reflected in the Front's divided leadership. D.S. Ramanathan, President of the Penang Teachers' Union, became President of the Penang Labour Party in 1955.

111. Popularly known as ADMO it was the fourth component of the Alliance. It admitted citizens who were not members of the UMNO, MCA or MIC so that they could become members of the Alliance party.

112. By 1959 the Alliance proportion of votes had fallen from 79.6% (in 1955) to 51.8%.

vasagam, a mouthpiece to air their grievances. By playing up the Chinese dissatisfaction with the policies of the Alliance government Seenivasagam emerged victorious in the same constituency where he had earlier lost his election deposit.

D.R. Seenivasagam (commonly referred to as Mr. S. in the newspaper headlines) established himself as the relentless gadfly of the Alliance, "incessantly claiming the limelight with some new ploy to tease or torment them.."[113] The People's Progressive Party had often stated in unequivocal terms that its role was not to replace the government but to provide steady constructive criticisms as a **bona fide** opposition. With his gift for oratory and self-dramatisation, D.R. Seenivasagam converted the Legislative Council, until then generally calm, "into a sounding board off which he bounced a continuous flow of eloquent aspersions against the Alliance."[114]

The Chinese, who provided the upper echelon leadership and membership, gave the P.P.P. enormous support which convinced the leaders of the need to broaden its base by opening up branches in other parts of Perak with a view to increasing the membership.[115] The party which stood for equal rights and privileges for non-Malays was particularly popular in areas with a high concentration of Chinese, such as Ipoh and Menglembu in Perak. D.R. Seenivasagam was joined by his brother, S.P. Seenivasagam, in the P.P.P. and they won comfortably in the 1959 elections and repeated the success, again, in 1964.

As opposed to the Pan Malayan Islamic Party which represented Malay communalism, the Peoples' Progressive Party championed and dedicated itself to win equal rights and privileges for all communities. D.R. Seenivasagam, in a party broadcast insisted that "there should be no discrimination on grounds of race or religion."[116] Ideologically it was inclined to socialism but its exploitation of Chinese dissatisfaction and popular support from the community cast

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113. W.A. Hanna, *Sequel to Colonialism* (New York, American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1957), p.62.

114. *Ibid.*, p.63. D.R. Seenivasagam is often credited for having taken an Alliance government Education Minister, Abdul Rahman Yaakob, to court and caused his resignation.

115. Though it started as the Perak Progressive Party, it changed its name to Peoples' Progressive Party to gain national prominence. However, it remained basically a Perak party.

116. *Straits Times*, 2 August 1959.

the shadow of non-Malay communalism on the party. Thus, a leading newspaper aptly commented that the party had "twanged hard at the chord of Chinese sensibilities and emotions."[117] There is little doubt that the popularity and success of the party was due largely to the brothers. They, nonetheless, remained the Ceylon Tamil community's only and greatest contributon to opposition politics in the Malayan political arena.

In assessing the Ceylon Tamil community's participaton in Malayan politics, one is bound to conclude that, invariably, practical considerations determined their political behaviour. This is because the Ceylon Tamils were sure of their existence as a viable ethnic group but often uncertain as to their political future. So long as the British were in power the community felt protected, but when signs of British departure became imminent the Ceylon Tamils wanted their existence felt by the other communities so as to claim for themselves a political status within independent Malaya. Facilitated by education and a realisation of their minority status, they made efforts to project themselves as a different ethnic group not to be mistakenly lumped together with the Indians. This was obvious in their struggle to gain separate representations on the various town, state and federal official bodies. Similarly, their stand on political issues bordered on pragmatism. They recognised what was advantageous for the community in their support of non-communal party politics and for minority representation in the Federal Legislative Council.

Moreover, despite their minority status the community, because of its middle class status and the professional achievement of individuals, produced politically vocal and socially conscious leaders like J.R. Vethavanam, E.E.C. Thuraisingham, S.C. MacIntyre and the Seenivasagam brothers, who earned for the community public attention somewhat disproportionate to its size.

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117. *Straits Times*, 24 August 1959.

RETROSPECT

As an immigrant community the Ceylon Tamils were concerned, in the first instance, with communal identity which was maintained through intra-ethnic marriages and the observance of cultural norms. The Ceylon-born generation, especially those who came to Malaya before 1900, were typical 'birds of passage' who worked in Malaya all their lives, retired and returned to their native village in Jaffna in the pre- and immediate post-war years. Despite the various advantages they had in Malaya, as compared to Ceylon, these early Jaffnese nurtured a desire to return to their homeland. Their attachment to their birth-place was proverbial. A writer on the history of Jaffna wrote that:[1]

> Go where he may in search of wealth and live where he may for the time being, even in the fairest and the most favoured of lands he feels himself but a sojourner; and sooner or later he follows his heart back to home, to spend his last days in those well-remembered spots and among the friends of his earliest love.

As such the pride and dignity of being a true Jaffnese when he returned home overwhelmed him and prevented from 'blemishing' the family honour through intermarriage with non-Jaffnese. The family and the ethnic community which served as the critical context of his daily living thrust upon him the implicit rule of keeping to tradition.

The participation of these Jaffnese in their own socio-cultural activities and their patronage of ethnic institutions reduced the chances of establishing inter-personal relations across ethnic boundaries. The use of their own dialects when they met fellow Jaffnese with whom they exchanged views about developments in Ceylon or Jaffna, in particular, reminded these immigrants of their common past, their cultural characteristics, their motive for migration and their distinct identity. The fact that they always nurtured a desire to return to Jaffna on retirement reminded them of a responsibility to preserve ethnic purity through strict observance of cultural norms.

Further, this phase of immigrants undertook migration to raise the family's socio-economic status back home, evident in the amount of remittances to

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1. C. Rasanayagam, *Ancient Jaffna* (Madras, Everymans Publishers Ltd., 1926), p.xix.

Jaffna, and not for the immigrant's immediate gratification in Malaya. They came with the firm intention of returning home to enjoy the fruits of their labour in retirement. These Jaffnese had a feeling of belonging to the Jaffna village and district where they were born and reared, which they showed by their readiness to provide financial support through the respective village unions in Malaya. They spent a major part of their life striving in Malaya for economic betterment and enhancing their social status, but the full enjoyment and final achievement of their objectives was to be in their place of origin. This was evident in the material comforts they enjoyed and the respect they commanded in Jaffna after their return from Malaya. The brick houses that these Malayan pensioners lived in and their leadership of the various village and district organisations are testimony of their post-retirement style of life.[2]

The concern about the preservation of their distinct identity has been present among most groups that migrated to a different country or environment. The different communities in America like the Chinese, Italians, Greeks, Sicilians and Poles all preserved their separate identity. Even in the inter-island migration in Indonesia it was found that groups "more often than not kept together and try to preserve as much as possible of their common cultural heritage."[3] Migrant groups commonly try to achieve a kind of integration in the new society by participating in its mainstream development, but without losing their identity as a group. Within the totality of the receiving society

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2. For example, S. Tilliampalam (retired Clerk of Works, Malayan Railways) was member of Moolai Cooperative Hospital, Jaffna and Director of Malaya Life Assurance Company Ltd., Jaffna; S. Seenivasagam (retired Financial Assistant, Forestry Head-quarters, Kuala Lumpur) was Manager of Hindu Mixed Tamil School of Thirunelvely, Jaffna and Director of Malaya Life Assurance Co. Ltd.; A. Nagalingam (retired Chief Clerk, Medical Department, Kuala Pilah) was President of Rural Development Society, Karainagar North and Vice-President of Saiva Maha Sabai, Karainagar, Jaffna; V. Saravanamuthu (retired Office Assistant, Chief Secretary's Office, Kuala Lumpur) was Treasurer of Tellippalai Cooperative Hospital and Chairman of Mavai Kollankalady Vinayagar Cooperative Stores Society, Jaffna; R. Nagaratnam (retired Financial Assistant, Public Works Department, Negri Sembilan) was President of Akkarayar Kulam Multipurpose Cooperative Societies and South Yalpanam Multipurpose Cooperative Societies Union, President of Kopay South East Rural Development Society, Jaffna and Manager of Sandilipay English School, Jaffna. *Malayan Ceylonese Association Silver Jubilee Souvenir* (Jaffna, 1962), pp.44–73.

3. W.F. Wertheim, *East West Parallels* (The Hague, W.Van Hoeve Ltd., 1964), p.201.

they came to occupy a certain position in accordance with their economic status and potential strength.

In the case of the Jaffnese who came to Malaya they mainly depended for greater job opportunities on the acceptance of the colonial government and not so much on the goodwill of the host society. They came to Malaya with little in the way of capital or special skills but they had secular education which solved the problem of making a living. Government employment became for them what manual labour was to the South Indians and peddling was to the Chinese. Government employment did not need much expertise, capital or powerful connections, and, as well as this, the Malayan government welcomed the arrival of English-educated immigrants to fill a large number of posts in the government departments. Thus, the Jaffnese did not find the necessity to deny parochial ethnic allegiances. In fact, they undertook conscious efforts to strengthen ethnic solidarity, especially in the pre-World War Two period, so as to maintain their distinct identity and improve the image of the community. Through organisational activities they brought to the community the awareness and appreciation of cultural origins, of a moral commitment and social responsibility to the group. The strength of this commitment to preserve their cultural and social heritage gave them the vitality in their struggle for existence and for economic advancement. Their leaders and parents, too, infused in them the conviction to attain success because these early immigrants had a definite ideal, not only to make a success out of every individual Jaffnese but, explicitly, to provide a foundation upon which to build an ideal Jaffnese society within the framework of a Malayan nation.

In the case of the Chinese in Malaya the British were so impressed by the high degree of communal organisation that they left the Chinese virtually alone to manage their own affairs.[4] Similarly, the Jaffnese, who were equipped with community organisations and formal processes with which to express their viability, also displayed a surprising degree of adaptation to living in a multi-ethnic society. Except for withholding from matrimonial alliances, they did interact occasionally with the other races. But in adapting themselves to the multi-ethnic climate in Malaya they did not lose their identity. Their cultural activities and norms were carried on with the same enthusiasm and tenacity. They did not surrender to any substantial degree of assimilation because they were conscious of their different destiny as a minority ethnic group.

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4. R.N. Jackson, *Pickering, Protector of Chinese* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1965).

Overwhelmed by a desire to preserve racial purity, the Jaffnese viewed intermarriage more as a threat than an opportunity. Being never assimilationist in orientation they experienced the threat of intermarriage on a collective as well as on an individual basis. That is why they depended heavily on each individual to remain Jaffnese and pass on their identity to their children. In fact, the different ethnic groups in Malaya were never assimilationist in orientation. For that matter ". . . every known human society rigorously regulates 'who married whom'".[5] Each community regarded inter-ethnic marriage either as a threat to the continuity of generations within the family or the group. Sometimes marriages within a community, as for example among the Indians and Ceylon Tamils, was based on caste, class, religion, village, regional and linguistic groupings. This further curbed free intermarriages even between individuals of the same community. Thus, with so much intra-ethnic restrictions on marriages, it is obvious that inter-ethnic marriages in the pre-war days would have been a distant dream. The odd individual who was drawn into it was virtually ostracised and left the community fold.

The subsequent generation of Ceylon Tamils born in Malaya in the third and fourth decades of this century, though localised in their general orientation, still maintained communal distinctness and cultural characteristics. They had benefitted from the social responsibility of their parents which dictated that they provide for the higher education of their children. By virtue of this benefit they successfully entrenched themselves as an upper middle class through their entry into the professions. As professionals they had a definite role to play in the development of the country. Just as in the period 1885–1930 where the government used the Ceylon Tamils as clerks and subordinate civil servants, the post–1957 period assigned them more responsible positions as high ranking civil

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5. H.M. Hodges, *Social Stratification: Class in America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Schenkman Publishing Co., 1964), pp.123–124. Even in contemporary American society where love presumably rides roughshod over tradition, with little or no conscious thought Americans choose to marry within their own class levels or ethnic groups.

   The controls regulating marriage behaviour are sometimes legal in form as in the case of Negro-Caucasian marriages which are prohibited by state statutes. In the case of orthodox Jews they were bound by religious sanction not to marry gentiles. In the case of still other communities, like the Ceylon Tamils, they were defined in the form of customary laws. More often, however, they are a matter of convention.

servants, executive officers, diplomats, professionals and academics.[6] However, despite the ascendance of many of them into a professional class, the Ceylon Tamils never divorced themselves from their cultural symbols or ethnic identity. They continued to manage the associations set up by the earlier generation of Jaffnese, and patronised the temples and Hindu fine arts in Malaya. Except for sporadic instances of intermarriages with outsiders, the Ceylon Tamils invariably married among themselves and kept their distinct ethnic identity intact.

Their concern with economic security ensured them a firm footing within the multi-ethnic scene in Malaya. But beyond establishing this, the Ceylon Tamils were also concerned with their communal identity within the wider society. This was achieved largely through their middle class status. They found easy access to participation in the town and health boards, and the state councils. They also won the favour of the British through the help they rendered, both financial and physical, in times of war, and their efforts to model themselves after the British civil servants. The latter resulted in many Ceylon Tamils developing rounded personalities with interest in western-oriented activities like sports and rotary and welfare services.

In their social interactions beyond the community, the Ceylon Tamils were soon brought into the mainstream development of the country. Communal interaction was increased by post-war nationalism and the growth of the professional class amongst the Jaffnese. They began to interact on the national level in cooperative movements, trade unions, professional associations, girl guide movements and in politics. Particularly in politics, the Ceylon Tamil community made an impact on the politics of post-war Malaya through the important contacts and alliances which their leaders established with Malay political leaders. But internal party squabbles of the community leaders and the generally apolitical orientation of the community as a whole, undermined their political credibility. By and large, the numerical weakness of the Ceylon Tamils within the framework of communal politics in post-war Malaya brought to them the

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6. Some of the prominent Ceylon Tamils include Ramon Navaratnam (Ministry of Transport); S.T. Ratnam (Foreign Service); M. Rajasingam (Posts and Telegraphs); P. Alagendra, S. Kulasingam and K. Selvanayagam (Police Department); K. Thanabalasingam (retired Rear Admiral, Navy); Selvarajah (Brig. General, Army); K. Jegadeva, V. Murugasu and P. Navaratnarajah (Ministry of Education); Professors V. Navaratnarajah, K.J. Ratnam, M. Balasegaram, T.S. Sinnathuray, Visu Sinnadurai and A. Canaganayagam (academics).

realisation that political elitism was out of their reach though this did indeed made them good civil servants with no political axe to grind.

The post–1957 period ushered in an era during which the Ceylon Tamils gradually receded from the limelight of Malayan political and economic scene. This was due to the decreasing population among the Ceylon Tamils,[7] the rise of literacy and middle class status among the other Malayan communities and the emphasis on cultural identity by the Indians which overshadowed the erstwhile dominance of Hindu cultural activities in Malaya by the Ceylon Tamils.[8] Further, the rise of political consciousness among the major ethnic groups, particularly the Malays, Chinese and Indians, contributed to the Ceylon Tamils becoming insignificant in terms of participation in activities outside the community. As a result they no longer were able to exert themselves as a conspicuous minority in post-independence Malaya. However, their contribution to social developments and the middle class structuring, and its concomitant implications on nation building, was significant.

The domination of the government service by the Ceylon Tamils in the pre-World War Two period contributed to the community achieving a state of conspicousness, viability and success in Malaya. The Ceylon Tamils in Malaya had the companion ingredients of education and religion-based ethics to guarantee economic opportunity. This factor assisted the Ceylon Tamils in establishing themselves as the pioneers of the Malayan middle class. Their inconspicuous numbers proved an advantage for they posed little threat to the Malays. Yet, they emerged as a large enough middle class group to establish a middle class nucleus for the majority communities to emulate – a process accelerated by post-war developments and the spread of western education. In time, other communities, especially the Malays, began, gradually, to realise their own weaknesses and deficiencies vis-a-vis the immigrant communities, particularly the Ceylon Tamils, who had used their Engish education to dominate the government

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7. *Census of Malaya, 1957* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1958); *Malaysia Population and Housing Census, 1970)* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1971). The Ceylon Tamil population which stood at 24,738 persons in 1957 declined in 1970 to 24,436 persons. The Malay population increased from 3,125,474 in 1957 to 4,663,284 persons in 1970; the Chinese population increased from 2,333,756 to 3,117,896 persons, and the Indian population increased from 735,038 in 1957 to 933,250 persons in 1970.

8. See S. Arasaratnam *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore* (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), pp.162–177.

administration. Since a **nouveau riche** was yet to emerge within Malaysian society prior to about 1970, civil servants, administrators and professionals still formed the core of the middle class. As a result, there arose a great demand for English education among the Malays so as to enable them to enter the government service.[9] This reference group behaviour, coupled with the support of the government's pro-Malay policy in recruitment for government service, enabled the Malays to gradually gain ascendancy within the post-independence bureaucracy. By initiating middle class financial and economic enterprise and enhancing security in the form of introducing co-operative, insurance and banking services, the Ceylon Tamils contributed towards the development of a full-fledged middle class. Popular participation in sports and other inter-communal and club activities also contributed towards the growth of a viable middle class within which the urban Malays began to take a prominent role. On the other hand, the Ceylon Tamils were able to meet the challenge of Malay domination in government service by entering the professions in large numbers. This, in turn, elevated a good fraction of the community from their predominantly lower middle class status in pre-war Malaya to an upper middle status, through their entry into the professions during the post-war period.

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9. *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council (5th Session) February 1982 – February 1953* (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printers, 1953), pp.491–492. The number of Malays in government and government-aided schools had increased from 6,535 at the end of the Second World War to 21,584 in 1952.

GLOSSARY OF TAMIL WORDS

adigar – an official appointed by the kinds in Jaffna to supervise a number of village headmen.

agamas – religious texts of the Saivite school of Hindu religious philosophy

ampattar – barber caste

brahmin – priestly caste

coracan – a type of dry-grain known as cynosurus coracanus

dharma – righteousness

isvarams – five aspects of the Supreme God Siva represented by Tiruketeeswaram, Muneeswaram, Tondeswaram, Tirukoneswaram and Nakuleswaram

kalvettu – originally meant lithic inscription but now it covers all sorts of folk literature

kamakaran – Tamils of **vellalar** caste were referred to by this honorific title which literally meant fieldmen

karaiyar – fisher caste

karnaven – manager of a **tarwad** or family unit under **Marumakattayam** law in Malabar, South India

kollar – blacksmith

kollu – a type of dry grain

kootu – tontine

koviar – a caste of servants to **vellalars**, peculiar only to Jaffna

kumbabishegam – consecration ceremony to enhance the sanctity of temples

madam – mut (a place where religious education is imparted)

malayalathar – people of Malabar, South India

marumakattayam – system of family structure of the Malabar people, essentially matrilineal in nature

mudaliyar – native chiefs of Jaffna

mullai – pastoral tracts of the Tamil country in South India

mullainattar – people inhabiting pastoral tracts

nalavar – caste of agricultural labourers, considered low in the caste hierarchy

natuvar – temple musicians

Nikandu – a Tamil lexicon in verse

pallar – a caste of agricultural labourers, considered low in the caste hierarchy

panchayat – a council of elders in a village

pandaram – a caste of temple priests

pandarapillai – a tax collector in Jaffna

puranas – religious works which glorify the Hindu gods through stories e.g. Periyapuranan, Kanthapuranam and Tiruvathvoorarpuranam

Saiva kurukkal – Saivite priests

Sinnayalpanam – literally meant 'Little Jaffna'. It referred to the area around Scott Road (present day Jalan Tun Sambanthan 2) in Brickfields where were found a concentration of Ceylon Tamil households in the pre-war days

tarwad – family unit in Malabar society in South India

tattar – a caste of goldsmiths

Tesavalamai – customary laws of the Tamils of Jaffna

thalamaikaran – village headman in Jaffna

thirumbar – a caste of washermen for people of **paraiyar** or **nalavar** caste

uliyam	–	tenurial system founded upon a personal basis
uluthunpor	–	those who ploughed the fields themselves
uluthuviththunpor	–	those who get their fields ploughed by others
ur	–	town or village
vannar	–	caste of washermen, considered low in the caste hierarchy
vanniyar	–	a peasant caste
varagoo	–	a type of grain (paspalum frumentaceum)
vellalar	–	a dominant Tamil caste
vibhuti	–	holy ash

APPENDIX A

MARRIAGE CEREMONY AMONG THE CEYLON TAMILS

An explicit consideration in marriage related to the Jaffna Tamils unflinching faith in destiny demanded that the horoscopes of the prospective bride and groom be matched to determine compatibility.[1] Only when it was pronounced favourable would marriage discussions proceed, otherwise, they ceased immediately. The priest-cum-astrologer who read the horoscope also determined an auspicious time and day or **Muhurtham** for the marriage after the important question of dowry was settled. The date of marriage should not fall within the period of mourning which varied according to the degree of relationship of the deceased with the parties concerned. A period of one year was observed if it was one of the family members of the boy or girl, for other relatives a period of one month was observed. The pollution period of thirty-one days or **thudakku** following the birth of a child in either the boy's or girl's house was avoided.[2] Similarly the girl's parents expected the date of **Muhurtham** not to coincide with their daughter's period of menstruation which was considered as polluting. Inauspicious months that were often avoided for marriage were **Masi** (February 15th – March 1st), **Adi** (July 15th – August 15th), **Puratassi** September 15th – October 15) and **Markali** (December 15th – January 15th).[3] Only after giving allowance to the following periods was a suitable date and time selected through the assistance of a priest or astrologer.

The wedding was the climax of a marriage and was usually accompanied by customary rites and ceremonies, and though marriages were held in temples or homes they were replete with ceremonies. The following description is an account of marriage ceremonies performed among the Jaffnese of **vellalar** caste. It has been acknowleged as an accurate description of **vellalar** marriage ceremonies and though slight variations have occurred in some families, it had

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1. As a tradition bound people, the Jaffnese normally took steps to have the horoscope of a new-born child written. They believed that a child's birth brought good fortune or ill-luck to the family and if necessity arose performed special ceremonies to remove the ill-luck.

2. The purification ceremony was usually performed on the 31st day where the child's head was shaved bald. Visitors for this occasion were served brown sugar if it is a girl and stone sugar if it was a boy. Stone sugar was an indication of the importance placed on sons who were expected to perpetuate the family lineage. Stone sugar was distributed at most happy occasions. Only after the 40th day the parents chose an odd day, for example 41st, 43rd or 45th day, when the child was taken to the temple for prayers. Jaffnese Christians, too, observed similar customs for childbirth. The Methodists and Catholics observed the 31st day but with no religious ceremony. The Methodist baptised the child after the 40th day.

3. Months considered favourable for marriage include *Thai* (January 15th – February 15), *Panguni* (March 15th – April 15th), *Chittirai* (April 15th – May 15), *Vaikasi* (May 15th – June 15th) and *Ani* (June 15th – July 15).

been due to the extent of affluence which determined how elaborate the rituals should be. But generally, among the Jaffnese, the following description stood.[4]

> On an auspicious day alone a *murukku* tree decorated with mango leaves, cloth, and jewels called *kannikal* or virgin post is erected in the North-east corner with certain ceremonies by an elderly relative, who is not a widower. On the same day gold for the **tali** is melted by a goldsmith whom he brings to his house for that purpose. The pole is besmeared with pulverized sandalwood, and tumeric and the top is decorated with mango leaves.
>
> On the day fixed for the wedding the bridegroom sends his present called **parisam** to the bride. Sometimes before the hour fixed for the ceremony the bridegroom at his home and the bride at hers are bathed to the accompaniment of native music and the chanting by dhobies and barbers of blessings. Milk is poured and **aruku** grass placed on the head of each before they are escorted to the well at which each is to be bathed. They are taken home after the bath and dressed and adorned for the occasion.[5]
>
> The bridegroom is taken in procession walking, driving or in a **thandikai** (palanquin). He is accompanied by a bestman and is followed by a servant woman carrying the **tali** and cloth *(kurai)* for the bride in a box on her head. Men precede them and women follow them. On the road dhobies assisted by barbers sing blessings. The dhobies spread a cloth for him to walk on.
> In front are musicians. Wherever he walks the female inmates are mustered at the door to greet him armed with a water pot **(nirakudam)** trimmed at its mouth with mango leaves and surmounted by a coconut as well as with a brass plate **(taddam)** *(alatti)*, containing saffron water and lighted with stick in

4. The above account was taken from *The Ceylon Antiquary Literary Register*, Vol. 2, Part 4, 1916, pp.239–241.

5. The headdress worn by the groom resembles that of the king's crown. *Vellalars* who had assumed the role of patron-rulers in Jaffnese society adopted some of the status symbols of kings like headdress, palanquins, umbrella and fly whisks.

a bowl of boiled rice. The bridgeroom halts; one of the women salutes him by raising and lowering the **alatti** three times from right to left, the light is then extinguished by being immersed in the saffron water. This ceremony is called the *alatti.* She spreads a little of the water over him and with her right forefinger makes a mark **(poddu)** on his forehead. He then resumes his procession. At the gate of the bride's home he is received by women with a **nirakudam,** a full water pot decorated as stated earlier and then the **alatti** ceremony is performed often by a dancing girl. The younger brother of the bride washes the feet of the bridegroom and is presented with a ring. The bridegroom is then ushered into the **pandal** and is seated under a canopy at the western end of the **pandal** facing the east. The sacred fire has been made previously in front of him and the priest seats himself on the right of the bridegroom in a line with the sacred fire facing it and into it he keeps on throwing small twigs of the mango tree and ghee and recites Sanskrit hymns. The bride's parents (father) seat themselves on a small heap of paddy between the bridegroom and the priest. On the left of the bride and opposite to the priest are two water pots, one representing Ganesa and the other containing holy water. Behind the water pots that symbolize the hermit and his wife is the grindstone representing respectively the hermit Vasiddur and his faithful **paraya** wife Aruntuti.[6] Behind the water pots that symbolize the hermit and his wife is the grindstone representing Akilikai.[7] Further back two water pots serve for Siva and his wife. At the back, in the centre four full water pots and four lighted lamps are arranged round a pot called **arasani** which is decorated with cloth, flowers and jewels.

Everything being ready the bride's parents wash the feet of the bridegroom and do reverence to him with

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6. According to Hindu mythology Aruntuti and Vasiddur were elevated to the heavens for their exemplary character and conduct. They are now represented by the twin stars Pollux and Castor.

7. According to Hindu mythology Akilikai was the wife of the sage Tamnvasa. One day she went out before dawn to fetch water and Indra in the form of a cat, followed her with a view to seduce her. Tamnvasa came to know of this and cursed Indra for his immoral conduct and cursed hsi wife for having gone without his permission. She was transformed into a rock.

camphor lights. Then, they take the right hand of the bride and offer it to the bridegroom with betel leaves, arecanut and gold coins. This is called **kannikathanam** (gift of a virgin). The bridegroom accepts these with both his hands. The priest then joins the hands of both reciting Vedic hymns accompanied by music and ringing of bells. Meanwhile on a silver plate the *tali, kurai* cloth and garlands are taken around to receive the benediction of the people. They as well as the priest bless the same by touching them with both hands. After exchanging garlands with her, the bridegroom hands the **kurai** to the bride. She takes it to her room and comes out dressed in it. Then the bridegroom ties the **tali** round her neck to the accompaniment of music. This is called the **tali** ceremony. Then the cermony known as **poothathalam** is gone through. A piece of cloth is tied in front of the bride and bridegroom. The bride offers to the bridegroom milk and plantains. He sips a little from the cup and returns it to the bride who sips a little. After this they publicly stand before the sacred fire as man and wife and receive roasted rice **(pori)** from the priest and bringing their hands together they shower the same on the blazing fire. After this the bridegroom takes the bride's hand and leads her thrice round the sacred fire and they do reverence to the water pots representing Vasiddur and his wife Aruntuti. By way of contrast, the bride spurns with her left foot the grinding stone that represents the disobedient Akilikai. Blessing and congratulations follow. On the day the wedded pair offer rice, vegetables, cloth, etc. to the **Brahmins** who shower on them saffroned rice from a plate held between them. Elderly relations and friends bless them by putting first on the head of the bridegroom and then on that of the bride **aruku** grass and rice. Two women come and prepare the **alatti** and the bridegroom and bride are led to the bride's room where she serves him with rice of which he partakes. She too shares the meal. The bridegroom is then conducted to the wedding hall where he meets her relatives. The males are fed first, then the females. After them the carters, dhobies and barbers are fed.8

8. Among the *vellalars* in India, the *panigrahana* or taking hold of the bride's hand and circumbulating the fire accompanied by Vedic mantras, and *sapthapadi* or treading of the stone and the seven steps are considered the most important rites. The marriage ends with the completion of *sapthapadi*. In Jaffna the *sapthapadi* ceremony is seldom performed.

Among the Jaffnese Christians, though ceremonies were bound to differ due to religious differences, the customs and practices were similar to those of the Hindus. Both Roman Catholics and the Methodists preferred arranged marriages as dowry was still practised, caste was emphasised and horoscopes were consulted though without the knowledge of the pastor, auspicious time was selected according to the Hindu almanacs, the **tali** and **kodi** were used in marriages and **kurai** was also given to the bride. All these practices were customary and similar to the Hindu marriages. The only conspicuous difference between Hindu and Christian marriages were the actual marriage ceremony and the venue of the wedding. Thus it is in this respect we have to take note of the importance placed by the Jaffnese on customary practices, even though they had professed different faiths. It appeared that customary laws and practices including ceremonies among the Jaffnese were far more important than even their religious faith.[9] This may be the reason why the Jaffnese parents stressed in intra-community marriages.

9. There were a number of similarities among Hindus and Christians in other life cycle ceremonies like birth and death. The observance of ritual pollution and performance of charitable deeds were common among Hindus and Christians. An important feature of funerals at Jaffnese houses was the feeding of the poor or giving clothes, cash or uncooked rice to religious or other institutions where there were children. The Hindus and Christians donated to temples, churches or orphanage institutions.

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCES AND NOTIFICATIONS REGARDING RECRUITMENT OF STAFF FOR MALAYA

Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 1 October 1880

A Draughtsman is required, for the Survey Department of the Selangor Government, at a salary of $40 a month. Applications, with testimonials and certificates, should be sent to this office on or before the 11th proximo.

Colonial Secretary's
Office, Singapore
29th September 1880

By His Excellency's Command
Cecil C. Smith
Colonial Secretary

Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 6 January 1882

A Draughtsmen is required for service under the Government of Perak; salary $50 a month, with free quarters. Applications, with testimonials will be received at this office up to the 10th proximo. It is essential that the selected candidate should be neat, expeditious and intelligent, and should possess a fair knowledge of Euclid and Arithmetic.

Colonial Secretary's Office
Singapore, 7th December 1882

Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 3 February 1882

Applications will be received at this office up to the 10th instant, for the appointment of Overseer of Roads, Province Wellesley; Salary $420 per annum. Applicants should posses some knowledge of building construction.

Colonial Secretary's Office
Singapore, 2nd February 1882

Ceylon Government Gazette, 13 May 1882

Applications for a competent Draughtsman for service in Perak (Malay States) will be received at this Office until 31st instant. Salary, fifty dollars ($50) per mensem, with prospect of increase. Applicants must have experience in making architectural drawings from rough sketches, and in plotting from fieldbooks.

Colonial Secretary's Office
Colombo, 12th May 1882

Ceylon Government Gazette, 24 February 1882

Applications with testimonials for the following appointments under the Sungei Ujong Government will be received at this Office up to the 19th proximo:

Assistant Surveyor	.. ..	Salary, $1080 per annum
Draftsman ..	.. ..	Salary, $480 per annum

Colonial Secretary's Office
Singapore, 8th February 1882

Ceylon Government Gazette, 2 June 1882

Applications for two Road Overseerships under the Government of Sungei Ujong will be received by the Director of Public Works up to the 15th proximo.

Salary, 25 dollars a month each, with free quarters.

Applicants should be able to read and write English well, should know how to keep a checkroll and a distribution sheet, be capable of measuring up and preparing their reports, and have some knowledge of road constructon.

Colonial Secretary's Office
Colombo, 31st May 1882

Despatches, Colonial Secretary Singapore to Colonial Secretary Colombo, 1 May 1882.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter No. 1797 of 30th March and No. 2356/82 of the 5th ultimo, requesting your assistance in obtaining the services of a Draughtsman for the PWD in Selangor, I am directed by Governor Sir F.A. Weld to request that you will be good enough to select and send another Asst. Surveyor for that State, on a salary of $720 per annum.

Despatches, Colonial Secretary Singapore to Colonial Secretary Colombo, 2 January 1883.

Sir,

I am directed by the Governor of the Straits Settlements to inform you that the Resident of Perak has made an urgent request to this Government to procure efficient overseers to superintend the work on the roads in that State.

2. It is found impossible to get suitable men in the State or indeed in the Colony, and His Excellency trusts the Government of Ceylon will be able to assist this Government in this matter.

3. A letter which I now enclosed in original has been submitted to the Resident by a person in Ceylon named Sabapathy who appears to be of the class wanted. He is related to a draughtsman who was lately selected by the Ceylon Government for Perak, who has himself given every satisfaction.

4. It would perhaps be advisable to make some enquiries regarding this applicant, and if he and three others of a similar class, can be engaged, it will be of very great advantage to the Perak Government.

5. It is proposed that the selected persons should enter into a three years agreement, and the Perak Government desires to leave the rate of salary to be fixed by the Government of Ceylon.

Notification at Traffic Superintendent's Office, Ceylon Government Railway, Colombo, 1 September 1893.

Station Masters for Kinta Valley Railway

The Government of the Straits Settlements asks for the services fo three Station Masters for the Kinta Valley Railway, Perak and any member of this Department willing to apply should do so at once and those selected should arrive at Perak not later than the end of October next.

Particulars of office are as follows:

Salary $50 a month with free unfurnished quarters,
Half salary from date of embarkation and a free
second class passage from Ceylon to Perak. A
thorough knowledge of both goods and coaching
work is necessary.

Traffic Superintendent,
Ceylon Government Railway,
Colombo

APPENDIX C

Money Order Remittances to Ceylon from the Federated Malay States (FMS), Straits Settlements (including Singapore) (SS) and British North Borneo (BNB)*
(in Ceylon rupees)

Year	FMS	SS	BNB
1890	included under SS	91558	–
1892	included under SS	130377	–
1984	included under SS	135039	–
1896	included under SS	129211	–
1898	included under SS	131892	1092
1900	included under SS	179134	865
1902	included under SS	157541	991
1904	included under SS	269718	228
1906	417577	105519	1673
1908	510834	113101	1095
1910	598731	133866	3055
1912	652503	146967	–
1914	685490	248946	–
1916	726622	304904	–
1918	736652	289651	–
1920	313156@	237384	–
1922	892337	218509	–
1925	1,009814	256797	–
1930	957052	282674	–

Note

CAR, 180–1922, Posts and Telegraph. All money order remittances from the FMS till 1905 were included under SS remittances. Only when direct exchange was established between the FMS and Ceylon on 1st June 1905 that the amount increased steadily. Earlier remittances were made through banks and chetties and only a small proportion through money orders. The British Postal Order introduced in 1911 became another popular means of remittance. In 1917 the exchange rate for money orders was Rs. 1.75 to a Malayan dollar. As the bank rate was Rs. 1.55 to a dollar the chetties and merchants tried to abuse the facilities and as such the money order remittances to Ceylon rose to Rs. 1,437,900 from the FMS and Rs. 1,597,730 from the SS. However, the Malayan Government immediately took measures to stop the abuse and in the following year the money order remittance returned to normal.

@The sharp drop in the amount was because the postal order became very popular. In 1920 money orders were advised in sterling conversion rate and so postal orders were less favourable then bank drafts and money orders exchanged in rupees and thus discouraged postal orders as a means of remitting money to Ceylon. The rate of exchange was fixed at 2s. 4d. to a Malayan dollar and Rs. 14 to a Pound. In 1921 money order remittances increased to Rs. 1,092,053 but decreased to Rs. 892,337 in 1922 because of the retrenchment exercise in Malaya which affected the Ceylonese government servants.

APPENDIX D

Ceylonese (i.e. Sinhalese, Tamils & Others) in Malaya (by states), 1911–1970

State	1911			1921			1931			1947			1957			1970		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Penang				667	510	157	694	465	229	846	440	306	1009	530	479	989	499	490
Malacca				417	315	102	462	312	150	423	230	193	873	448	425	884	439	445
Perak				2864	2062	802	3322	2215	1107	3683	2019	1664	458	2419	2159	3617	1787	1830
Selangor				5722	4334	1388	7244	4974	2270	9030	5022	4008	12448	6688	5760	14911	7348	7473
Negri Sembilan	7249	6077	1174	1698	1275	423	2048	1424	624	2724	1522	1202	3623	1918	1705	3223	1577	1646
Pahang				849	720	129	1034	772	262	1336	778	558	1642	917	725	1119	566	553
Johore				670	521	149	1166	798	368	1249	713	536	2596	1402	1194	2540	1221	1319
Kedah				498	381	117	443	292	151	342	189	153	812	496	316	483	250	233
Perlis				18	11	7	32	20	12	39	22	17	41	25	16	22	13	9
Kelantan				239	208	31	290	216	74	156	90	66	308	178	130	218	130	88
Trengganu				10	10	–	51	45	6	30	25	5	100	75	25	90	52	38
Unlocated				–	–	–	–	–	–	44	42	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
TOTAL	8500[a]	7000	1500	13652[b]	10347	3305	16786	11533	5253	19802	11092	8710	28030	15096	12934	28096	13972	14124

Key : T = Total M = Male F = Female

Note: [a] This is an estimated figure as separate statistics were not available for the Straits Settlements (excluding Singapore) and the Undefedated Malay States. Refer Table 2.1 in text

[b] This figure represents only Ceylon-born Ceylonese as statistics on local-born Ceylonese is not available. However, the number of local-born persons was extremely small or negligible as even in 1931 there were only 1,673 local-born Ceylonese.

Source : *Census of British Malaya, 1911, 1921, 1931; Census of Malaya 1947, 1957,* and *Census of Malaysia, 1970.*

APPENDIX E

Ceylon Tamils in Malaya (by states), 1911–1970

	1911			1921			1931			1947			1957			1970		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Penang				326	263	63				358	208	150	708	369	339	704	357	347
Malacca				255	190	65				242	137	105	776	393	383	755	381	374
Perak	1692	1382	288	2208	1634	574				2706	1492	1214	3998	2113	1885	3167	1572	1595
Selangor	2824	2399	425	4110	3302	808				7450	4149	3301	11021	5916	5105	13033	6515	6518
Negri Sembilan	861	715	46	1327	1024	303				2373	1316	1057	3291	1735	1556	2858	1394	1464
Pahang	626	578	48	750	631	119				1180	676	504	1571	869	702	1027	519	508
Johore				452	356	96				795	463	332	2307	1242	1065	2213	1060	1153
Kedah				377	285	92				186	105	81	725	459	266	431	222	209
Perlis				18	11	7				14	8	6	57	22	35	19	10	9
Kelantan				149	130	19				70	42	28	228	129	99	147	82	65
Trengganu				9	9					14	9	5	56	34	22	82	46	36
Unlocated										23	22	1						
TOTAL	6800 [a]			9981	7835	2146	12700 [b]			15411	8267	6794	24738	13281	11457	24436	12158	12278

Key : T = Total M = Male F = Female

Note : [a] This is an estimated figure.

[b] An estimated figure. There were 3,671 and 4,391 other Ceylon peoples (excluding Ceylon Tamils) in 1931 and 1947 respectively. Given a reasonable estimate of 4,000 other Ceylon people in 1931, the Ceylon Tamil population could be estimated around 12,700 persons

Source : *Census of British Malaya 1911, 1921 and 1931: Census of Malaya 1947* and *1957: Census of Malaysia 1970.*

APPENDIX F

NOTES ON SOME CEYLON TAMILS IN MALAYA

K. ARUMUGAM

He was born in 1883 and educated at Jaffna College. He came to Malaya in 1905 and served in Land Office, Seremban, and Marine and Customs Office, Port Dickson, before retiring from Government Service. He took up rubber planting and became a successful planter. He was popularly known as 'Planter' Arumugam. He was an active member of the Asian Estate Owners Association, was the member of the Rubber Restriction Committee, the Rubber Board, the Rubber Research Institute and Malayan Planters Estate Owners Association. He also served on the Seremban Sanitary Board for many years besides being the President of the Vaddukoddai Union in Malaya. He started the daily newspaper, Malayan Daily Express and the Bank of Jaffna in the 1920s. The newspaper closed down during the slump period in the 1930s while the Bank was incorporated with the Oriental Bank of Malaya, started by another Jaffnese, Bastiampillai Paul Nicholas. One of his sons, A.P. Rajah, a lawyer, became Speaker of the Singapore Parliament and later Singapore's High Commissioner in London while A.C. Rajah served in the Singapore Education Service and A.D. Rajah, also a lawyer, practised in Kuala Lumpur.

S. CHELVASINGAM MACINTYRE

He was born in 1903 in Rawang, Selangor. He had his early education at Trinity College, Kandy, in Ceylon and later at Lincoln's Inn, London. He was the only Ceylonese elected to the Federal Legislative Council in 1955. He had earlier served on the Batu Pahat Town Board (1945-55) and Johore State Council for many years. He was Managing Director of Lanka Realty Co. Ltd. in Batu Pahat and Chairman of Central Council of Ceylonese Associations in Johore. When Malaya attained independence he was posted as the country's first High Commissioner to India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. On his return in 1967 he was appointed a Senior Federal Judge and President of Industrial and Arbitration Court. He was the first non-Malay Asian Federal Judge. His wife, Edith MacIntyre, was a very active District Commissioner of the Girl Guide Movement in Batu Pahat, Johore.

DEVAKI KRISHNAN (MRS.)

She was born in 1923 in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan and educated at St. Mary's Girl School, Kuala Lumpur. She was a teacher by profession. She became a Municipal Councillor, Kuala Lumpur in 1953. She had also served at the Vice-President of Bangsar Brickfields M.I.C., as Vice-President of Selangor Blood Donors Association, and as Committee Member

of St. John's Ambulance Association, Kuala Lumpur, besides being associated with Selangor Children's Home, Nursing Board (Federation of Malaya), Malayan Council for Child Welfare; Malayan Leprosy Relief Association and Indian Welfare Society.

A.E. DURAISAMY

He was born in Jaffna in 1888. He had his early education in Jaffna, studied medicine in Straits and F.M.S. Medical School in Singapore and joined the Malayan Medical Service in 1914. He retired in 1946. He was Municipal Councillor, Kuala Lumpur from 1946 to 1951 and member of the Federal Legislative Council from 1951 to 1955. He was Vice-President of the Ceylon Federation of Malaya and Chairman of the Selangor Family Planning Association. In recognition of his services he was awarded the O.B.E. and created a Justice of Peace. His wife was the President of the Selangor State Girl Guide Association (1956-57).

A.R. KANDIAH

He was born in 1906 in Singapore to D.V. Kandiah (an active lay steward and member of Tamil Epworth League of the Methodist Tamil Church, Kuala Lumpur). He graduated from King Edward VII College of Medicine, joined Malayan Medical Service and retired as Medical Officer, Central Kedah. He was Captain (Medical Officer) of the F.M.S. Volunteer Force during World War II and had served Malayan Campaign No. 3 M.V.F. Ambulance. He was on the Medical Advisory Board to Health Minister 1955–57; was the member of the Auxilliary Police Pension Board; was Member of Board of Stewards, Methodist Tamil Church, Kuala Lumpur; and was President of the Selangor Stamp Club (1946-53).

His wife was Rose Rajamani Kandiah. the daughter of Rev. J.A. Supramaniam, the second Tamil paster of the Methodist Tamil Church Kuala Lumpur. She was a teacher who organised and directed the Golden Jubilee Choir, Methodist Tamil Church, Kuala Lumpur and was the first Asian member of the pre-war Kuala Lumpur Musical Society. She organised several charity concerts including a piano recital in aid of University of Malaya Endowment Fund in 1949.

M. KANDIAH

He has been associated with the Sangeetha Abivirthi Sabha since its inception where he had been a student, teacher, supervisor and later patron of the Sabha. He had contributed enormously to the spread of classical Indian music in Malaya. In recognition of his contributions the Indian community had on a number of occasions bestowed honours on him.

His son Kamahl, the famous Australian singer, had attained international fame.

R.V. KARLAKANDAN

He served on the Selangor Malayan Volunteer Infantry since 1916, was made a Captain in 1939 and led the Malayan Victory Contingent to represent Malaya at the Victory Parade in London on 6th June 1946. He was member of the Management Committee, Sri Kandasamy Temple, Kuala Lumpur; member of the Management Committee, Tamilian Physical Culture Association; Chairman, Jaffnese Unemployment Committee, 1930s; Founder President of Prince of Wales Institution, Kuala Lumpur, 1929 and was also a former President of the Selangor Ceylon Tamils Association.

S. KULASINGAM

He was born in 1902 in Jaffna and educated in Jaffna College, Jaffna and Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur. He joined the Clerical Service in 1919, rose to be First Legal Assistant in the Attorney General's Office and retired as Administrative Assistant in 1957. On retirement he was re-employed on special duties on revision of the Laws of Malaya from 1957 to 1964. He was awarded the King George VI Coronation Medal in 1937, commended for work done in compiling the Supplement to the Laws of the Federated Malays States in 1939 and the Index to the Evidence Ordinance of the Federation of Malaya in 1951. He was awarded the M.B.E. (Civil Division) in 1948. He was appointed a Member of the Public Services Commission, Malaysia from 1968-1970.

His activities included active membership of the Y.M.C.A., Kuala Lumpur since 1920; as President of the T.P.C.A. (1963-69); served as President of Philatelic Society of Malaysia for 10 years; Member of Jaffnese Cooperative Society since 1924; President of Jaffnese Cooperative Housing Society (1967-1975); Secretary/Treasurer of Soora Cooperative Industrial Development Society (1964-1966); Secretary of the Malayan University (Ceylonese) Endowment Fund (1949–52); the Founder Member and later President of Malaysian Ceylonese Welfare and Educational Fund, 1966-81; besides being Life Member of the Malayan Association for the Blind, Pure Life Society, Victoria Institution Old Boys Association, Malaysian Zoological Society, National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia, Malaysian Government Pensioners Association and Petaling Jaya Hindu Association.

E.T. MACINTYRE

He was born in 1878, had early education in Ceylon and came to Malaya in 1896. A doctor by profession, he joined the Federated Malay States Medical Department, and became one of the first Asian doctors to obtain an M.D. degree.

He did valuable social service in Kuala Lumpur being actively involved and being responsible for the growth of the Methodist Tamil Church in Kuala Lumpur. He served on the various town and health boards in Kuala Lumpur for a long period of time. For his services he was appointed a Justice of Peace.

On retirement he returned to Jaffna and became the Founder President of the Malayan Ceylonese Association (Jaffna). He died in 1938.

His son, S. Chevasingam MacIntyre had a distinguished career as Member of the Federal Legislative Council and later as the Malaysian High Commisioner for India, Ceylon and Nepal.

MAHALAKSHMI NAVARATNAM (MRS)

She was born in 1919 in Kuala Kangsar, Perak and educated at the Kuala Lumpur Convent. She was the daughter of Dr. A Viswalingam (the Opthalmic Surgeon who retired from the Malayan Medical Service). She was for a long time actively involved in the Guide Movement in Malaya. She was the President of the Selangor State Guide Association (1950-55); Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guide Movement in Malaysia since 1958; a Committee Member of the World Association of Guides and a Liaison Committee Member for Guiding in Asia and Far East. She was also active in the Child Welfare Council, Family Planning Association, National Association of Women's Institutes, Y.M.C.A., Board of Visiting Justices to Hospitals and Prisons, was Advisor for the Juvenile Courts and a past President for the Kuala Lumpur Convent Past Pupils Association.

R. NAGARATNAM

He was born in 1892 and had early education in Jaffna and later at St. Paul's Institution in Seremban. He joined the Clerical Service and rose to be Financial Assistant, Public Works Department, Negri Sembilan and Malacca and served as Office Assistant, Negeri Sembilan Secretariat and Clerk of Councils. He was gazetted as Collector of Stamp Duties, Negri Sembilan by name. He was the Chairman of the Negri Sembilan Branch of the Junior Civil Service Association and served as State Councillor, Negri Sembilan representing the Ceylonese in the State. He was actively involved in the Ceylon Tamil community development having served as Treasurer and Secretary of Vivekananda Hall, Seremban; Manager, Vivekananda Tamil School, Seremban; President of Ceylon Association of Taiping; President of Negri Sembilan Ceylonese Association and President of Ceylon Federation of Malaya, Negeri Sembilan branch. He was also the founder member of the N.S. Government Thrift and Loan Society; Chairman of the N.S. Cooperative Stores Society and Chairman of the Larut and Matang Thrift and Loan Society.

On retirement in 1951 he returned to Jaffna and took active interest in community activities like organisation of colonisation scheme at Akkarayan Kulam which made it possible for 50 Malayan Ceylonese on retirement to own land. He was also the President of Akkarayan Kulam Multipurpose Cooperative Society, South Yalpanam Multipurpose Cooperative Society Union, Kopay South East Rural Development Society and Manager of Sandilipay English School.

M.W. NAVARATNAM

He was born in 1891 in Jaffna, educated at Central College, Jaffna and Methodist Boys School, Kuala Lumpur. He joined F.M.S. General Clerical Service in 1910 and retired in 1948 as Auditor, Federation of Malaya.

On invitation by the Malayan Government he organised clerical branches of Special Constabulary, Detention Camp Headquarters and Development Department, Petaling Jaya. He was Secretary and Vice-President, Selangor Ceylon Tamils Association and Government Servants Thrift and Loan Society Ltd.; Vice-President, T.P.C.A.; founder Member and Secretary, K.L. Cricket Association; President and Manager, Saraswathy Tamil School, Kuala Lumpur; President, Selangor Tamil Union; Founder Member and President, Ceylon Association of Selangor; Secretary, Subordinate Services Association; President, Midlands Urban Cooperative Union; Editor, Malayan Cooperator; Chairman, Kuala Lumpur Cooperative Stores Society; Treasurer, K.L. Civil Defence Club; Vice-President of Junior Officers Association; Steward and Secretary, Methodist Tamil Church; and a private in Malayan Volunteer Infantry. He changed the name of the Ceylon Association of Selangor in 1958 to be Malayan Ceylonese Congress and became its first President.

SWAMI PRANAVANANDA

He was born in 1908 in Jaffna as N. Ponniah, educated in Jaffna, came to Malaya in 1925 and joined the Railway Department and later the Rubber Research Institute of Malaya. He rose to be Administrative Assistant and retired in 1959. He was actively involved in spiritual, cultural and religious activities notably with that of Vivekananda Ashrama, Theosophical Society, Malaya Arulneri Thirukkootam, Hindu Prachara Sabha and the Pure Life Soceity.

In 1959 he was initiated into the monastic order of the Divine Life Society founded by Swami Sivananda in 1936 at Rishikesh, India. He was given the name of Swami Pranavananda Saraswati.

In Malaya Swami Pranavananda set up the headquarters of the Divine Life Mission in Malaysia at Batu Caves, Kuala Lumpur and engaged in an effort to spread the tenets of divine life. As a spiritual leader he had often been called to preside or address meetings and conduct prayer meetings by

Malaysian Hindu Sangam, Arulneri Thirukkootam, Thavaneri Manram and other Hindu temples.

R.P.S. RAJASOORIA

A prominent lawyer in Kuala Lumpur, he became the first non-Malay Asian to be appointed a District Judge and Magistrate in Malaya (1942–1944). He served as the Selangor State and Kuala Lumpur Municipal Councillor from 1949–1953.

His contributions included the formation of the Selangor and Malayan Cricket Associations and thereafter as Founder President of both, represented Malaya in the First Asian Cricket Conference in Calcutta in 1949 and being a member of the prestigious 'Forty Club' of Whitehall which is open to first class cricketeers over forty years old in the Commonwealth. He was also responsible for the establishment of the Faculty of Law in the University of Malaya.

He was elected Honorary Rotarian, Kuala Lumpur Club for outstanding meritorious services as Malayan representative to Rotary International at Paris in 1953 and Seattle, USA in 1954. His wife, Datin Nesamani Rajasooria, was President of Kuala Lumpur Rotary Inner Wheel for three terms besides being the founder President of Selangor and Malaysian Consumers Association and International Women's Club in Kuala Lumpur.

T. RAJENDRA

He was the son of Carthigasu Thambapillai, a Senior Court Interpreter in Kuala Lumpur. A lawyer by profession, he served as the President of the Malayan Bar Council for several years besides being an ex-President of the Selangor Ceylon Saivites Association and Selangor Ceylon Tamils Association.

His son Rajendra Ponnudurai is also a lawyer.

D.S. RAMANATHAN

He was born in 1908. He was a schoolteacher by profession and rose to be Principal of Anglo-Chinese School, Penang. He formed the first Teacher's Union of Penang. He served as a member of the Penang State Legislature and Penang Municipal Council. He became the first Mayor of Penang when the Penang Labour Party of which D.S. Ramanathan was the Chairman won the Municipal elections in 1957. He had served as President of the National Union of Teachers, 1959–62; Vice-President of Malayan Teachers National Congress, 1961–62; Member of the National Joint Council Teachers, 1959–62; Member of National Labour Advisory Council 1958–61; and Lay Leader, Methodist Church, Malaya, 1961.

S.K. RAMANATHAN

Popularly known as Solomon Ramanathan, he was Manager of Sir Graeme Elphinstone Coffee Plantations in Ceylon till 1882 when he came to Kuala Kangsar at Sir Graeme's request. He became a shareholder and director of the Kuala Kangsar Plantations together with Sir Graeme. He owned Ramanathan Estate and Logie Estate in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. He died in 1923.

He was the first nominated member of the Kuala Kangsar Sanitary Board (later Town Council) and the first Asian Justice of Peace in the Federated Malay States.

His son S.R. Chelvarayan and grandson R.C. Mannavarayan were planters in Perak while the great grandson R.C.M. Rayan became a prominent lawyer-politician in Ipoh (closely associated with the People's Progressive Party).

REV. SAMUEL ABRAHAM

A brother-in-law of Dr. E.T. MacIntyre of the Malayan Medical Service, he was invited from Jaffna in 1899 to serve as the first Pastor of the Tamil Methodist Church in Kuala Lumpur and Headmaster of the Anglo Tamil School. He was instrumental in establishing evangelical services around Kuala Lumpur besides spreading the gospel among the estate Indian labourers in the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. He became the first Asian District Superintendent in 1913 and his work covered from Upper Perak to Malacca. He died in October 1918. He was succeeded by Rev. J.A. Supramaniam, another Ceylon Tamil, who spread further the influence of the Church.

M. SARAVANAMUTHU

He was born in 1895 in Colombo and educated at St. Thomas College, Colombo and St. John's College, Oxford. He was Sports Editor of **Ceylon Observer**, 1922–25; Editor of **Sunday Observer**, 1925–28; Assistant Editor of Ceylon Independent, 1928–30; Sports Editor of **Straits Echo**, Penang in 1930 and later Editor in 1931; and Managing Editor of **North Malayan Newspapers**, 1939–47.

He served as Ceylon Commissioner in Malaya in 1950 and retired from Ceylon Foreign Service in 1957.

He was President of Ceylon Association, Penang, 1934–47; President of Penang Rotary Club 1947; Committee Member of Penang Turf Club, 1945–50; Member of Court, University of Malaya 1949; Patron of Ranji Sports Club, Jakarta in 1954; Honorary Member of British Cricket Club, Jakarta; President of Penang Cricket Association and Vice-President of Malayan Cricket Association and later its patron.

He was elected the most popular personality in Malaya in the Singapore Standard Contest in 1953 which won him a world tour. The Sara Scholarship was established by public subscription at Penang Free School and Bukit Mertajam High School. He presented the Sara Shield to the Malayan Ceylonese Cricket Association for inter-state cricket competitions among the Ceylonese.

SWAMI SATYANANDA

He was born in Ipoh, Perak, in 1909 at Kailasapillai Chellathamby and became an orphan at the age of eleven. He had his early education at St. Michael's Institution, Ipoh, entered government service in 1926 and became Post Master at Teluk Anson in the 1930s.

He came under massive influence of Hindu spiritualism in the 1930s especially the teachings of Buddha, Vivekananda, Christianity and Sufi mystics and the Bhagavadgita. He left the service and studied at Calcutta University and Tagore's International University in India and entered spiritual order and was initated.

On his return to Malaya in 1940 he served as principal of Vivekananda Boys and Saradamani's Girls School in Singapore. During the Japanese Occupation he was principal of Indian National School and was sent by Subhas Chandra Bose to report on the welfare of the Indian Independence Army and the civilian labourers at the Siam-Burma border. He served as the publicity chief of the Indian Independence League. After the war he was Chairman of the Indian Relief Committee in Malaya set up by Nehru in 1946, besides being involved in the All-Malaya Liquor Prohibition Movement Committee (June 1946). He was a Founder Member of Malayan Indian Congress and its Working Committee Member between 1946–1947. Congress and its Working Committee Member between 1946–1947.

He was the Founder President of the Pure Life Society in Puchong, Selangor, the premier orphanage institution in the country set up in 1949 and the President of Kishan Dial School Management Committee.

He died in 1960.

SEENIVASAGAM

He was educated at Hindu College and Jaffna College in Jaffna, arrived in Malaya in 1901 and joined the General Clerical Service. He rose to be the Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court, Federated Malay States in 1919. He served as Official Administrator, Perak and Joint Examiner in Law in Perak to the members of the Malayan Civil Service in 1925. He was appointed Chairman of the Board of Visiting Justices, Kinta in 1925. He served as Assistant Registrar of the Supreme Court, Seremban and was called to the local Bar and admitted in 1926. He started private practice in

Ipoh and became Notary Public, Federated Malay States. In 1935 he was appointed a Member of the Perak State Council representing the Indians and Ceylonese. His sons, D.R. Seenivasagam and S.P. Seenivasagam, of the Peoples Progressive Party became prominent citizens in Perak.

D. R. SEENIVASAGAM

He was born in Ipoh in 1921 to S. Seenivasagam (a lawyer and former Perak State Councillor). He was a lawyer by profession, was elected to the Ipoh and Menglembu Municipal Councils between 1954 and 1957. He was the Founder Vice-President of the Perak Progressive Party (later to be the Peoples Progressive Party) 1953–55, was elected to the Federal Legislative Council in 1956 and was Member of Parliament from 1956. He served on and Perak State Assembly. His brother, S.P. Seenivasagam, also a lawyer and Founder Member of the Perak Progressive Party became a member of the Perak State Legislative Assembly and Member of Parliament in 1956. He took over the helm of the Party on the death of his brother, D. R. Seenivasagam, and later served as President of the Ipoh Municipal Council.

V. SELVANAYAGAM

He was born in 1912 in Jaffna and had his early education in Jaffna and Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur and later at the Technical College, Kuala Lumpur. He joined the Malayan Railways in 1933, rose to be Structural Superintendent and later retired as Personnel Officer in 1969.

He had a very active social, cultural and professional life and his outstanding contributions are found in the development of the TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION OF MALAYA (after serving as Chairman of various branches he became President of TAM in 1967); TECHNICAL COLLEGE (of which he served as President of Technical College Alumni Association 1951–53, was member of Technical College Advisory Committee 1948–49, member of Technical College Board of Governors 1953–1960); COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT (served as Vice-President, Railways Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society 1954–57; Director and Vice-President, Cooperative Insurance Society 1954–57; Vice-President, Midland Cooperative Union 1955–57; Chairman, Malayan Cooperative Bank Study Committee 1956; President of Cooperative Union of Malaya 1956–57; Member of the Advisory Committee, International Cooperative Conference (Stockholm) 1957 and Executive Director of Soora Cooperative Society 1969); TRADE UNION MOVEMENT (Founder Member of CUEPACS; Vice-President, Malayan Technical Services Union 1950–58; Member of Whitley Council 1953–58; Vice-President of Government Services Staff Council 1955–56); CULTURE (Vice-President and later President of Sangeetha Abivirthi Sabha); EDUCATION (as Chairman, Board of Governors, Vivekananda Secondary School, Kuala Lumpur 1962–70; Chairman, Education Committee, National Educational Deve-

lopment Council (Indian Schools) 1960–61; Organising Secretary, First International Tamil Conference, Kuala Lumpur 1966; Chairman, International Association for Tamil Research, Malaysia 1979–1981; Secretary, Malaysian Indian Scholarship Fund 1972–1981); and SPORTS (Vice-President and later President Railway Recreational Club 1953–57, Vice-President of Railway Sports Council 1958–61).

S.C.E. SINGAM

He was a teacher by profession; was popularly known as 'Singam Bola' for his active involvement in Malayan football. He had served as President of the Football Association of Selangor (1953) and as a Council Member of Football Association of Malaya (1949–57).

He was actively involved in Y.M.C.A. and T.P.C.A. activities, was President of Selangor Parents' Association (1954/55), and Secretary of Board of Control, Stadium Merdeka, from 1957.

He stood for elections in the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Elections in 1952 and won as an independent candidate.

T. SIVAPRAGASAM

He was born in 1894 in Jaffna, educated in Victoria College, Jaffna and M.B.S. Kuala Lumpur. He joined government service in 1911 and retired in 1952 as Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Federation of Malaya.

He was known as 'Mr Rotary' in District 330 (K.L. Rotary Club) for his outstanding contributions to Malayan Rotary movement for 32 years. He was an ex-President of the K.L. Rotary Club. His other public activities included being Municipal Councillor, Kuala Lumpur (1952–54); Chairman, Malayan Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Selangor; Chairman, Selangor State Scout Council and Kuala Lumpur Boys Scout Association; Member, Board of Governors in ten schools; Trustee, Federal Scout Endowment Fund; Trustee, Ceylon Federation of Malaya; President, Federation of Family Planning Associations; Member of Industrial Courts, Federation of Malaya; and Managing Director, Malayan Cooperative Wholesale Society Limited (1949–1952).

V. G. THALYASINGAM

He was born in Kuala Lumpur in 1909 to Wilson Chellappah Vijayaratnam of the Clerical Service. He was Headmaster of Anglo-Chinese School, Port Swettenham, till 1949 and thereafter was transferred to Methodist Afternoon School in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur, as its Principal. He was responsible for developing the school into an important educational institution in Kuala Lumpur. His son Lloyd V. Thalyasingam became a

doctor while his nephew, Ramon Navaratnam, joined the civil service and rose to be Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Finance, Malaysia and later Secretary-General of the Ministry of Transport, Malaysia.
V.G. Thalyasingam was closely associated with the Methodist Tamil Church, Brickfields.

R. THAMPIPILLAY

He was born in 1879 in Jaffna. He served the Victoria Institution as a teacher for 35 years where he came the first Asian teacher to be promoted to superscale post in 1924. He was awarded the Imperial Service Medal in 1932. During the teaching career he served as the Adjutant of Cadet Corps, Victoria Institution for 31 years.

On retirement in 1934 he had served as Headmaster of the Maxwell English School, Mahatma Gandhi School, Prince of Wales Institution, Ipoh Road School and Vivekananda English School between 1934 and 1953.

He had been on the Board of Visitors to Government Hospitals, Board of Visiting Justices to Prisons, Member of the Rent Assessment Board and Member of the Public Services Appointments and Promotions Board.

He was largely responsible for the formation of the No. 1 Platoon of the Malayan Volunteer Forces, Selangor. His brothers, R. Mailvaganam (attached to the Institute of Medical Research, Kuala Lumpur), Dr. R. Vythilingam (Medical Officer, General Hospital, Kuala Lumpur) and R. Seenivasagam (Head Overseer, Public Works Department, Pahang) all served in Malaya.

A. THAMBY THURAI

He was born in 1883 in Jaffna, educated at Jaffna Hindu College, came to Malaya in 1901 and joined the General Clerical Service where he rose to be Office Assistant, Chief Secretary's Office, Federated Malay States. He died in 1947.

He was actively involved in cooperative development in Malaya, being associated with K.L. Sanitary Board Labourers Cooperative Society and being a founder member of the Jaffnese Cooperative Society Ltd. established in 1924. He became the latter's President from 1926 till 1928 and from 1931 to 1946, during which time the Cooperative developed into a successful and viable economic institution in Malaya.

He had also served as President of the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Club, Malayan Suguna Vilas Sangam and Youth Amateur Dramatic Society. For his services to the country he was awarded an M.B.E. by the British Crown.

E.E.C. THURAISINGHAM

He was born in Taiping in 1898 and obtained his law degree at Cambridge University and at the Middle Temple, London, in 1925. He was President of Ceylon Society in Cambridge.

A successful lawyer, he managed family rubber estates in Johore and Perak between 1934 and 1941 and represented Malaya at several rubber study conferences abroad. He was founder member of Malayan Rubber Estate Owners Association.

He entered public life in Malaya in 1946 when he became Member of the Malayan Advisory Council, Selangor, and later represented the Ceylonese on the Federal Legislative Council in 1948. He was the Chairman of the Communities Liaison Committee formed in 1949 to ease inter-racial feelings in Malaya. E.E.C. was Malayan delegate to Inter-Asian Conference at New Delhi and led U.K. Colonies Delegation to UNESCO Conference in Bangkok in 1950. In 1951 he was made first Member for Education, Federation of Malaya. During this period he helped to establish the Malayan Teachers Training College in U.K. known as Kirby and Brinsford and in Malaya, the Kota Bahru Training College. He was founder President of Ceylon Federation of Malaya from 1946 to 1975.

D.A. VENDARGON

He was born in 1909 in Ceylon but had his early education in Malaya. He was actively involved in missionary activities and served as pastor of St. Anthony's Church in Kuala Lumpur. He was responsible for the erection of St. Theresa's Chapel, Nilai, Negri Sembilan. He was chosen to be first Bishop of Kuala Lumpur in 1955 and later rose to be Archbishop of Malaya.

J.R. VETHAVANAM

He was born in 1879 in Jaffna. He arrived in Malaya in 1901 and joined Federated Malay States Railways. He rose to be Chief Draftsman of the Construction Branch of the F.M.S. Railways. He retired in 1930 and set up private practice. He was an active committee member of the Institute of Architects and an Imperial Service Medalist.

A prominent personality in the pre-war period, he had served as a member of the Selangor State Council from 1935 till 1939; was member of Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board (later K.L. Municipal Council) from 1930 till 1956; was Visiting Justice to the Jail for 20 years, was Member of the Rubber Licensing Board, Member of the Rent Assessment Board, and Member of War Absentees Adjustment Board.

He led a very active social life in Seremban which included being President of Ceylonese Association, Seremban; Seremban Literary Association and

Seremban Reference Library (the latter two amalgamated to form the Negri Sembilan Club); Chairman and Producer of Seremban Dramatic Society; President of Indo-Ceylonese Association and Secretary of the Negri Sembilan Sports Club. In Kuala Lumpur he had served as Chairman of Railway Cooperative Thrift and Loan Society; President of Tamilian Physical Culture Association; organised The Street Boys Club and was founder member and later President of the Young Men's Christian Association, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. He was also the founder member of the Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club and later its Chairman of Community Service Committee, besides sitting on the Asiatic Unemployment Committee in 1930s and on the various school committees as adviser and patron. He was the Vicar's Warden, Parish Church of St. Mary, Kuala Lumpur.

A. VISWALINGAM

He was born in 1890 in Jaffna and had early education there before entering the Straits and F.M.S. Medical School in Singapore in 1909. Had a distinguished career in the Malayan Medical Service and retired as an Ophthalmic Surgeon in 1946. Among his contributions to medicine include the discovery of Pellagra in Malaya for the first time in 1917, setting up the Eye Department in Kuala Lumpur and being a pioneer advocate of Public Health Ophthalmology. He has published a number of articles in medical journals, both locally and abroad, and became a Fellow of Royal Society of Medicine in 1930.

While in Malaya his involvement in public life include being President of Ceylon Association, Taiping in 1917; Founder President of Young Men's Hindu Association 1917; Founder President of Malayan Saiva Siddhantha Sangam 1923; Chairman, Board of Trustees, Athi Eeswaran Temple, Sentul, Kuala Lumpur; Founder Member of Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club 1928 and later President in 1937; Chairman, North Ceylon Flood Relief Fund 1934; Chairman, Ceylon Malaria Epidemic Relief Fund 1937; Chairman, Selangor Anti-Tuberculosis Association (forerunner of Malayan Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis) 1948; Chairman, Malayan Agri-Horticultural Association, 1949–50; and Vice-Chairman, Boy Scouts Association, Selangor.

On retirement in Ceylon he became President of the Ceylon Ophthalmological Society in 1958; became Founder President of the National Association for the Prevention of Blindness 1959–70 (later President Emeritus from 1975 onwards); Member of the Executive Committee of the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness, Paris, 1958–70 and an elected Honorary Life Member of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, 1970 (a distinction granted to outstanding pioneers in international science and practice of ophthalmic care).

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In this research both primary and secondary sources have been consulted, but the bulk of the relevant materials are drawn from government documents, publications of associations, newspaper and interviews with Malayan pensioners in Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

Background literature on the general history of Ceylon was referred though attention was focussed on literature which dealt with the period under British rule. This period was important for it signified the changes and developments in the Ceylon Tamil community. Such literature also provided useful historical data on Jaffna which was relevant for this study. The background literature was useful to trace the historical and cultural origins of the Jaffna Tamils which in turn helped to understand their socio-cultural patterns and behaviour in Malaya. H.W. Thambiah's **Laws and Customs of the Tamils in Jaffna** (Colombo, 1956) and Michael Banks' **The Social Organisations of the Jaffna Tamils in North Ceylon** (Ph. D. Thesis, Trinity College, University of London, 1957), sufficed the need for anthropological data on the customary laws and social organisation of the Ceylon Tamils. The original text on the customary laws or the **Tesavalamai** was first codified in 1707 in Dutch and later translated into English in the nineteenth century. But this text, because it "lacks coherence and systematic exposition of the laws, customs and practices," has been studied and interpreted by Thambiah. It is his critical exposition of the **Tesavalamai** which has proved indispensible for this study. Expect for the above two studies, very little attention has been given to the study of the social history of modern Jaffna.

The Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo, and the Jaffna University Library, Jaffna, have been useful sources for research into the social and economic conditions in Ceylon. Material collected at these two places were invaluable for the initial chapters. At the Sri Lanka National Archives, sources included the Ceylon Administration Reports, especially those pertaining to that of the Northern Province; the Ceylon Sessional Papers; and the Despatches between the Malayan and Ceylon Governments, particularly on recruitment of staff and information on administrative procedures (classified under Lot 6). The Ceylon Blue Books (an official publication containing statistical information on Ceylon matters, especially its economy) and Ferguson's Ceylon Directory which is a compilation of various types of information on Ceylon, and published by the Ceylon Observer Press, were also referred to. While most of the archival material at the Sri Lanka National Archives have been properly catalogued for easy reference there were, at the time of this research (1980–1981), also material which was kept as "Pending Files", as for example files related to the Ceylon Pioneer Corps and Despatches related to Passport Regulations.

The Jaffna University Library contained newspapers like the **Morning Star, Catholic Guardian, Ceylon Patriot** and the **Hindu Organ** which carried abundant material in the form or articles, letters to the editor, news reports and advertisements by shipping agents. These have proved useful for the chapter

on migration. Publications by the various Christian missions and the leading schools in Jaffna were also available at this Library.

Besides literary sources Malayan pensioners living in Jaffna were able to provide a wealth of information not only on the mechanics of migration but also on the conditions prevailing both in Ceylon and in Malaya at the time. Their ability to recall in detail events and developments that took place more than sixty or seventy years ago is surprising. Attempts to collect old letters or diaries from these pensioners, however, were unsuccessful.

Records available at the Arkib Negara (National Archives) in Kuala Lumpur were indispensible for information on the social and political development in Malaya which attracted the Ceylon Tamils to this country. While the Proceedings of the Federal Council and Federal Legislative Council, Annual Reports of various States and Departments and Federated Malay States Annual Reports make some mention of the role of the Ceylon Tamils, the Staff Establishment Lists indicate the numerical predominance of the Ceylon Tamils in the various government departments. Straits Settlements Legislative Council Proceedings, Government Gazettes, Census Reports on population figures and newspapers like the **Straits Times** and **Malay Mail** assisted in the collection of material for a number of chapters.

Relevant information was also obtained through the various Ceylon Tamil association records and publications, the High Court Library, the University of Malaya Library, the Registrar of Societies and school records, especially that of the Victoria Institution and Methodist Boys' School in Kuala Lumpur. Visits were made to various parts of the country and a number of Ceylon Tamils were interviewed to collect information on the activities of the community organisations.

In London the Public Records Office was consulted for supplementary information unavailable in Malaya and Sri Lanka. Most sources available there are largely originals of documents found in the Sri Lanka National Archives and Arkib Negara. Almost all the relevant Colonial Office records bearing reference numbers C.O. 273 and C.O. 537 can be obtained in the form of microfilms at the University of Malaya Library and Arkib Negara. Of the sources unique to the United Kingdom are the shipping records at the National Maritime Museum in Maze Hill, London. They were able to provide details on the fare and frequency of sailings between Ceylon and Malaya by the popular ocean liners plying between the two countries. Though relevant pre-war records of shipping companies, like the Orient Steam Navigation Company were reported lost during the Second World War, records of the Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company and British India Steam Navigation Company are still available at the museum. The newspapers in Sri Lanka, especially the **Hindu Organ** and **Morning Star**, were able to provide the necessary information on fares, sailings and ports visited by the popular liners including the Japanese liners, Nippon Yusen Kaisha and Osaka Shusen Kaisha, and German and French ocean-going ships.

While the above sources indicate material written in English, some Tamil sources were also referred to, though they have not proved as important as English source materials. Souvenir publications of some Ceylon Tamil associations, some of the minutes of the Selangor Ceylon Tamil Association meetings, and Tamil newspapers like **Uthayatharakai** in Jaffna University Library, Jaffna and **Tamil Nesan, Tamil Murasu** and **Jananayakam** in Arkib Negara, Kuala Lumpur, appear to be the only Tamil sources that were available. The dearth of material in Tamil is evidently because most of the Ceylon Tamils were English-educated and preferred to read and write in English.

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