

# HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE PLANTATION SECTOR.

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A majority of the Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka live in the estates or the rural areas of the country. According to the last census of the population conducted in 1981 in Sri Lanka, the number of people living in the estate sector was 933,451 persons or 6.3 per cent of the total population. Among the estate population, the greater majority (75 per cent) were Tamils of Indian Origin and they lived predominantly in Nuwara-Eliya, Badulla, Kandy, Ratnapura, Kegalle, and Matale districts. A substantial number of people of this community also lived in the Northern and Eastern districts of Sri Lanka. The total number of Tamils of Indian origin living in Sri Lanka in 1981 was 1,031,651 or 6.9 per cent of the total population of 14.8 million (1). According to the latest conventional estimate, the present (1996) number of Tamils of Indian origin in the country was around 1.35 million or 7 per cent of the total population of 18.4 million (2)

## *Human Resource Development*

Among all resources of a country it is the Human Resource that is more valuable and important for growth and development. If not for the development of human resource, many of the developed societies today would not have reached the present levels of progress and development. The present scenario of the development of human resources in Sri Lanka among different ethnic groups is at different levels and the status of the Tamils of Indian origin is in the bottom of the list. The data obtainable from the Consumer Finance Surveys conducted by the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in 1986 / 87 provides information about the educational attainments of different ethnic groups in the country, which can be considered as an index of the level of human resource development.

Table I highlights the low levels of the educational attainments of the estate sector, which is the lowest and the zero level at the tertiary level education and nearly zero level at the higher secondary level.

**Table 1**

***Distribution of levels of Education among sectors - 1986 - 87***

Particulars	Urban	Rural	Estate	All
No Schooling (Illiterate)	7.8	10.9	31.5	11.8
Primary	31.7	42.2	52.7	41.1
Secondary	36.1	33.1	12.1	32.1
SSC/GCE(O/L)	18.5	11.2	2.7	11.9
GCE (A/L)	4.2	2.0	0.2	2.3
Undergraduates	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.2
Graduates	1.6	0.4	0.0	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**Source:** Central Bank of Sri Lanka, The Report on Consumer Finances and Socic Economic Survey 1986/87 Sri Lanka, part I, (1986), (Colombo), p. 80.

***Objectives***

The major objectives of this article are to identify the problems related to the development of education at secondary and tertiary levels of the estate sector populations, which comprises the greater majority of the Tamils of Indian origin in this country and to suggest remedial actions necessary to adopt policy commitments by the state in order to change the situation towards the development of the human resources of this community.

***State response in the past***

The Government of at various stages especially after 1977 recognised the problems faced by the Tamils of Indian origin and also agreed to introduce remedial measures to overcome these problems in response to requests made by representatives from this community. Government took over most of the plantation Tamil schools by the early 1980s and now they are under the administration of the Ministry of Education. (3) Under foreign donor assistance some of the schools have been earmarked for some improvements and some of the plantation schools have now been improved. However some more schools (about 400 schools) are still in need of rehabilitation if they are to be effectively. (4)

The Government at policy level agreed to employ qualified young men and women from the Tamil community of Indian origin as teachers in those schools indentified as Plantation Tamil schools. This action was undertaken to provide teaching services uninterruptedly.

This has been a major problem during the last one and a half decades owing to the on-going internal war. Prior to 1987 teaching services were provided in the plantation Tamil schools by teachers from the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. But it has faced difficulties owing to various reasons. This being the major factor, it is also felt important to provide employment opportunities of the educated youth of the Tamil people of Indian origin. Teaching is one of the field in which the public sector still provides a substantial number of job opportunities. Out of the present population of 194,000 teachers (1993), even if five per cent is allocated to the Tamils of Indian Origin, they could secure about 10,000 of these jobs. At present, there are only about 3,500 teachers belonging to this community, while the possibility exists for providing at least 3,000 jobs based on urgent needs. (5)

There is also another reason for employing them based on their religious and cultural background. As much as 95 per cent or more of the Tamils of Indian origin in this country are Hindus and to teach children of this community, religion as a subject in schools, teachers should be familiar with their religion, in the same way the other religious groups in the country look after their children.

Above all, a community which is very backward and deprived of education must be taught by persons, who can have sufficient personal knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the community and also have some degree of awareness of their social and cultural background in order to impart knowledge and provide the necessary service at least with a minimum level of commitment and understanding.

### ***Teacher requirement***

There are 821 plantation Tamil schools in Sri Lanka (1996) in which 4,848 teachers are employed to teach some 200,000 students. (6) This leaves a teacher - student ratio of 1:41 and it varies from 1:61 in Nuwara Eliya to 1:34 in Homagama area. Whereas this ratio at the national level was 1:23 in 1993. This is partly owing to the fact that the existing vacancies of around 3,140 for teachers in the plantation Tamil schools have not been filled. Out of the total requirement of 9,210 teachers, about 35 per cent remain vacant. These vacancies are for Primary, Mathematics, Science, English and for other teaching requirements.(7) Annexe 1a, 1b and 1c

provide details about the type of teachers required and their distribution at district level.

**Shortage of Qualified Persons - A Human resource problem**  
Teachers for the Plantation Tamil Schools are recruited with G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) qualifications. At G.C.E. (O/L), the candidate should have passed in six subjects including Mathematics and First Language (Tamil). They also should have obtained at least three credit passes out of the six subjects.

Candidates with A/L qualifications are required to have obtained at least three passes. Unfortunately, candidates with the above minimum qualifications are found to be few in number.

A ministerial study reveals that only 48 students from 52 leading plantation Tamil schools have passed with the necessary qualifications at the O/Ls in 1996 to proceed to A/Ls, the minimum qualification necessary to obtain teaching posts in Government schools.(8)

The number of students who passed in subjects or more at the G.C.E. A/Ls in 1996 from among 25 schools out of the 32 plantation Tamil school is as follows.

Arts.....	313 candidates
Commerce.....	147 candidates
Mathematics / Science.....	32 candidates
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>492 candidates</b>

From the available information it could be assumed that candidates qualified to apply for teaching posts from among the Tamils of Indian Origin are very few. At the national level about 300,000 applications were received by the Education Services Commission for 25,000 teaching vacancies. For the recruitment of 1,000 teachers for the Tamil schools in the plantations on the other hand only 1,300 applications were received from the Tamil of Indian Origin. This clearly reflects the shortage of qualified persons in the community.(9)

At the university level the number of persons from this community registered for degree courses in all 12 national Universities is less than 150. This means that only 35 persons would graduate each year from all the Faculties of the Universities in

the country.(10)

These are the potential sources from which candidates for teaching posts can be drawn and that too without any special training necessary to quality, for teaching. Any person recruited from the above sources invariable has to undergo a special teacher training course to become a fully qualified teacher. At present only 33 per cent of the teachers in the Plantation Tamil schools have gone through formal teacher training. As a result 67 per cent of the teachers are untrained and cause a quality teaching problem in schools. (11)

The one the only college of Education located at Kottagala has enrolled 283 trainees of whom 115 are expected to complete their training by the end of this year. This institution has a capacity to train 360 trainees from among Tamil student of Indian Origin at any given time, selecting 180 per batch.

It is unfortunate that the number of persons who applied for training is so low that it leaves 77 vacant places for which no suitably qualified students have applied. (12)

There is no difficulty in absorbing the trainees completing this course Palntation Tamil schools. Unfortunately, those trained to be deployed in the Plantation Tamil schools previously have been assigned to urban schools where children from other ethnic groups are predominant.

The Government Training College at Kotagala has a capacity to train 65 teachers each year. This college recruits trainees every year to meet its full capacity. Even if this Training College continues to take the same number, in future too, it will take at least a quarter century to train all the untrained teachers who are now in these schools. This will result in some teachers retiring without any training and some generations of students will be forced to learn from untrained teachers throughout their school career.

### Master Teachers

Master Teachers are expected to contribute to the maintenance of the quality of teaching in schools by providing in-service training to teachers in their subjects. in the case of Plactation Tamil Schools, where two-thirds of the teacher population is without formal training or higher education, the role of Master Teachers can be extremely valuable. As proposed by the Ministry of Education, the Plantation Tamil

Schools are in need of 200 Master Teachers to handle eleven subject areas as shown in table . At present there are only 30 Master teachers in service, 170 or 85 per cent of the positions are vacant. Table 2 gives details of Master Teachers needed in Plantation Tamil Schools for the year 1997 by subject areas.

Table 2

Master Teachers requirements for Plantation Tamil Schools - 1997

Subjects	No. of master Teachers required
Tamil	19
Science/ Maths	18
Social Studies	18
Religion	09
Art	12
Music and Dance	13
Agriculture	12
English	3
Home Science	09
Primary	26
Commerce	12
Total	170

The shortage of Master Teachers for the Plantation Tamil Schools at Provincial level is shown in Annexe 2.

### Management of Schools

Each school needs a Head teacher / Principal to manage the schools efficiently and to make the best use of the available resources for the benefit of the students by adopting the latest management principles and techniques. Most of the Plantation Tamil schools are faced with a shortage of qualified, experienced and grade Head teacher / Principal.

Therefore many of the Plantation Tamil schools are manned by unqualified, inexperienced and ungraded persons, resulting in inefficiency and waste of resources.

Among the Plantation Tamil Schools there are 156 schools in need of Principals of different grades. 75 per cent of these vacancies are found in the Plantation Tamil Schools in the Central and Sabaragamuwa provinces. The breakdown of the shortage of principals and their grades for Plantation Tamil Schools is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**

**Principal positions vacant in Plantation Tamil schools - 1997.**

Principal Grades vacant				Total	%
Provinces	1	11	111		
Central	10	20	44	74	47
Uva	4	8	19	31	20
Sabara gamuwa	5	8	25	38	25
Western	-	4	9	13	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100</b>

The number of principals in each grade needed, now available and the shortages are given at Provincial level in annexe 3.

**Supervision and Administration assignments**

Besides teachers, the services of various supervisory and administrative categories are necessary for the efficient functioning of the school system. Master Teachers and Principals are good examples of this. These persons are expected to possess the necessary experience and training to supervise and monitor the progress of schools so that the resources are efficiently used, in order to ensure that the students get the best out of these resources.

At present, there are different kinds of officials who function in the Education system to achieve the institutional objectives. The following are some of the important categories of officials in the school system.

1. Additional Zonal Directors (15 Vacancies - Only one is filled)
2. Deputy Directors of Education (12 Vacancies - Only 6 are filled)
3. Divisional Officers (30 Vacancies - none is filled)

The Ministry of Education has already identified 118 positions that could be filled with persons who possess qualifications necessary to join the SLES and was

able to fill only 9 positions form among Plantation Tamil Officials. 109 positions remain unfilled due to lack of suitably qualified persons from this Community, the breakdown of these positions are shown in Table 4. About 90 per cent of the positions are unfilled and this is a very serious problem.

**Table 4** Positions to be filled with SLES Qualifications to work for the Plantation Tamil Schools - 1997.

<b>SLES Posts</b>		<b>Shortage</b>
Class I	10	10
Class II	23	23
Class III	41	41
Development Unit Class III	35	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>109</b>

Details of the vacancies available at Provincial level for SLES positions are shown in annexe 4.

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

- Conclusions**
- There is a severe shortage of suitably qualified persons among Plantation Tamil to meet the demand for the position of teachers, Master Teachers, Principals and Administrative / Supervisory officials on the basis of the present required qualifications.
  - Of the number of personnel identified by ministry of Education as necessary for the effective functioning of the Plantation Tamil Schools; 60 per cent of the eachers, 25 per cent of the Principals, 85 per cent of the Master Teachers and 92 per cent of the administrative officials are not available to serve the plantation schools.
  - At the national level there are about 195,000 teachers, Plantation Tamil Schools at present employ about 5,000 teachers which is about 2.5 per cent of the total.
  - The Kotagala Teacher Training College trains only 65 teachers a year. If this continues at the present scale, it would take many more decades to train the



presently untrained teachers in these schools.

### Recommendations

1. There is an urgent need for the government to formulating such policies the participation of representatives from the plantation community is inevitable
2. Development of a programme to continue the good work that is being carried out by foreign agencies, when such programmes come to an end is important to ensure the development and rehabilitation of plantation schools continue without hindrance.
3. Teacher Training
  - a) Request the Ministry of Education to introduce additional teacher training courses at both at the Teacher Training College and the College of Education at Kotagala. Short term training courses and intensive school holiday courses for untrained teachers can ease the problem of poor quality of teaching by untrained teachers to some extent.
  - b) Request the Ministry of Education to introduce courses appropriate to Plantation Tamil Schools at the College of Education. there should not be a rigid system of teaching courses that are only available in other College of Education e.g. Training for Commerce teachers can be introduced as a course at Kotagala College of Education.
  - c) Appoint a committee with the necessary terms of reference to study the possibilities of relaxing the minimum qualifications necessary to enter College of Education for students from Plantation Tamil Schools, especially for courses in Mathematics and Science with a grace period.
  - d) Introduce at least one more teacher training college to train the untrained plantation teachers or make immediate provision to double the training capacity of the present college at Kotagala.
  - e) Organise a supervisory unit for Plantation Tamil Schools and implement management training to school principals.
4. Promotion of Higher Education among Plantation Tamil School Teachers, on a part-time basis.

- a) Teachers qualified to under take the part time degree / diploma courses must be encouraged by introducing a system under which qualified teachers are promoted without delay after obtaining such qualifications.

5. Job opportunities to maximise the use of available man power

- a) Provide graduate teacher appointments to Plantation Tamil Graduates under a separate arrangement every year to ensure the best use of the scarce resource.
- b) Request the Ministry of Education to strictly post all the college of Education pass - ouhts only to plantation Tamils Schools.

6 Expand higher education opportunities for Plantation Tamil children

- a) Introduce more secondary schools with GCE O/L and A/L classes. At least another 30 schools over a period of next five years need to be upgraded to provide A/L classes for the plantation community.
- b) At present University Admissions are administered on a competitive basis. For a specific period of 10-15 years, until such time the plantation Tamil schools are equipped with sufficient educational infra structure facilities, adopt a quota system for plantation children to get admission to universities. (For this purpose those students from Plantation Tamil schools who reach the minimum qualifications at the A/Ls should be given admission to university).

Foot Notes

1. Department of Census and Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 1981, General Report, Vol.3., (1986) p .115
2. Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Annual Report 1996 (Colombo), (1997) p3
3. The Plantation Tamil Schools were gradually taken over by the Government during various years.  
1962 = 24 schools                      1963 - 77 = 280 schools                      1978 - 79 = 1 school  
1980 = 346 schools                      1981 - 90 = 70 schools                      Total = 721 schools  
(Source: Plantation Schools Unit, Ministry of Education).
4. PSSEDP / SIDA Plan of Operation June 1992 to June 1994 p8

5. Ibid. 80
6. Navaratne, C., "Primary and Secondary Education in Plantation Tamil Schools in Sri Lanka" (workshop - unpublished paper) pp.8-13
7. Mookiah, M.S. Education of the Plantation Tamil Community: Historical Background and Current Status, (1997) (Kandy), (Workshop - Unpublished Paper) p.23.
8. Navaratne, C., " Primary and Secondary Education in Plantation Tamil Schools in Sri Lanka" (Workshop - unpublished paper) Annexe III.
9. Daily News, Teaching appointments to Plantation Tamil Schools, 20.9.91 p9.
10. Association of Up-Country Undergraduates, Souvenir of the Annual get together.
11. PSEDP / SIDA, Plan of Operation June 1992 to June 1994 p.11
12. College of Education, Kottagala, Statistical Handout - 1997 (unpublished). p3.

#### Annexe I (a)

#### Plantation Schools - Teachers Needed (by districts ) - 1996

District	Prim	Ma/Sc	Eng	Oth	S.H.	Prin	Total
Kand	679	143	186	222	66	106	1,402
Matale	173	50	63	77	19	34	416
Ratnapura	450	96	155	141	42	90	974
Kegalle	240	46	93	57	15	67	518
Badulla	772	145	227	197	106	154	1,601
Kalutara	154	24	57	36	7	40	318
Nuwere-Eli	1,749	370	451	587	211	292	3,660
Moneragala	61	9	20	14	1	11	116
Galle	11	1	3	-	1	4	20
Matara	19	5	8	6	3	4	45
Hangwella	17	8	10	14	3	5	7
Kurunegala	38	6	13	15	3	8	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,363</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>1,286</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>9,160</b>

Source: PSEDP Emis 1999/97

Prim - Primary

Ma/Sc - Maths and Science

Eng - English

Oth - others

S.H.- Sectional Heads

Prin - Principals

### Annexe 1 (b)

#### Plantation Schools - Teachers Available (by Districts) - 1996

District	Prim	Ma/Sc	Eng	Oth	S.H	Prin	Total
Kandy	140	50	62	398	66	106	822
Matale	42	21	22	123	19	34	261
Ratnapura	142	17	30	162	42	90	483
Kegalle	64	13	23	126	15	67	308
Badulla	120	33	40	412	106	154	865
Kalutura	32	2	15	42	7	40	138
Nuwera-Eliya	510	68	62	662	211	292	1,805
Moneragala	9	-	1	15	1	11	37
Galle	3	-	1	7	1	4	16
Matara	3	-	2	7	3	4	19
Hangwella	6	2	3	4	3	5	23
Kurunegala	21	3	8	23	3	8	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,0921</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>1,981</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>4,843</b>

Source:

PSEDP Emis 1996/97

Prim - Primary

Ma/Sc - Maths and Science Eng - English

Oth - Others

S.H - Sectional Heads Prin - Principals.

**Annexe 1 (c)**  
**Plantation Schools Teachers Needed (by Distrists) - 1996**

District	Prim	Ma/Sc	Eng	Oth	Total	New App up to 30.6.97	Deflict as on 30.6.97
Kandy	-539	-93	-124	176	580	104	-476
Matale	-131	-29	-41	46	-155	46	-109
Ratnapura	-308	-79	-125	21	-491	158	-333
Kegalle	-176	-33	-70	69	-219	42	-168
Badulla	-652	-112	-187	215	-736	223	-513
Kalutura	-122	-22	-42	6	-180	10	-170
Nuwera-Eliya	-1,239	-302	-389	75	-185	619	-1,236
Moneragala	-52	-9	-19	1	-79	22	-57
Galle	-8	-1	-2	7	-4	0	-4
Matara	-16	-5	-6	1	-26	0	-26
Hangwella	-11	-6	-7	-10	-34	2	-32
Kurunegala	-17	-3	-5	8	-17	1	-16
<b>Total</b>	<b>-3,271</b>	<b>-694</b>	<b>-101</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>-436</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>-3,140</b>

**Source:** PSEDP Emis 1999/97

Prim - Primary Ma/Sc - Maths and Science Eng - English

Oth - Others . Sectional Heads Prin - Principals.

**Annexe 3:**

**Vacancies Available for Principals of Schools of the Plantation Tamil Schools - 1997**

Province		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Central	Needed	25	70	344	439
	Available	15	50	300	365
	Shortage	10	20	44	74
Uva	Needed	8	23	139	170
	Available	4	15	120	139
	Shortage	4	8	19	31
Sabragamuva	Needed	7	18	135	160
	Available	2	10	110	122
	Shortage	5	8	25	38
Western	Needed	-	8	39	47
	Available	-	4	30	34
	Shortage	-	4	9	13
Total	Needed	<b>40</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>816</b>
	Available	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>660</b>
	Shortage	<b>19</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>156.</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Education, Battaramulla - 1997

**Annexe 2**  
**Master Teachers requirements for the Plantation**  
**Schools - 1996/97**

Province		Ta	S/M	Soc	Rel	Art	M/D	Agr	Eng	H.S	Pri	Co
	Needed	12	12	3	6	6	6	6	12	6	15	6
Central	Available	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	-
	Shortage	10	10	10	3	6	6	6	12	4	12	6
	Needed	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	3	8	3
Uva	Available	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	1
	Shortage	5	4	4	2	3	3	2	5	2	6	2
	Needed	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	5	3	8	3
Sabragamuva	Available	2	2	2	-	1	0	0	0	1	2	1
	Shortage	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	5	2	6	2
	Needed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
Western	Available	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Shortage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Needed	23	23	23	10	13	13	13	23	13	33	13
Total	Available	4	5	5	1	1	0	1	0	4	7	2
	Shortage	19	18	18	9	12	13	12	23	9	2	11

Source: Ministry of Education Battaramula - 1997

**Annexe : 4**

**Positions with SLES Qualification Available in the Plantation School Areas - 1996/97**

Province		Class 1	Class 2	Class3	Develop ent Unit	Total
Central	Needed	4	14	25	14	76
	Available	-	1	6	-	7
	Shortage	4	13	19	14	61
Uva	Needed	2	4	10	7	23
	Available	-	-	-	-	-
	Shortage	2	4	10	7	23
Sabragamuva	Needed	2	4	10	7	23
	Available	-	-	2	-	2
	Shortage	2	4	8	7	21
Western	Needed	2	2	4	7	15
	Available	-	-	-	-	-
	Shortage	2	2	4	7	15
Total	Needed	10	24	49	35	118
	Available	0	1	8	0	9
	Shortage	10	23	41	35	109

Source: Ministry of Education, Battaramulla - 1997.

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