

Shanmugarajah Srikanthan

**HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND CHANGES OF
JAFFNA IN POST-WAR SCENARIO :
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF A FISHING
COMMUNITY OF KATCOVALAM**

Family and household system have been one of the most important study areas in the social science research fields, particularly after the industrial revolution it has gained the attention of anthropologists as well as sociologists. However, in ancient Greece, the concern about family studies was initiated long ago by great scholars like Aristotle. In general in the past fifty years, family and its associated matters have significantly changed both in the western and eastern countries. But the scale of change differs in these countries. Several factors have contributed to these changes. Industrialization is one of the factors for change, leading to urbanism, capitalism, individualism, etc. It has to be mentioned that these trends had its impact on several elements of the societies and culture. In third world countries these trends may be seen during the middle of the twentieth century. In this context this study attempts to discuss the household structure and its changes in a fishing community, Jaffna in the post-war scenario.

A systematic study of the family structure began after the middle of the nineteenth century during the period of Social Darwinism (1885-1900) and continued through the period of emerging science (1900-1950) and the period of systematic theory building (1950). During the first half of the twentieth century various statistical techniques were developed and certain sociologists and psychologists studied personal adjustment of the individual and family influences on personal adjustment and the relationship between certain family problems and social problems in general (Ratra, Kaur and Chhikara 2006:384). The research studies on the family conducted in the past four to five decades have focused on generating empirical evidence in relation to various dimensions of family life – its multiple forms, structure, size and fertility trends, changing function and individual roles and resultant problems (Sriram 1993: 122).

D. H. J. Morgan (1979: 3) in his article titled 'New Directions in Family Research and Theory' pointed out on the new areas of family research studies

that sociologists will no longer be able to rely upon simple 'before and after' snapshots of the pre-industrial and the industrial family and complexities of the relationship between family and economy at different levels will come increasingly appreciated, encouraging the elaboration of new or existing concepts. The study of household is also considered the result of new directions in family research.

The study of household has travelled a long way and in different directions during the last twenty five years or so (Shah 1998: 2). A particular research group in the study of household analyzed the nature of emotions and sentiment on household solidarity beside some scholars desiring to find the relationship between the household stability and economical development. However most of them come to the point that it is the impact of urbanization and industrialization on the household system which is of importance. I am also interested to discuss about the household structure of Jaffna and its changes in the postwar scenario.

Objectives of this study

Shah (1973: 173) suggested in his writings entitled 'The Household Dimension of Family in India' that the phenomenon should also be studied in different sections of the society. Besides, some renowned scholars studied many sections of society in the sociological and anthropological perspective such as teachers, villagers, business community, lower income group, middle class people, woman headed family, joint and nuclear family setup, marriage and dowry, caste and ethnicity, etc., within India and Sri Lanka. However household studies gained little attention of social science researchers. In this regard, this study aims to contribute to the present knowledge of the household studies.

The aim of the present study is to describe and discuss the major household patterns among the fishing community that live in Jaffna and to bring out the major changes that occurred in the household pattern in the post war scenario of Jaffna. The objectives of the study are:

1. To describe and interpret the existing household patterns of Jaffna.
2. To study the matri-local residence household structure of Jaffna and examine the major changes that occurred in the household patterns due to the recent war.

Conceptual frame

This section discusses the concepts of household in relation to its changes based on sociological and anthropological perspectives. In general, family and household is not the same thing, while they often overlap and to distinguish between household and family has now become common in social science. In this regard, one must understand what is understood

by household and its structure? Before even attempting to answer such a question, it is necessary to explore the relationship and differences between family and household in the present context.

Anthropologists refer to human family system as one of the ancient social institutions of the world cultures. Donald C. Johanson and his colleagues have suggested that we should be able to estimate the beginning of earlier human family life between 3 million and 3.5 million ago, based on excavation studies in Ethiopia (Williams 1990: 11). The earlier human family life had been developed when the earlier humans began to live in small groups for several reasons such as gathering food, protecting themselves from wild animals, etc. After this process, some practices such as marriage and kinship related to regulate the sexual rights, property rights, etc., were adapted by human beings for a better life.

Family is one of the words most commonly used in anthropological writings and discussions, and yet its meaning is neither always clear nor a matter of consensus. The family is identified as those kin and affine who live together in the same dwelling, share a common hearth, and jointly participate in production and consumption (Pine 1996: 223). In some research studies, the family seems to be the residential family group, spoken of as the household, 'house site'.

A family is a kin group whose members generally but not necessarily live together in the same household (Dasgupta & Mukhopandhyay 1993: 341). Murdock defined family as a group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and children of their own or adopted by the sexually cohabiting adults (Lazar 1978: 15). The definition of family given by Murdock is somewhat similar to the definition of joint family.

The definitions of family contented one more concept based on the major types of family. Although family is defined as a single unit or a domestic group, it has several types such as nuclear family, extended family, joint family, stem family, etc. In this background, the concept of household mostly correlated to the definition of joint family. Cohn speaks of the joint family as eating from one hearth. This means sharing property and rights, pocket book, larder, debts, labour and usually one head (1961: 1052). Beside, Mayer describes a household as those who share a cooking hearth, pool their income and have living expenses in common (1960: 177).

The type of family is not to be determined by the fact of co-residence, commensality or the size of the group. It is the relationship between the members of a household among themselves and with those of another household that determines the type of that household (Dasai 1956: 148 quoted by Raina 1989: 8). Milton Singer (1968: 437) does not regard household size or

composition, common residence or property as the essential characteristics of a joint family, and suggests that from a sociological point of view, the family should be studied as a 'network' of social relations among persons related in specific ways.

In this context, a household, on the other hand, is a group made up of people who share a common residence and food cooked on the same hearth. In other words, a household is a residential and commensal unit which may be at least theoretically constituted of members who are unrelated to each other although empirically it almost always includes a group of kinsmen (Dasgupta & Mukhopandhyay 1993: 342). The subject matter which was widely discussed under the label 'family' has now turned into 'household', after Mayer (1960: 182) had concretely established the distinction between 'family' and 'household' (Bharathi 1999: 111).

There are some distinctions between the family and household at conceptual levels. Family is a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together; all such people are considered as members of one family, whereas household is a single economic unit all the members of which are mutually dependent on one another for the production of their food supply and the satisfaction of most of their wants (Sahai 1973: 17).

A family mostly consists of people who are related by blood or marriage. Besides a household consists of all the people who occupy a housing unit. A house which is a basic residential place with sensitivity for both family and household, an apartment or other group of rooms, or a single room, is regarded as a housing unit when it is occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters; that is, when the occupants do not live and eat with any other person in the structure and there is direct access to the outside or through a common hall.

Further, a household includes the related family members and all the unrelated people, if any, such as lodgers, foster children, wards, or employees who share the housing unit. A person living alone in a housing unit, or a group of unrelated people sharing a housing unit such as partners or one who occupies a room are also counted as a household. The count of households excludes group quarters. There are two major categories of households, "family" and "nonfamily".

A family household is a household maintained by a householder who is in a family (as defined above), and includes any unrelated people (unrelated subfamily members and/or secondary individuals) who may be residing there. The number of family households is equal to the number of families at all times. The count of family household members differs from the count of family members, however, in that the family household members include all people living in the household, whereas family members include only the householder

and his/her relatives. Let us examine the definition of a family. A nonfamily household consists of a householder living alone (a one-person household) or where the householder shares the home exclusively with people to whom he/she is not related.

In this complex background, every government defined the household for the purpose of census which is taken every ten years (decennial census). In Sri Lanka, Ministry of Plan Implementation in 1987 defined that 'The household consists of one or more persons, living together and having common arrangement for food and other essentials of living'. They may be related or unrelated persons or a combination of both. They are, however, expected to pool their incomes and have a common budget to some extent if not totally. A person who usually lives here but is temporarily away should be included as a member of the household (Kottegoda 2004: 22).

At the same time, the Central Bank of Ceylon, which carries out the Consumer Finance and Socio-Economic Survey, defines the household as a social unit, and spending unit which is seen as an economic unit within the family. Thus, a household is either a person or group who is related or not related, living together and sharing common cooking arrangement (*ibid*: 22), whereas the part of the 1961 census survey in India classified family into the four types: simple, intermediate, joint and others (Kolenda 1989: 73).

Methodology

The study of household structure of Jaffna and its changes are conducted in Jaffna peninsula with special reference to *Katcovalam*, a traditional fishing village. This village is located 5 km from Point Pedro which is a small town in *Vadamarachchi*. *Vadamarachchi* is a culturally significant place more or less 30 km away from Jaffna town in the Jaffna peninsula. Some historical documents on Tamils in Jaffna have recorded that the Kingdom of *Singai Ariayn* had existed here for a long time (Ragupathy 1984: 83).

The data used in this study were collected through intensive fieldwork carried out during in June–July 2012. Beside the statistical information related to the family and household, details documented by the Divisional Secretariat of *Vadamrarchchi* North and West were also considered as secondary data for this study.

According to the intensive fieldwork data, this study would be analyzed based on the research problem on the two major approaches such as descriptive and stakeholder analyses. The descriptive methods mostly is used in analyzing the household patterns, whereas the changes that occurred on the household patterns were analyzed based on the stakeholder analyses which are defined by the World bank that 'those affected by the outcome – negatively or positively – or those who can affect the outcome of a proposed intervention' (Roth 2001: 37). In this background there are several factors such as war, foreign migration,

economic development programme, government housing plan, etc. All these factors contributed to the changing household patterns of Katcovalam, a fishing village. In this regard, the stakeholder analyses are useful to analyze this kind of information.

Short Introduction of Jaffna

Jaffna is one of the historical places in northern part of Sri Lanka and is also the homeland of the Tamils from pre-historical times. Geographically, Jaffna and the adjoining islands form a single unit and strikingly differ from the rest of Sri Lanka. Such a distinctive ecological character may have been possibly responsible for the rise of the homogeneous culture, social and economic pattern of the peninsula, with its own identity (Ragupathy 1987: 3). Further the Jaffna peninsula had a multi-dimensional relationship with the neighbouring country of India especially Tamil Nadu from very early times.

Fishing has historically been one of the main activities in Sri Lanka including Jaffna where families engaged in fishing have inhabited from a very early date relating to *Veddha's* period (Sivasubramaniam 2009: 16). In Jaffna, most fishermen belong to the *Karaiyar* caste who dwelled mostly in the coastal area of *Vadamarachchi* and other parts of Jaffna, along with small *Mukkiyar* and *Thimiliar* community in western parts of the district. The present study is concerned with the household structure of *Karaiyar* which differs from the household structure of Indian villages even though their ethnohistory reveals that the myth of their origin or spread emerged from the ancient Indian myth.

Household Patterns of South Asia

The aim of this section is to examine the major household structure existing in the South Asian region, especially India. Household in South Asia is a specific confluence of three forms of social relations – kinship, production and consumption (Gray and Mearns 1989: 22). Most of ethnography accounts of South Asian households involve identifying a genealogical matrix of membership and social relations (*ibid*: 22).

A number of studies on family and household in India and South Asia were carried out by several researchers belonging to different fields. B. S. Cohn (1961), Savitri Shahani (1961), A. M. Shah (1973, 1998), I. Sahai (1973), Pauline Kolenda (1987), J. K. Raina (1989), J. N. Gray and D. Mearns (eds.) (1989), Patricia Uberoi (1993), S. Dasgupta and R.S. Mukhopadhyay (1993), M. Kodanda Rao (1990), Bhakthavatsala Bharathi (1999) are some of the contributors in the field of family and household studies in Indian and Sri Lanka.

This section discusses only the research works of Shah, Raina, Pauline Kolenda and Kodanda Rao, Bhakthavatsala Bharathi, although a number of researchers have contributed for classifying household structure in several ways. They all agree on the classification of the household based on the

numerical and kinship/genealogy and size based classification and nucleus studies and commonness based on classification. However there are some differences in classifying existing household patterns of South Asia at the micro level. The following discussions emphasize only the different techniques used for kinship based classification of household patterns put forward by the scholars referred to above.

Professor A. M. Shah is a renowned scholar on the family and household studies and author of 'The Household Dimension of the Family in India' (1973) and 'The Family in India: Critical Essays' (1998) which receive the attention of most researchers. This reveals his endeavour and brilliant knowledge on the families of India. Shah demonstrated the households into the ten subdivision based on kinship composition. He further divided nuclear household as four major groups, beyond this he discusses the joint household as six major types (see Shah 1998: 70). He considers only the two generation groups particularly husband, wife and their unmarried children when dividing the nuclear household into four major groups. Beside this, his joint household classifications include the ideas of the definition of the joint family as well as the household.

Pauline Kolenda has written a number of research papers regarding the family and household structure on Indian villages. Kolenda has also authored a number of books. In one of Kolenda's studies namely 'Regional Differences in Family Structure in India', focused she on the dimensions of the family structure based on the nine studies carried out among the particular sub-lineage societies. According to this study, classifications of family structure in India are described in twelve types which give proper guidance to the researchers who are involved in family and household studies (see Kolenda 1987: 11-12).

Raina who authored 'Structural and Functional Changes in the Joint Family System: A Study based on D. C. M. Workers', also classified all household patterns into seven types based on the different categories such as nuclear and joint family system. His nuclear household is divided into four subparts in considering a single family which is defined as a combination of not only husband and wife with unmarried children but also unemployed minor brother or widowed mother. At the same time she analyzed the joint household based on the concepts of lineal and fraternal members (see Raina 1989: 26 – 31).

Kodanda Rao published a research book entitled 'Cultural and Structural Dimensions of Family: A Study of *Jalaris* Fishermen'. The focus of this book is on the study of family and household among the *Jalaris* of coastal Andhra, South India. His classification of household structure derives from the composition method of the household. Based on this approach, he classified the household structure of *Jalaris* into three types. Each type was also divided

into four subdivisions. So he included twelve classifications of household structure (see Kodanda Rao 1990: 63 -90).

Bhakthavatsala Bharathi in his publications titled 'Coromandel Fishermen: An Ethnography of *Pattanavar* Subcaste'. In this book he classified the household structure of *Pattanavar* sub-caste under the nine types based on his intensive fieldwork carried out among the Coromandel coastal fishermen community of Tamil Nadu, India. In his research studies, he emphasizes the major factors such as broken family; incomplete family; family dependents which form the basis formation of new household structure (see Bharathi 1999: 117-119).

The earlier studies have shown that there is a relatively consistent variation in the incidence of different household types among the different grouping of population of villages of India. In other words, even if the developmental cycle of dissolution and formation of joint household is a universal feature, it does not necessarily operate in the same manner for all grouping.

Household Structure of Jaffna

Family is a basic domestic unit among human beings. In common English parlance the word Family has several different meanings, including household (Shah 1998: 53). The Tamil term '*kutumbam*', that is literarily meaning for family is also ambivalent, a concept invariably used in wider situation of life time. Aside, this term denotes that husband and wife with their children live together through the relationship of affinity in particular society even though they lived separate in brevity for the purpose of employment, education, etc. Even though adult men and women are living together in illegally, they don't consider or are mentioned by other as '*kutumbam*' – family under the view of cultural sense. Other sided this term is used to mention a particular residential group in which the members of group are linked through consanguinity or affinity relations.

Another term of Tamil '*illam*' or '*vidu*' literarily meaning for house is used to designate the household referring to its activities. The '*nadchaar vidu*' literarily meaning four square house which has a common open space in the center and a common hearth with several rooms is a traditional structure of a house in Jaffna. Its structure supports the idea that joint household habits existed in Jaffna for many years and lasted until about the last fifty years.

The Jaffna household structure usually consists of an adult male, his wife and their children. In some cases, it includes the married daughter's family or wife's parents with or without their children; this may be the result of the existing dowry system in Jaffna. All the parents of all 'prospective brides' are expected to give a house with land to the groom as dowry in the conjugal

ceremony, in other words, this has now become a cultural practice and more or less an unwritten rule.

The Jaffna household is a small matrilineal kin group of narrow range. It always consists of a family unit, i.e., headman of the family with his wife and unmarried children sometimes this family consists of the married daughter and her husband with their children or wife's father and mother. In the Jaffna cultural situation, on marriage, a man is brought into his wife's household or the usual mode of post-marital residence is matri-local. It was confirmed by the marriage and post marriage ritual. This will be compared and discussed with Tamil Nadu household structure at the end of this paper. Several kinds of household composition have arisen in Jaffna due to the war.

The classification of the household structure has been examined on the basis of two aspects. Firstly classification is a 'numerical composition household'. Indeed, it was determined through the size of household; in other words this classification is the basis of the *etic* perspective. Secondly classification is 'kinship or a genealogical composition household' in which household members relate through consanguinity and affinity, in other words, it was classified based on the *emic* view. Despite household theoretically emphasizes the constitution of members who are related or unrelated to each other, it empirically almost always includes a group of kinsmen. However this study refers kinship or genealogy to classify household structure of Jaffna because there is no account on non-related household composition in our data.

Numerical Composition of Household

This classification only considers how many members are living together in a house. That is to say, it is based on the number of household members beyond the kinship composition for household formation. There is a considerable range in the size of households (see below Table 1) which reflects the range of variation in genealogical or kinship composition.

The average size of household in Sri Lanka was 4.27 persons in 2003/04, compared with 5.75 persons per household in 1963 (see below Central Bank of Sri Lanka's Report - Table 2). The average of household in the research village is 5.08 persons per household based on the data collected by using household profile questionnaire from 215 families inhabited in *Katcivalam*.

The following household classification adopted by Raina in his study of structural and function changes in the joint family system (1989: 26) while her classification also tallies with Gore, Shah. The numerical household structure of Jaffna based on data collected from *Katcivalam* fishing village have been classified under four categories as follows (see below Table 3): small household (1-3), Medium household (4-6), Large household (7-9) and very large household (10>).

The table 1 shows the household classification based on the range of the numerical size of household which varies from 1 person to 10 person and reveals general household structure of *Katcovaalam* whereby according to Table 3, in the 215 households studied in *Katcovaalam*, 124 or nearly half (57.67%) of households in the village, are found to be having medium household structures while small household is included into one third percentage (33.03%) among all household. However, these findings are not enough to find the general conclusions on the variation of distributions of the numerical household classification because non-numerical facts have contributed to these variations. So, these findings pave the way for another analyzing method.

Kinship or Genealogical Composition Household

The kinship or genealogy has emerged as a prominent component in the analysis of household formation and its classification due to the lack of use in the numerical household classifications. Kinship as 'cultural construction' is a basic institution in human societies. Wider kinship system was built upon the foundation of family and household.

The study of kinship composition is more meaningful than the study of the numerical strength of the households because it gives the clue regarding the structural nuclearity or jointness of the families (Raina 1989: 27). Every household is composed of two or more generation groups with the exception of solitary household that was established due to the decline of his or her natal family. In this situation, we should consider the role of kinship and genealogy in the household formation and its classification.

The household structure of Jaffna based on the family structure of *Katcovaalam* traditional fishing community was classified into seven types (see below Table 4), this is based on kinship and genealogical method along with many of the classifications available.

Content of table 4 is household structure of *Katcovaalam* divided into seven broader types. Thus, each of these classifications would be further subdivided through specification of composition patterns of various households involved and every type incorporates one or more of the significant features. It is noteworthy that the thirty five years of war that took place in Jaffna, Sri Lanka has been the cause/basis for the formation of new household structures in Jaffna peninsula. It would be discussed in depth under the following sub-headings.

Single Person Household Structure

This household type consists of single person who lives alone for several reasons such as the death of his or her spouse, his or separation of the family, have no children, If they have children, their children have given

up them, he or she did never got married. According to the data collected by me 7.44 per cent of all household are single person household in which 10 single persons in out of 16 households were women and their average age is between 60 to 75 years. The single person household is distributed in three sub categories: widower, widow and single meaning un-married (see below table 5).

From the personal conversation I had, most of the single household persons said that their offsprings live away from them such in other parts of the country or in foreign countries due to the war and employment opportunities. Apart from this few persons felt sad that their children do not care for them, while some children look after them although they lived in separate households. However, from table 4 one can that only one household consists of an un-married person.

Incomplete household structure

Incomplete household is one where husband and wife live together although they had no children (Bharathi 1999: 118). There are several factors that contributed to this kind of household formation, The members did not either have children or the children born, did not live with the parents for some reason, they were either killed or migrated to other parts of country or foreign countries as a consequence of the war, and in some rare cases the parents who survived re-married and formed new households.

Further according to my data four incomplete household are formed due to the war and *tsunami*. Two of these households include grand mother and her grand children. One of these children lost the parents in the tsunami. In the second case the father died due to the war and the mother re-married. In the third case in order to get an opportunity for better advanced level education, one of the grand-daughters whose parents lived in *Wanni* where the educational resource is comparably low than that in Jaffna lived with her grand-parents. Finally, the case is totally different from the above and consists of the husband and wife with married daughter whose husband is restrained by Sri Lanka government in the rehabilitation camp because he was suspected as a member of the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil *Eelam*) and a grand-daughter whose parents died in the war that took place in *Wanni* in 2009 (see below table 6).

According to table 4, more or less 10 percent of the total households in *Katcovalam* has an incomplete household structure. Because of the war, approximately 2 percent of 215 households or four out of 215 new incomplete households were created while the parents living alone, while their offspring and to foreign countries as refugees during the war, the parents admitted that their children had to be forced to migrate for the safety.

Nuclear Household Structure

The preponderance of simple kinship structures reflects the tendency of the households to split in each generation into simple and nuclear households (Kodanda Rao 1990: 65). Generally, nuclear household consists of husband and wife with their progeny, whereas earlier it consisted of the widowed mother with her unmarried offspring, and some time, mother and her offspring live together alone for the reason that her husband (their father) lives apart from them in order to earn money in foreign countries. Most of the nuclear households represent transitional forms in the normal functioning of the developmental cycle of joint family households involving the breakup of a joint family household into several nuclear households (Dasgupta and Mukhopadhyay 1993: 346). (see below table 7).

There are 144 such households classified under the nuclear household, forming nearly 67 per cent of the total 215 households recorded in the *Katcovalam*. It includes the parents and their children. Nearly 16 percent of the nuclear households consist of women headed households, while 35 families were counted as women headed family households in all household profile. The following table 8 (see below) shows the causes of total women headed family households based on the 215 household profiles collected from *Katcovalam*.

Stem Household Structure

In order to study the impact of industrialization, urbanization, the size of joint families has been substantially reduced or is found in its fragmented form. Some have split into several nuclear families while others have taken the form of extended or stem families (Singh 2010: 18). At this point, the stem family household is as a small expansion of nuclear family household and it consists of the residential aggregation of a parental family and the family of one of the children (Witkowsk 1996: 482), usually in Jaffna, it is the younger daughter and her family lives with her parents. However it includes a nuclear household with additional single person who is a widower father / father in law and widowed mother / mother in law (see below table 9).

According to the fieldwork survey data of all households stem families household constituted nearly 4 percent. In three cases of stem family households the inclusion of additional member to one's nuclear family took place in parental line when a widowed parent joined a daughter's nuclear household at the death of the other spouse. Especially in all three cases an extra single person who is a widowhood mother or mother in law joined her daughter's or son in law's custody. It reveals the Jaffna matri-local culture. That is to say, dowry system in Jaffna emphasizes that the parents should give house with small land (in Tamil version *vidu valvu*) to their daughter as a dowry when they arrange the marriage of their daughter. In other words this is also expected from the bridegroom's side. At the same time, most of mothers like to stay with their daughters after their spouse died, this was

revealed from the conversation I had with them. In this regard it is not surprising to continue a matri-local culture in Jaffna.

Extended Family Household Structure

Extended family household which is in fact a transitory phase between joint and nuclear family household systems, which usually includes a man, his wife and children with extensions formed by both his or her parents or unmarried siblings who lost their parents. Our survey in *Katcivalam* refers to all the extended households in Jaffna which are established based on matrilineal kinship, viz. most of the women like to stay with their parents or sibling, in the situation if she became a widow or due to desertion from her husband at a young age. The following table 10 (see below) portrays the nature of extended household structure of *Katcivalam*.

There are 9 such extended households in the village and in all these cases the extensions rely on the women lineage. Two new types of extended households have emerged due to the war.

We can further divide the entire extended households in Jaffna into two. The first one called parental extended family household in which extensions are made by the wife's parents or the daughter. The second one is fraternal extended family household in which the extensions will be based on the married sibling.

Joint Family Household Structure

Even there are multiple definitions of the joint family household. A. C. Mayer in his book titled 'Caste and Kinship in Central India' (1960: 180-181) noted that a household where only one man resides is simple household or where more men reside and pool their income and expenditure is a joint family household which composed of both parents and their one or more married sons or daughters and their wife or her husband with their children. However it should be noted that Pauline Kolenda (1989: 57) noted in his study 'a joint family is a household composed of two or more related couples'.

As the table 11 shows, more or less 85 percent of joint households consist of married women lineage groups with exception of only two families established based on the married son lineage. However, according to case study recorded from the head of the householder whose son stays with him, his son has to stay with him because their marriage was not accepted by the bride's relatives because they belong to *Vellalar* caste which is considered as upper caste comparably with bridegroom's caste. As a result they did not give dowry to the daughter. In this situation the new couple was forced to stay in the bridegroom's house. If the bridegroom parents also rejected their marriage they have to form a new household. This case study also confirms the matri-local household structure existing in Jaffna.

Multiple Family Household Structures

Indeed it contains two or more discrete simple families (quoted by Sanhek 1996: 286). According my data four multiple households exist in the *Katcovalam* fishing village (see below table 12).

Multiple family household generally seems to be rare. However, it is noteworthy that four households in out of 215 households were counted as multiple households in the small fishing village. All multiple family households in *Katcovalam* consist of three single families in which all members are connected through their kinship.

Matri-local Residence Patterns in Jaffna Household Structure

The question was raised in this paper, why was there a higher proportion of matri-local residential family households.

Matri-local residence is generally defined as a residence pattern in which a married couple lives in the locality associated with wife's relatives. In other words a man may live with the family in which his wife grew up. This is called matri-local residence (Haviland 1981: 219). Everyone a Hindu, high caste or low caste follows the same basic pattern of marriage and residence: the daughters stay put, the sons marry out, and unmarried children periodically shift domicile (McGilvray 1989: 201). In the matri-local/ matrilineal zone of Sri Lanka, virtually all the family wealth goes to the daughter as dowry, which thus functions as the main channel and premortem matrilineal inheritance (Goody and Tambiah 1973, quoted by McGilvray 1989: 201).

Chidenam literally meaning 'dowry system' is derived from the Sanskrit word '*Stridhana*', many writers have erroneously come to the conclusion that the law relating to *chidenam* is taken from the Hindu Law (Tambiah 2004: 158). However *chidenam* existing in Jaffna is a significant feature in comparing with the Indian Hindu Law of *Stridhana* (ibid: 160 – 161). Among Jaffna Tamils, the essential core of a woman's dowry is land and a house, while cash, jewelry, clothing and utensils are additional (McGilvray 1989: 201). The absolute minimum dowry a woman must have is a house; without it, or without at least a firm pledge that it will be built, a marriage is usually impossible (ibid: 201) while there are exception in love marriages.

In this background every bride's parent became obliged to give land and house to their daughter on the occasion of her marriage. Most parents choose / try / prefer to give the house in which they live as a dowry to their daughter, until they are able to find a new house with land. It is a complicated matter because, the parents may have other unmarried female children and they will be forced to find houses for them as well. Having unmarried male siblings is not a problem as they are not obliged to give a donation to them. As

a result the parents usually prefer to stay in their daughter's house or the bridegroom must be moved to his wife's house and the new couple may become responsible and are expected to look after the wife's parents.

It is obvious from the data presented above that 81 percent of the household surveyed lived in independent dwellings unity without any kith or affine of either members of the marriage, 39 household or 19 per cent of the total households were dependent dwelling units in which 87 per cent of the households cover matri-local or matrilineal residential groups while only 2 households were patri-local or matrilineal residential groups. However three multifamily households reveal dual residential patterns.

Impact of War on the Household Structure

A careful examination of the characteristics of the household structure falling within each category particularly those of the incomplete, nuclear, extended, and multiple household types, it reveals some prominent features related to the war that seems to distinguish the common household structure of Jaffna.

North and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka have been affected due to the war situation for the last 35 years. The result of this war has made changes not only in economical structure but also in social elements as well. Family and household are major social institutions. It is generally affected in a war situation due to death or disappearance or injury of the family members, as well as destruction of livelihood activities. Particularly if the head of household is affected due to any of the above reasons, the household concerned may be affected due to the loss of the breadwinner. It should be noted that the Jaffna society lived in a war situation for over 35 long years.

In this context war has contributed for the establishment of new household structures among the Jaffna people. According to my data two incomplete households (table 6) were created due to war and two extended households (table 10) also established due to the same reason. Further, five married women lost their husbands and became widows and one married woman was separated from her husband as a result of this war (table 8). In another case the daughter from a multiple household lost her husband and the mother who is a widow is now forced to maintain her married daughter.

Apart from these cases there are six nuclear family household headed by women due to the fact that their husbands are away in foreign countries in order to earn a living, jobs are rare in Sri Lanka, these men had no choice but to seek employment outside the home country. However, I am not trying to conclude that the total household structure of Jaffna was destroyed or changed completely as a result of the war, at the same time it should be recorded that the war has contributed immensely for the changes that took place the household system.

Twelve households out of 215 households which is more or less five percent of all household surveyed have been established as a result of the war in Jaffna, the seven household types have been ascertained by me and which were interpreted above. However it did not cover other types like the household with the husband in foreign countries or children missing or left the country due to the war.

This research concludes following this discussion that the matri-locality residential culture has been continuing from very early days of Jaffna. It was confirmed by the Law of Tamil Customs (*Tesavalamai Saddam*). And the traditional household structure of Jaffna has also been impacted by the 35 years war in several ways along with urbanization, industrialization, and other inducing factors.

Table 1
Numerical Distribution of Households in Katcovalam

No. of persons per household	Frequency	Percentage	Total
1	16	7.44	16
2	24	11.16	248
3	31	14.42	93
4	58	26.98	232
5	49	22.79	245
6	17	7.91	102
7	08	3.72	56
8	08	3.72	64
9	02	0.93	18
10	02	0.93	20
Total	215	100.00	1094

Average household members: 5.08 per household

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 2
Average Household Members in Sri Lanka 1963 - 2003/04

Area	1963	1973	1978/79	1981/82	1986/87	1996/97	2003/04
Urban	5.97	5.78	5.67	5.50	5.17	4.89	4.40
Rural	5.70	5.63	5.49	5.20	5.09	4.56	4.24
Estate	5.80	5.24	4.73	4.80	4.78	4.74	4.56
All	5.75	5.62	5.46	5.20	5.10	4.61	4.27

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka Report (website <http://www.cbsl.gov.lk-20.10.2012>)

Table 3
Household structure based numerical household members in Katcovaalm

Types	Frequency	Percentage
Small household (1-3)	71	33.03
Medium household (4-6)	124	57.67
Large household (7-9)	18	8.37
Very large household (10>)	02	0.93
Total	215	100%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 4
Household classification based on Kinship and Genealogy

No	Major Types of Household	frequency	Percentage
1	Single person household structure	16	7.44
2	Incomplete household structure	20	9.30
3	Nuclear household structure	144	66.98
4	Stem household structure	09	4.19
5	Extended family household structure	09	4.19
6	Joint family household structure	13	6.04
7	Multiple family household structures	04	1.86
		215	100%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 5
Distribution of Single Household structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Widower	05	31.25
Widow	10	62.50
Un-married	01	06.25
Total	16	100%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 6
Distribution of Incomplete Household structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife without children	03	15.00
Husband and wife alone even child bear	13	65.00
Husband and wife with grant daughter	01	05.00
Grandmother and her grand children	02	10.00
Husband and wife with grand-daughter whose parents were killed and married daughter whose husband is segregated	01	05.00
Total	20	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 7
Distribution of Nuclear Family Household Structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring	121	84.03
Mother and offspring due to husband in foreign	06	4.17
Mother and offspring due to widowhood	17	11.81
Total	144	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 8
Causes of women headed household structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband in foreign countries	06	15.79
Widowhood due to: Natural death	18	47.37
War and violence	05	13.16
Man made accidents	04	10.53
Separated due to: War	01	02.63
Divorce	02	05.26
Other reasons	02	05.26
Total	38	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 9
Distribution of Stem family Household Structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and the widowed mother in law	07	77.78
Mother a widow with unmarried offspring and her mother who is also a widow	01	11.11
Mother separated from husband with unmarried offspring and her widowed mother	01	11.11
Total	09	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 10
Distribution of Extended Household Structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and his widow daughter whose husband was killed during the war and her children	01	11.11
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and daughter deserted by her husband and her children	03	33.33
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and his father in law with his wife	04	44.44
Brother and sister whose husband disappeared during the war (1998) with her daughter	01	11.11
Total	09	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 11
Distribution of Joint Family Household Structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and married son with his wife and children	02	15.38
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and married daughter with her husband and children	08	61.54
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and his father in law with his wife and children	02	15.38
Widow mother with unmarried son and married daughter with her husband and children	01	7.70
Total	13	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

Table 12
Distribution of Multiple Family Household Structure

Categories	frequents	Percentage
Husband and wife with married daughter whose husband was in foreign country and his mother in law	01	25.00
Husband and wife with unmarried offspring and married daughter with her husband and children and his mother	01	25.00
Widow mother with unmarried offspring and young widow daughter whose husband was killed in the war with her children and her husband's sister who is a mentally affected person	01	25.00
Widow mother with unmarried offspring and married son with wife and her father and mother	01	25.00
Total	04	100.00%

Source: Intensive Fieldwork

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