GIRLS' EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: A MORAL NECESSITY
ACCESS AND IMPEDIMENTS TO EDUCATION FOR FEMALE TEA
PLANTATION RESIDENTS

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By
SESHEENI SELVARATNAM

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ABSTRACT

GIRLS' EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA: A MORAL NECESSITY
ACCESS AND IMPEDIMENTS TO EDUCATION FOR FEMALE TEA
PLANTATION RESIDENTS

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University Of Guelph, 2000

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Professor Amali Philips

This thesis is an investigation of the educational experiences of girls' and women in the tea plantations. Despite Sri Lanka's impressive literacy levels the tea plantation communities' lag behind the national rates in literacy, retention and participation in education. The gender gap in education in the plantations is also higher.

The access of plantation girls to primary education is no longer a problem. Yet, retention and participation are problems due to the cost-benefit perceptions (employment), supply factors (schools, transportation) and cultural barriers.

Girls with a grade 10 education are unable to translate their educational achievements into employment opportunities, which are in short supply. Cultural barriers, labour market sex segregation, ethnic insecurities are factors that continue to disadvantage girls in education and employment in the modern sectors of the economy.

Women's work as housemaids in the Middle East and in garment factories provide an alternative source of income but these occupations do not require high educational qualifications. Thus, the labour market expansion of women will have negative effects on cultural perceptions on the value of girls' and womens' education in the future.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study grew out of my interest to engage in development oriented research in Sri Lanka. Many individuals have been instrumental in helping me with my field research in Sri Lanka. I owe many thanks to the estate resident communities of Silver Hills and Golden Tips for their willingness to share their thoughts and experiences on my research topic. Thank you for all your kindness and hospitality, I will never forget it. I am privileged to have known you, spent time with you, become friends and a part of your family while residing on the estate.

I would like to express my gratitude to my host institution, the Centre for Development Alternatives and its staff for helping me gain entry into a tea plantation, supporting me during my stay in Kandy and most importantly for being my friends. Bala, I will never forget your kindness and assistance to me during my stay in Kandy. I also want to thank Bala, Pushpa and their family for letting me stay at their home when I first arrived in Kandy. Amila, Babu, Chandrika, Pradeep, Ramesh, Ravi and Ubeeyratne thank you for all the conversations we have had, for constantly reminding me to finish my research and for your all your assistance in my research, finding accommodation and to moving to and from the estate.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIDA  Canadian International Development Agency
CDA   Centre for Development Alternatives
CP    Communist Party
CTI   Congress Technical Institute
CWC   Ceylon Workers Congress
DPI   Director of Public Instruction
EMA   Estate Medical Assistant
FTZ   Free Trade Zone
GAD   Gender and Development
GCE O/L General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level
GCE A/L General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level
GNP   Gross National Product
GTZ   Deutsche Gessellschaft fur Technische/German Agency for Technical Cooperation
ILO   International Labour Organisation
IPS   Institute for Policy Studies
JEDB  Janatha Estate Development Board
JPTUC Joint Plantation Trade Union Centre
JVP   Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LJEWU Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union
MA    Management Agents
MP    Member of Parliament
NAITA National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation
NIC   National Identity Card
OPD   Outpatient Dispensary
PSEDP Plantation Sector Education Development Programme
PHSWT Plantation Housing and Social Welfare Trust
PRA   Participatory Rural Appraisal
RMO   Rural Medical Officer
RPC   Regional Plantation Company
SAP   Structural Adjustment Programme
SAARC South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
SIDA  Swedish International Development Agency
SLBDC Sri Lanka Business Development Centre
SLCDF Sri Lanka-Canada Development Fund
SLSPC Sri Lanka State Plantation Corporation
SSA   Social Scientist Association
TCM   Tamil Cooly Mission
TPR   Teacher to Pupil Ratio
UF    United Front
UN    United Nations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Emergence Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WID</td>
<td>Women in Development</td>
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<td>WUSC</td>
<td>World University Service of Canada</td>
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

aathi soodi call to worship the lord who wears on his head a couplet of Aathi flowers (Bahunia racemosa)
appu cook
cooly menial labour
deepavali Hindu religious festival honouring (a god)
kanakapulle bookkeeper
kangany labour supervisor
maha vidyalayam school with post-primary grades (Tamil Medium)
murukku traditional sweets
puranas ancient tales
periya dorai plantation superintendent/manager
raj king
silarai velai sundry work
saraswathy poosai/pooja festival for the goddess of education
sinna dorai assistant superintendent/manager
thalaivars trade union officials
theru ceremony for the rededication of the kovil
thinnai pallikudam verandah school
vidyalayam national school
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

People inside plantations are the means to the end of people outside the plantations (Angela Little, 1987).

The declaration of the United Nations (U.N.) Decade for Women (1976-1985) called the world’s attention to the social and economic situations of women around the world and their contributions to domestic and economic production. The focus on women during the decade for women led many developing countries to implement policies and initiatives that focused on women’s development of which education was considered an integral component. The popular slogan ‘Educate a man and you educated an individual. Educate a woman and you educate a nation’ captures the value and benefits of girls’ and women’s education. It has been established that investing in girls’ education may well be the highest return in terms of investment in the social and economic development of the family through its trickle down effects (Summers 1994). The positive impacts of education for reducing poverty and population, for increasing health and nutrition and for raising incomes have generally been acknowledged.

Poverty, culture and gender role expectations are all factors that influence the education of girls in general. Sri Lanka has an impressive record in education among the countries of the developing world and in the South Asian region with a literacy rate of over 90% (Haq 1997; Hollup 1994; Jayaweera 2000; Little 1999). However, the plantation sector lags behind both the urban and rural sectors in literacy and participation.
The literacy rate of the plantation sector is at 76.9% compared to the literacy rates in the urban (94.5%) and rural (92.3%) sectors of the country (Jayaweera 2000a:75). In the urban (96.1%) and rural (94.5%) sectors the literacy levels of men are also higher than in the plantation sector where male and female literacy rates are 87.2% and 67.3% respectively (Ibid). The literacy rate of women in the plantation sector is lower than the rate for women in the urban (93%) and rural (90.4%) sectors (Ibid). Sri Lanka is an exception to this general pattern of a gender gap in education enrolment and access.

Although many studies have focused on education in Sri Lanka in general, few have focused on the education of plantation resident communities. The few studies (Gnanamuttu 1977, 1979; Little 1999) that have looked at education in the plantation sector have not primarily focused on girls’ and women’s education and the impact of education programmes on them. Angela Little’s ethnography Labouring to Learn (1999) is the most recent and comprehensive study conducted on education in the plantation sector. However, she does not focus on the education of girls. This study is a modest attempt in this direction.

Since the 1970s there have been several changes to the education system in the plantation sector and also to the tea industry. Until 1977, the estate schools remained outside the national education system. Historically, only a rudimentary education was provided under a two tiered system based on class and caste distinctions: one for the children of the staff grades and the other for the children of estate labourers. In 1977, the government began to integrate estate schools into the national education system. The integration of all estate schools into the national education system was completed in 1994. Since then a number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) have provided
infrastructural facilities for schools in the plantations. These efforts have combined to increase the level of access of children to education in the plantations. Despite the recent efforts of the government and NGOs in the plantations, women are unable to always capture the benefits of this integration for social, cultural and economic reasons.

The major shift in the plantation structure since the 1970s have been: the nationalisation of plantations in 1975 under two government ministries, namely the Sri Lanka State Plantations Corporation (SLSPC) and Janatha Estate Development Board (JEDB) and the privatisation of plantation management in 1992 due to the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). The management of the estates was distributed among 22 Regional Plantation Companies (RPC) and Management Agents (MA) (Lawrence 1995) for a period of five years, which was extended to a period of 50 years in 1997. The export value of tea in 1995 was CDN $877.5 million, approximately 5% of the Gross National Product (GNP) (MEDA 1998). The total tea production in 1995 accounted for 45% of all plantation sector products (Ibid). In recent years, the manufacture of garments has overtaken tea as the leading export of the country. However, tea exports still remains a valuable export in terms of earning foreign revenue for the country. A recent labour force survey predicts a shortage in the plantations in the future (Dunham et al 1997). This is partly because of the relatively better educated youth population who are reluctant to work on the plantations. The open economic policy initiatives by successive governments and NGOs impact on vocational training have also opened up new opportunities for employment. Although this can be the focus of a larger study, my study focuses on this issue namely employment and future education.
1.1 Purpose and Research Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to examine the educational situation of girls and women in the tea plantations of Sri Lanka. The specific objectives of the research are::

1. To profile the educational facilities, opportunities and level of participation of girls in the plantations.
2. To assess the relative roles of household and cultural factors in influencing household/kinship decisions on education access and retention.
3. To examine the relationship between education aspirations of girls and employment opportunities.

1.2 Sri Lankan Context

It is a country in the southern hemisphere with a rich mix of many religions, languages and ethnic groups. The population of Sri Lanka is close to 19 million. The dominant ethnic group in the country is the Sinhalese who comprise 74% of the population, 69.3% of whom are followers of Buddhism. The second largest ethnic group is the Tamils. They are divided into two distinct groups: the Jaffna Tamils and the Indian Tamils. The Jaffna Tamils comprise 12.6% of the population and are primarily domiciled in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country. The Indian Tamils who were brought into the country as indentured labourers by the British in the mid-19th century to work in large, export-oriented plantations comprise of 5.6% of the total population. They are mainly Hindus by religion and live in the Central Province of Sri Lanka, which has the largest concentration of tea plantations in the island.

The British introduced plantation agriculture in the 19th century. The recruitment of South Indian labour initially for the coffee plantations and subsequently, with the demise of the coffee crop, to work the tea plantations was influenced by many factors. Two key factors were the reluctance of the Sinhalese villagers to work on the estates and
the social and economic conditions in South India that encouraged the migration of South Indian labour to work in the plantations in Sri Lanka. Famine, landlessness, caste problems and debt to landlords were all factors that pushed South Indians to migrate to Sri Lanka. The majority of the South Indian migrants were from the lower castes and classes.

Since the coffee and later tea plantations were established, they have operated as 'total institutions', where residence and labour combined to produce an effective system of labour control based on class, caste and gender hierarchies (Hollup 1994). The resident population was also isolated from the rest of the Sri Lankan communities.

Women were primarily recruited by the British as a source of cheap labour and for their services as 'nimble fingered' tea pluckers. They served the tea plantation as producers and reproducers of labour^4 (Pool and Singh 1999:35). Today, 5% of Sri Lanka's workforce reside on the plantations (MEDA 1998:4). Women represent over 50% of the plantation workforce. Ninety percent of the women work as tea pluckers, which is the single most important income generating activity in the plantations. Men work in maintenance jobs that are described as 'sundry' work (silarai velai).

Until recently most Tamils of Indian descent were denied Sri Lankan citizenship rendering them stateless and confined to the plantation sector. In the 1980s a majority of stateless plantation workers gained citizenship. Yet they remain ethnically and politically marginalized from the rest of the Sri Lankan society. Their numbers have decreased from being 12% of the total population in 1946 to less than 7% today. This is largely due to the repatriation by the government, violent deaths and migration due to the prevailing ethnic situation in the country. The ethnic and political marginalization of Indian Tamils
over the last 160 years caused limited access to education for the children of the community.

1.3 Research Site

Field research was conducted for a period of seven months between June 1999 to January 2000. Two tea plantations were selected with the help of a local NGO, which is active in the two estates. Contacts with the Centre for Development Alternatives (CDA) were made prior to beginning my field research. This NGO has been involved in many programmes in the tea plantations located in the Kandy district since the early 1980s. When I arrived in Kandy in late June the centre was involved in conducting a survey on the socio-economic and civil status of plantation workers on 10-12 estates. The project was to provide the workers with National Identity Cards (NIC), birth certificates, marriage certificates and death certificates, which many of the residents on the estates lacked. I went with the Director and staff of CDA to several estates before I finally chose the first estate, which was to be the field site for my study. I chose this estate as my primary work site while the second estate was a secondary site chosen for reasons of comparison.

The two estates chosen for my research are located in the mid country region which has a large concentration of tea estates. Tea estates are primarily located in three areas based on the elevation and altitude of tea. They are categorised as low country (0-2000 ft.), mid country (2000-4000 ft.) and high grown (4000-6000 ft.) tea. Silver Hills, the primary estate which I selected for my study was situated 50 km from the City of Kandy, a major urban centre in the Central Province. Before the start of my research, the
Director of my host institution obtained written consent from the Regional Manager of the RPC in charge of Silver Hills and from the Regional Director of the Plantation Housing and Social Welfare Trust (PHSWT). The latter institution is an independent organisation which overseas the welfare of workers in the plantations. I also met with the estate manager to discuss the purpose of research. The estate is fairly large in size, consisting of around 1000 hectares of land and is divided into three divisions based on the level of accessibility to the tea fields by workers living in different areas of the estate. A second estate named Golden Tips managed by the same RPC (as Silver Hills) was located two kilometres away from Silver Hills. I visited Golden Tips on a regular basis and knew several estate residents who provided me with information for my study. Silver Hills became my primary research site. This was where I lived for the greater part of my stay in Sri Lanka.

My goal, when I entered the field was to compare the levels of education among women in two tea plantations: one close to a main town and another in a more remote location. However, given the time limit and the need to carry out participant observation, I decided to spend a considerable amount of time in one estate. Transportation in and out of the estates was also a major problem. Restrictions on movement given the ethnic situation in Sri Lanka, was another problem. Thus choosing one estate was the best possible choice I could make given the circumstances. However, data from Golden Tips and other estates were also collected and included in this study.

The data from this research come from research at Silver Hills and Golden Tips. As such, the findings of this study can be generalised to include all the tea estate
communities in Sri Lanka. Differences are to be found in terms of the location, exposure to the outside community, provision of welfare services and influences of the media.

1.4 Methodology

I found a qualitative research approach appropriate to this study of women’s educational status since it allowed me to analyse women’s actions, thoughts and sentiments in their own socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. Quantitative research techniques were also employed in this research project by way of a survey questionnaire. Therefore, while this thesis takes an ethnographic approach quantitative data remains important and is integrated with the qualitative analysis.

1.4.1 Sample Population

Prior to my research, I had proposed to use a sample population of 50 households to acquire basic socio-economic information using a basic questionnaire. However, after my arrival in the field and after consulting with the director and staff at the host institution in Kandy, I decided to use the socio-economic and civil status survey data that had been collected by the institution as the data base from which I would select the sample for my study. A second questionnaire to elicit the same information from the community seemed redundant. The socio-economic and civil status survey was also used to obtain basic information on education, gender, income, occupation and age of the sample population. The information in this survey on the plantation community was categorised into four sections (see Appendix I for a sample copy of the survey).

1. General information on family members: name, age, sex, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, religion, ethnicity, etc.
2. Civil Status: citizenship; voting rights; marriage, birth and death certificates; access to national identity cards.

3. Employment and Income: by sector of work, type of employment, form of payment, job satisfaction, technical skills, unemployment and aspirations, etc.

4. Family Income: family income, income generating projects and family expenditure per month.

From a resident population of 688 families at Silver Hills, a sample population of 181 was chosen to be part of the survey conducted by CDA. The questionnaires were filled out through interviews, which were administered by staff members of CDA as well as trained volunteers among the resident population on the estates chosen to be part of the project. The interviews took about 15-20 minutes to complete and were conducted in Tamil.

The summary data from all the surveys, which were entered in a database, was given to me by CDA. However, I did not receive the frequency calculations for Silver Hills since the calculations were not completed at the time I began my research. When I was first given the raw data collected from the survey forms, I was overwhelmed by its size. In order to make the sample population more manageable, I decided to use a random systematic sampling procedure to create a smaller sample population, which would provide a more manageable sample population given my limited time in the field.

My sample population consisted of 59 families, which included 134 males and 114 females. After reviewing the data in the survey questionnaires, I selected nine households for in-depth studies based on the following criteria.

1) The level of education of parents and children
2) Place of employment (i.e. estate work, domestic work, business)
3) Family income
4) Age range of family members to obtain intra-generational views
I started in-depth studies of the selected household, which lasted for a period of two months since I did not conduct research on a regular basis every week. I was constrained by two factors. My ability to conduct interviews largely depended on the availability of my research assistant who acted as my translator. Language was a barrier at first, which was subsequently overcome to some extent when I become more familiar with the language. A second problem was the work schedule of women workers and the fact that I could interview them only in the evenings at home. This proved to be a problem for me as movement in the night was discouraged by the management and other concerned workers. Despite these limitations, I was able to carry out the study. With each interview I gained access to more members on the estate. Some estate residents having seen me interview a particular family would then invite me to visit their home for an in-depth discussion. Hence the choosing of households for this study was not random. At the end I held in-depth studies with twelve families on the estate.

1.4.2 Fieldwork Techniques

A number of fieldwork techniques were used to collect data on the situation of women’s education in the tea plantations. These methods involved the use of questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, participatory rural appraisal techniques, participant observation and visual material. All names of individuals mentioned in my discussion of results have been changed to protect the anonymity of the informants.
1.4.2.1 Interviews

An interview schedule was used to gather information on a number of issues, which were perceived to be relevant to the problem to be studied. The information gathered from each in-depth study of households was on several themes.

1) Historical Data: details pertaining to family migration from South India
2) Social Organization: caste and class relations, its effects on society, family and education (if any)
3) Structure of Employment: estate work, migration to the Middle East, reasons for migration
4) Household Data: decisionmaking authority, control over income, division of labour
5) Educational Attainment: education of different age groups and relations in the family, factors that affect access to education
6) Health: knowledge about health of different generational groups
7) Ideologies: family and gender ideologies

An interview schedule was primarily used as an aid for interviews. However, changes were made to the theme schedule to include new areas or delete that were irrelevant to the interview (Appendix II).

A field investigator was hired from the community to act as my translator and assistant. The hiring of an assistant also helped me to move freely on the estate. All interviews were recorded with the aid of a tape recorder. The tapes were transcribed in Kandy with the help of two translators well versed in Tamil and English. By using different translators for the interview and translation of the cassettes, I was able to get an accurate translation of the events during each session. Interviews with each household lasted three and a half to four hours.

All my in-depth studies with the exception of two were conducted after 5.30 p.m. Most women tea pluckers did not return home until after 4.30 p.m. after having the final load of plucked tea weighed at the muster shed. Initially, I anticipated speaking with men
and women separately so that women did not feel intimidated by the presence of men while answering my questions. However, when I entered a line room to ask permission to conduct an interview both the husband and wife were present. Other members of the family would also join in the interview since they were curious about the work I was doing on the estate. I found it very difficult to interview women alone unless they were divorced or widowed. Thirty-nine plantation residents, 20 males and 19 women, participated in these in-depth studies. Multiple voices are represented in the in-depth studies since generally more than three people were present while I conducted my in-depth study of different households. Thus, the number of respondents was more than the numbers given above. Also, informal discussions with workers and other residents whom I met during the stay on the estate provided additional data.

Interviews were also conducted with development workers, teachers and medical staff on the estate. Questionnaires and unstructured interviews were used to gather information from eight teachers, seven women and one man (see Appendix IV). During my field research I met with several officials from Governmental organisations, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and NGOs, namely, CARE International, ETC Consulting (Dutch funded consulting firm), Social Scientist Association (SSA) and Sri Lanka Canada Development Fund (SLCDF) to discuss matters pertaining to education in the plantation sector. Additional interviews were also conducted with two professors at the University of Peradeniya located in the District of Kandy due to their involvement in projects in the plantation sector. Four unstructured interviews were also carried out with local community members at Silver Hills and Golden Tips estates based on their availability and knowledge of problems facing households in the plantation sector.
1.4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions

Six exploratory focus group discussions were held with community members belonging to different age groups. The first group included 14 youth, four females and ten males, all of whom had a Grade 10 or higher level of education with the exception of one male. These youth whose ages ranged between 19 and 27 years were asked to comment on problems faced by estate residents and women entering employment outside the estate; they were also asked to list the major concerns of the younger generation on the estate.

The second group focus group discussion was held with parents between the ages of 29 and 54 years with a low level of education (between Grade two and eight). Only one woman participated in this session. Although the aim was to obtain reasons pertaining to their relative lack of education and changes in views towards education among their children’s generation, the discussion inevitably led to a discussion of the socio-economic problems faced by the community on the estate. I held two separate discussion groups for youth, males and females, to obtain their perspectives on access and obstacles to education, employment and other facilities. A focus group involving two young males was conducted due to their extensive knowledge of problems in the plantation sector. The final group included 30 children from Golden Tips Tamil Maha Vidyalayam (national school). The students were divided into three different groups and were given three tasks to accomplish. These tasks involved the mapping of the area surrounding the school, drawing the daily activities of their parents and describing the importance of education in terms of employment aspirations. Children’s knowledge of their surroundings, division of work in the household and estate as well as problems associated with employment for educated youth were discussed among each group.
1.4.2.3 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Workshop

A Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) workshop was held on resource allocation in the family. Four women and one man were chosen on the basis of their availability in the lineroom situated close to the estate dispensary at Silver Hills and were asked to name the resources owned by men and women in their community. They were also asked to discuss the main problems faced by the community and to provide possible solution for them. Since the leading trade union leader, S. Thondaman had passed away a few days earlier\(^7\), the participants were also asked to discuss its implications on their welfare and employment bargaining. This discussion topic will not be included in my thesis given the scope of my study but should prove to be useful for further articles on the plantation sector.

1.4.2.4 Participant Observation

I participated in several religious and cultural events at Silver Hills and Golden Tips, which included the *Saraswathi pooja* (festival for the Goddess of education), *Deepavali* (religious festival), *Theru* (rededication the main Hindu kovil on the estate), and the International Children’s Day celebrations. I frequented the residences of several families because of my friendship with youth who were close to my own age.

Families whom I visited frequently saw me as their daughter or a good friend of their son or daughter. They were especially concerned about my welfare when they realised I prepared my own food in addition to engaging in my research in the evening. On many occasions I was given tea, milk, traditional sweets and rice with several curries to eat before leaving to go home\(^8\). One day when I had entered the house of a friend of
mine and was treated to *murukku* (a traditional sweet made out of flour which is fried and then coated with sugar), I remarked how much I liked them. His mother responded by saying, “I made them because I knew you were coming”. It was in moments such as these that I knew I was included in the daily lives of the estate residents.

Many days were spent merely walking around the estate to familiarise myself with the surroundings of the community. On these occasions residents who wanted to speak to me about issues in the plantations approached me. This was an excellent method of making contacts. I also joined the welfare officer during his field visits to the three divisions to visit linerooms to interact with the residents. These opportunities were useful and they allowed me to become familiar with the estate setting and to learn more about the life style of residents from conversations with the welfare officer who has been in this sector for the past 25 years.

Since most of my interviews with women workers were conducted in the evening, I found my gender acted as a barrier against my freedom of movement on the estate. The manager made it clear he wanted me to finish my work by 5 p.m. because he did not want any harm to come to me from drunken men in the evenings. His fears however, were dispelled when I informed him that youth from the estate would walk me home after I finished my research. Thus, each night after I had finished my interviews or discussion meetings I was accompanied by two or three young men who would walk me home along dark estate roads. Some nights well-meaning families would ask me to spend the night at their house but knowing their predicament in terms of space I would always express my desire to go back to my residence on the estate.
A group of youth approached me during a discussion group meeting and asked for help to improve their English language. Therefore, towards the latter part of my research, I held series of classes in which I taught them basic English language skills. This was a learning experience for the students and for me. This experience, in combination with the field visits, proved to be the most rewarding part of my fieldwork.

1.4.2.5 Visual Materials

I used films to document the people, lifestyle, culture, welfare facilities and tea making processes at Silver Hills. I wanted to be able to bring back photographs and slides of my research site to supplement the material collected. Specifically, I wanted to share with my colleagues at the University of Guelph the visual scenes from my field site.

Since my return to Canada, I have presented my research and shown my slides of the estate resident community in Sri Lanka to students of Sociology and Anthropology in classroom and lecture settings. I also presented my research at the Sociology and Anthropology Graduate Students conference held at the University of Guelph in March 2000. I have included photographs in my thesis to supplement my discussion of topics in the plantation sector.

1.5 Position of the Field Researcher

I belong to two distinct ethnic groups because my mother is Sinhalese and my father is Tamil (the two main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka). I spent 18 years of my life in Sri Lanka where I completed my primary and secondary education. However, I received all my post secondary education from Canadian institutions by virtue of migration to Canada in
1994. When I returned to Sri Lanka in the summer of 1999, I was still a Sri Lankan citizen. While I considered myself a Sri Lankan, I was also conditioned by the values, cultures and practices I had encountered in Canada. A ‘halfie’ is defined by Abu Lughod (1990:137) as a person whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage. I considered myself as falling into all three of the above-mentioned categories because of my migration to Canada, my foreign post secondary education and mixed parentage. I had not anticipated many problems doing research or becoming accustomed to the cultural norms since I was doing field research at ‘home’. However, as I will discuss shortly my gender and ambiguous position due to ethnicity and class position in the tea estate made engaging in research at home more difficult that I had previously anticipated.

Prior to entering Silver Hills I had established contacts with the estate management through my host institution. Early into my research when I needed to find accommodation on the estate, a friend from Colombo who had previously been employed for the same private sector company that presently manages the estate spoke with the director in charge of plantations about finding a suitable place of accommodation for me on the estate. Entering the estate, I felt I was on the same level as the manager and assistant managers in terms of family background and class distinctions. I became fairly well acquainted with the management and was able to have conversations about the tea plantation resident community. During one of these conversations, one individual belonging to the managerial staff asked me if I ate and drank in the linerooms of plantation workers. I felt awkward when asked this question and hesitantly answered ‘yes, I do have tea with them’. This in fact was not the whole truth. Being a budding
Anthropologist and International Development student, I did not see why I should decline the offer of food or drink from the resident community in the plantations. However, my class position and ethnicity was a problem for the management who warned me about interacting closely with the residents.

My personality and behaviour has been further conditioned by migration and exposure to different values and cultures in Canada. My family would have never allowed me to travel back and forth from the estate or live on an estate and live in Kandy alone had I never moved out of Sri Lanka. The changes in my values and ideals particularly became evident in my relations with managerial and office staff. Given the hierarchical nature of the estate employment structure, the management maintains distance from its staff members. Although staff members were recruited from outside the estate, they are not on par with the manager and assistant manager. I had entered the estate without any previous exposure to the plantation sector but made many good friends by the time of my departure. On several occasions I was invited to their houses for meals. To some members of the staff my socialising with the management was seen as going against the cultural norm. They saw it as potentially threatening since they themselves do not get invited to the bungalows of the management.

I found the whole experience of doing research at home to be a learning experience. On the one hand, I was learning about the plantation sector; while on the other I was trying to come to terms with my own ambiguous position within this highly hierarchical structure. Whenever a researcher goes back to do research at home, especially when the country he/she comes from is less developed than the one he/she leaves, there are added expectations and values placed on him/her. I was constantly
reminded about being Sri Lankan while others saw me as a potential aid to furthering their goals in terms of starting a new life elsewhere. These challenges at the time seemed like gigantic mountains to be overcome when I was living on the estate away from family and friends in Colombo. Now that I have had several months to adjust to being out of the field and evaluate my research and relationships, it seems the behaviour of the staff, office and managerial, are predictable given my position on the estate. These experiences will definitely guide me and help anticipate problems the next time I visit Sri Lanka to do more research among women in the plantation sector.

Despite minor set backs, I am forever in debt to the resident communities of Silver Hills and Golden Tips as well as to my host institution who took care of me during my research by ensuring I obtained research data, found proper translators, assisted me in finding accommodation in Kandy and constantly worried about my security, health and eating habits. I wish I were able to present a copy of my thesis in English and Tamil to each participant of my research so that they will be able to read my research findings and learn that I did more than just go for ‘walks amidst tea bushes’! However, I have promised CDA a copy of my thesis, which I am sure will be passed on to all those who are interested in reading it. I hope my analysis and suggestions will prove to be useful to CDA in its planning of future educational programmes in the plantation sector.

1.6 Organisation of the Thesis
The research for this thesis is presented in nine chapters. The first chapter outlines the purpose and research objectives for this study as well as the methodology. Chapter two describes the theoretical framework of this project and the background of literature.
informing the research. The four theoretical areas relevant to my research are: colonialism, capitalist patriarchy and gender; gender and development approaches; intrahousehold dynamics of resource access and allocation; and gender and education from a development perspective. Women’s employment on the estate and their position in the plantation structure will be discussed in terms of structure of employment, conditions of labour and working conditions in chapter three. In chapter four a brief overview of the evolution of estate schools in the plantation sector from the British management period to the present is provided. The purpose of chapter five is to describe the cultural and domestic/kinship experiences of women and girls and the extent to which they have a bearing on educational access and perspectives. Chapter six will analyse the access of girls to formal education in terms of supply, costs benefit and social and cultural barriers. In chapter seven the access of women to informal education and existing impediments will be addressed. Youth employment, especially alternative employment opportunities open for girls inside and outside the plantation sector will be focused on in chapter eight. Finally, chapter nine summarises the main arguments of my research study, assesses the changes to women’s education and will provide recommendations for future studies as well as for improving girls’ access to education.
Notes


2 Jaffna Tamils are also originally from South India but they migrated to Sri Lanka much earlier than the Indian Tamils (around 300 or 400 BC).

3 Indian Tamils are also referred to as ‘plantation Tamils’, ‘estate Tamils’ or ‘hill-country Tamils’.

4 For instance, Pool and Singh (1999, unpublished manuscript) in their study of British recruitment policy for plantation labour in the West Indies argue that if only men were recruited as workers many would be compelled to visit India to see their spouses and children. However, by recruiting women the cooperation of both men and women were secured leading to fewer complications with regards to returning to India. This seems to have been a motive of British recruiters of Indian plantation employment abroad. A similar argument is presented by vanden Driesan (1997) with regards to the coffee plantation workers in the early 19th century in Sri Lanka.

5 Silver Hills and Golden Tips are pseudonyms for the estates in which I conducted field research.

6 While I was not present when the survey was conducted at Silver Hills, I had accompanied office staff during their field visits to other estates where the survey was being administered.

7 This resource mapping exercise was conducted on November 5th, 1999 approximately seven days after Mr. Thondaman’s death.

8 Since I lived on the estate for a period of two and a half months, I referred to my place of stay as ‘home’.

9 I only gained Canadian citizenship upon returning to Canada earlier this year.
CHAPTER 2

WOMEN, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The literature that informs the issue of gender among female tea plantation residents in Sri Lanka are those concerning: colonialism and capitalist patriarchy; gender and development approaches, gender dynamics of household resource allocations; and gender, education and development. The four areas will be examined in relation to the experiences of women in the plantations.

2.1 Colonialism, Capitalist Patriarchy and Gender

The expansion of colonialism into the non-western worlds changed the economies of these countries from a subsistence base to one based on import and export. Whereas previously, subsistence agriculture was the primary mode of production in countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, the infiltration of colonialists led to the creation of cash crop economies. Sri Lanka was first colonised by the Portuguese followed by the Dutch and the British. In the 1830s, the British introduced a non-industrialised type of capitalism in the form of plantations. Coffee was first planted and after its demise in the 1860s tea was introduced. As in many other countries, the social and economic conditions were suitable for merchant capitalist development. The European planters ran the estate while the state provided the infrastructural facilities for labour control, maintaining law and transporting to the market (Jayawardena 2000:70). A system akin to bonded labour was introduced to maintain a rigid form of control. The planters were the
‘little kings’ (Plantation raj/s) and the plantations evolved as virtual ‘enclaves’. Profits from the coffee and later tea plantations were funnelled outside the country.

Boserup (1970) in *Woman’s Role in Economic Development* draws attention to the negative impacts of colonial capitalist development of women’s subordination in developing countries (see also Etienne & Leacock 1980). She also argues that women’s incorporation into the labour force has the potential to increase their autonomy. The development of cash crop economies in Africa resulted in the gender segmentation of agricultural practices. Men left the villages to work in cash crop economies, which utilised ‘modern’ technologies while women took over the ‘traditional’ subsistence activities in the villages. However, in other areas such as South Asia where agricultural practices required the services of men, the entire family was recruited to work on the fields. The plantation type of semi-capitalist producers gave rise to new forms of labour-capital relationships arising from foreign capital, labour from South India and a working class in the plantations. Women in most South Indian communities from which the Sri Lankan plantation labour force was drawn were traditionally involved in agriculture. They were from the lower castes and classes. The plantation regime used pre-capitalist forms of social divisions such as caste, which was an important aspect of traditional agricultural labour arrangements. South Indian labour was recruited to Sri Lanka under a Head *kangany* (labour recruiter) system, which was based on caste and class distinctions. Boserup further acknowledges the greater participation of women in the plantation sector of Sri Lanka and Malaya, which generated high international revenue for the respective countries. Women formed an important component of the cash crop economy in Sri Lanka.
Orientalist (Said 1979) ideas permeated the writings of colonialists and planters alike who saw the Indian workers as ‘servile’, ‘passive’, ‘animal like’ and ‘irrational’ (Moldrich 1989). Orientalist attitudes were reflected in the way in which the British colonialists perceived the South Indian “cooly”, a term that referred to a “hired labourer” or “burden carrier” or “beasts of burden” (Moldrich 1989:x). Governor Robinson (who was in charge of colonial Sri Lanka in the mid 19th century) made the following statement regarding the needs to maintain strong control over the plantation labour force.

The Tamil coolie is perhaps the simplest, as he is certainly most capricious, of all Orientals with whom we have to deal in Ceylon. He is like a child requiring the sense of the strong-arm parent. He must know that he is subject to parental authority” (Moldrich 1989:vi).

These attitudes justified the colonial need to subjugate and control the natives.

Kumari Jayawardena (2000:xiv) points out that colonialism and capitalism were essentially patriarchal since the main agents were all male but included a “significant female component”. In the case of the plantations, women entered the labour force as cheap, dispensable and easily controllable labour.

Women were not recruited as labourers at first because of Victorian perceptions of the private/public distinction in male/female work. Hugh Tinker (1977:4-5) claims most Indian women who accompanied Indian men to the West included “widows; women who had been deserted by their husbands and lovers; prostitutes and dancers who had fallen on hard times; women who were kidnapped and women who had left home on pilgrimages”. He refers to them as a ‘sorry sisterhood’. They were women who were also fleeing from the rigid patriarchy of South Indian society. It likely that the same type of women were recruited to work in the plantations in Sri Lanka in the early years. Most
of them came as 'wives', mistresses and as companions to men to serve the sexual needs of male workers in the plantations. Between 1862 and 1865 men constituted 75% of the migrating population while women constituted only 18% (Kumar 1965 cited by Hollup 1994:21). The numbers of female migrants in subsequent years increased for two reasons. Firstly, the British needed a steady supply of labour for work on the tea plantations. It was believed that by encouraging men to bring their wives from time to time would prevent them from returning to South India. Secondly, women were needed as tea pluckers because of their 'nimble fingers'. Therefore, while patriarchy, poverty, family and individual circumstances that pushed women to migrate, Orientalist attitudes and plantation agriculture justified their use of cheap labour under British superintendents.

Boserup (1970) asserts that 'modernisation' is both beneficial and inevitable in the specific forms of capitalist development that has taken place in most developing countries. However, other scholars (Beneria & Sen 1981; Sharma 1985) see women's loss of status as resulting from the interweaving of class relations in "production and gender relations in reproduction". Beneria and Sen (1981:290) claim that modernisation is not a neutral process but rather one that dictates capital accumulation and profits making. They state that capitalism generates and intensifies inequalities making use of existing gender hierarchies to place women in subordinate position in each level of the interaction between class and gender. The British colonialists took a similar position regarding women in India. While they denounced the subjugation of women as reflecting the decadence of Indian society, it did not hinder them from recruiting women to be subjugated as passive and docile labour and as sexual exploits. In Sri Lanka capitalism
did not affect all women in the same way (Jayawardena 2000; Sharma 1985 for India). Kumari Jayawardena (2000) states that capitalist and colonialists created a space for the emergence of bourgeois women, who benefited by education, westernisation and wealth. In India (Sharma 1985) upper caste women were withdrawn from labour and became confined in purdah while low caste women continued to engage in agricultural activities allowing them relatively more freedom than women in the upper castes. Women in the plantations were affected by their ethnic and class positions and patriarchal ideas, which subordinated them because of their gender.

There has been much written on the effects of capitalist penetration in the developing world and its impacts on gender relations and women’s status (Sharma 1985:58). According to Marx (1967:572) the maintenance and reproduction of the working class is a ‘necessary condition to the reproduction of capital’. Similarly, much discussion in The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State by Engels (1973) surrounds the concept of private property and its ownership by men as well as the development of the monogamous family which he claims led to women’s subordination. According to both Marx and Engels, prior to the emergence of private property gender relations were egalitarian and complementary. Private ownership of property (i.e. land, domesticated animals, etc.) gave men control over material conditions and created changes in gender relations (Bretell & Sargent 1997:259). However, both Marx and Engels fail to address the inequality in gender relations at the level of the family and household that existed prior to capitalism. While capitalism increased gender inequality, it was related to the pre-existing subordination of women in households.
Etienne and Leacock (1980) expand on the Marxist theoretical framework by asserting that colonial expansion of capitalist agriculture drew women into the labour market as cheap, docile form of labour. In her view capitalism is the marking point for women’s decreased status. South Indian women became preferred by British colonialists to work in the plantations because according to Orientalist perceptions they were viewed as ‘docile’, ‘passive’ and ‘easily controllable’. While plantations further subordinated women in their positions as producers, South Indian women were already marginalized through the strong patriarchal system in their society. From the inception of the British plantations women were paid lower wages than men. This continued until 1984. Their work was considered not as valuable or important as men’s. Further, to go back to Boserup’s argument, women’s incorporation into the labour market does not necessarily lead to women’s increased autonomy. The problem with the plantation women was not their lack of integration but the manner of their integration.

2.2 Gender and Development Approaches

Development programmes in developing countries largely benefited men and not women. Women were made ‘invisible’ lacking voice and agency in development programmes. As such, women were often targeted as ‘development problems’ rather than as ‘agents of development’ (Heward 1999:1). Ester Boserup’s seminal work gave rise to new approaches to development that contributed to women and development discourses.

Women in Development (WID) and Gender and Development (GAD) are two of the key approaches that have sought to increase women’s participation in development projects. Each of these approaches are associated with a varying set of underlying
assumptions and had led to the formation of different strategies for the participation of women in the development processes (Rathgeber 1990).

The WID approach placed emphasis on providing basic human needs and also reflected the desire of practitioners to get out of the welfare mode. Development funding agencies insisted that basic needs should be provided through self-sufficiency rather than welfare (Tinker 1990:39). The ‘trickle down’ and ‘top down’ approaches to development were substituted by approaches that were intended to increase the self-sufficiency of women and their participation in development.

Under the WID approach, the recognition of women’s experience of development was institutionalised. It became legitimate for research to focus specifically on women’s experiences and perceptions (Rathgeber 1990). WID is associated with development projects aimed at women only, especially income generating projects where women are taught a particular skill or craft (Heward 1999). These projects operated on the basis that the access to income would lead women to manage their time and engage in project activities. However, when projects proved to be a revenue source for women, men took control over their income (Rathgeber 1990). Thus, the benefits of these programmes were marginal since the programmes did not account for cultural ideologies, which influence women’s role in the productive sphere. Therefore, such WID projects have been criticised for playing down the importance of welfare and ignoring the complexities of gender distributions of resources within the households.

The GAD approach, therefore, emerged in the 1990s as an alternative to WID. The transition represented in the GAD approach tries not only to integrate women into the development process but also looks for the potential in development initiatives to
transform unequal social/gender relations and to empower women (Kabeer 1994). It is a holistic approach, which analyses social organisation in order to understand particular aspects of society. Women are seen as ‘agents of change’ rather than ‘passive recipients’ of development assistance and the need for self-organisation among women is stressed for their effective political voice (Rathgeber 1990).

Gender inequality and relations in the household is the focus of the GAD approach. The GAD approach realises that women are not a homogenous group. For example, women among the grandparents, parents and present generations have differing views on education, employment and aspirations. It realises that it is unequal gender relations in society that prevent women from fully participating in it. Thus, the GAD perspective tries to provide equitable sustainable development in countries in the south by mainstreaming gender issues and reshaping the power variables. By introducing a greater power balance between both genders it tries to promote women’s empowerment (Parker et al 1995).

Education is a basic need for the world’s population. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has named education as one of the basic human needs for implementing development programmes in developing countries. In the case of Sri Lanka, more recently several agencies including the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has been involved in basic needs provision through funding infrastructural facilities for schools in the plantation sector. Education is not only a basic need but also a strategic need (Agarwal 1994). The introduction of education not only educates women but also empowers them. The ripple effects of women’s education is felt in all areas of the society such as health, future welfare of their families, fertility and

The contribution of this thesis is to include culture as an important component of development programmes. Firstly, development programmes that do not consider in culture and ideologies will not succeed. While schools, infrastructure and compulsory education legislation increases the access to education for children in Sri Lanka, it does not take into account the cultural barriers that restrict access to some children. For example, while education is compulsory for both girls and boys in the plantation sector, cultural ideologies and socialisation determine girls’ retention in schools. Jayaweera (2000a) states that cultural ideologies such as a marriage often lead girls’ dropping out of education. Secondly, education has to be viewed as multidimensional strategic need. Educated youth, especially girls and women have to be also provided with the employment. Many girls between the ages of 20-24 in Sri Lanka are presently unemployed because employment has not increased at the same rate as education (Jayaweera 2000b).

2.3 Gender Dynamics of Household Resource Allocations

Amartya Sen (1990:23) argues that the “systematically inferior position of women inside and outside the household in many societies points to the necessity of treating gender as a force of its own in development analysis”. Marxian and Neo-classical traditions have traditionally ignored the conflicts between the genders within the household and the family in favour of emphasising collective interests of families and class interests. Therefore, Neo-classical economics tended to define the market place in terms of “self
interest” and the family in terms of altruism, co-operation and moral sentiments. Marxian analysis looked at household and women’s labour in relation to capital and capitalist markets but largely ignored the conflicts between household members, the unequal resource allocation of goods or entitlements and the labour of women for men of the households (Folbre and Hartmann 1988). More recently, studies focusing on the gender dynamics within households and families points to the conflicts within families emerging from inequalities in resource distributions, allocations and entitlements.

Therefore, Sen (1987;1990) uses a ‘bargaining model’ (see also Agarwal 1994) to describe how men and women might co-operate when the outcomes of distribution favour them equally. He claims that conflict arises when the outcome is skewed in favour of one party. Sen’s model of “co-operative conflict”, moves away from the view of households as harmonious units with an altruistic male head. However, Sen’s model fails to apply in situations where the woman is in a weaker bargaining position to begin with and co-operate with other household members for short term gains such as income, security and protection.

Papanek (1990) uses the concepts of “entitlements”, “distributive justice” and “household allocations” to describe how households define who gets what and how much. According to her, the distribution of resources and entitlements (such as the right to education) depends on the culture’s evaluation of rights. Often rights or justice is based on the contributions of family members to the collective good. Thus, the distinction between “perceived” and “real” contributions is important (Sen 1987; 1990) since a culture’s valuation of a woman’s contribution would define her entitlement to household resources or access to education. Thus, if women are perceived to contribute
less (regardless of actual contributions), they get less. In many developing countries, it translates into less or poor quality education, health care, food and both basic necessities for women (Agarwal 1994; Papanek 1990).

In the plantation sector households in Sri Lanka, men control women’s wages, use women’s earnings to buy “adult goods” (alcohol, cigarettes), sleep on the one bed in the room, exercise authority and control women’s movement. The education of a daughter is sacrificed when income is poor or when her labour is needed in the household. Women and men do quarrel over women’s earnings and the spendthrift ways of men (Kurian 1982) but women still do not control their incomes or have more power over the purchase of household necessities. Although women earn more money than men, their work is less valued and viewed as ‘unskilled’, while men’s work is seen as requiring physical strength and hence, more difficult.

The “socialisation for inequality” begins at home (Papanek 1990) and girls who are deprived of education or food and who drop out of school to care for younger siblings or to perform household chores learn about their own value. Boserup (1970) asserts that women appear to fare relatively better in societies in which women play a major role in acquiring food. Women working outside the household create difference within the family in terms of greater visibility and bargaining power (Agarwal 1994; Boserup 1970; Sen 11987; 1990). Contrary to Boserup’s argument, however, plantation women have been contributing to plantation agriculture since its inception but this has not translated into a higher status for women. Their real contribution to the society goes unnoticed because of the cultural ideologies and socialisation that determine their
secondary position (Kurian 1982) to men who are traditionally viewed as the “breadwinners” of the family (Jayaweera 1990).

Every culture socialises both boys and girls into their respective roles in society from a young age. Nearly all parents teach their children that boys are superior to girls (Boserup 1970:214), which translates into a secondary position for girls in the family and bias in the distribution of resources (i.e. good, medicine, education and clothes). Poverty compels parents in developing countries to keep their children from attending school because the direct cost of education requires allocation from scarce parental resources. Also, when economics is an issue, the education of girls became more dispensable than that of boys (Khan 1993:224). Papanek (1990) uses the term ‘compulsory emotions’ in reference to the process through which girls are taught ideas about their self worth vis-à-vis boys. Statements such as “girls need less food than boys” or “men work harder than women and that is why they need more food” teaches children lessons on gender (Papanek 1990:172)). It also teaches them about the feeling of hunger, justifies the unequal resource allocations and also says something about the value of tasks and the person carrying it out.

2.4 Gender, Education and Development

The gender, education and development discourses are of recent origin in the development literature. This discourse emerged after the World Bank (WB) prioritised education, particularly for girls as an important component of educational policy (Heward 1999:1). Lawrence Summers, a senior official of the American government, at the Annual Meeting of the World Bank in 1992 called for the investment of resources for
women of the developing countries and predicted high rates of return compared to other forms of investment available to these countries. Educating girls and women promotes both individual and national well-being and prosperity (King & Hill 1993). However, many studies from the developing countries are showing that investing in education of girls is not enough for promoting the education of girls given the cultural barriers that very often mitigate against girls’ access or retention.

King and Hill (1993) discuss girls’ and women’s education in relation to direct and opportunity costs. They state that even when education is made public and tuition is free, school attendance still makes demand on family resources. Miscellaneous schools charges, learning materials, transportation and boarding fees are some of the nontuition costs for sending children to school. At the preliminary stages education benefits the individual and it is the family that bears the expenses. Therefore, in societies where girls play a valuable role in housekeeping and other related tasks such as rearing younger children, their education leads to a high opportunity cost for the family. Khan (1993) views poverty as a key reason for parents failing to enrol their children in school in South Asian countries. This also causes their premature departure from school. Related to poverty is also the demand for children to help care for siblings and to perform household and farm work. The demand for household tasks influences the education of girls who are ‘naturally’ deemed to be suited for these roles (Khan 1993:224).

Kan Feng Ming (1994 cited by Jongepier & Appel 1995:67) emphasises the importance of formal education as a powerful instrument for gender socialisation in school, reflected in teachers’ attitudes towards girls and the educational material that reinforces sex role stereotypes. School text books often portray women in more
traditional roles as wives and mothers and seldom reflect the diverse and changing roles of women (see Jayasena 1991).

Marriage is of vital importance for girls. The physical and moral safety of girls while accessing education becomes a concern for parents in many cultures (King & Hill 1993; Khan 1993) especially when great importance is placed on girls' purity at the time of marriage. Parents also see education as working against the traditional roles of women as wives and mothers and threatening to their daughters' marriage prospective. Education is also seen as undermining girls' traditional attitudes and reducing their willingness to engage in physical labour (Desai 1987 as cited by Khan 1993). By attending school and gaining high levels of education girls are more likely to revolt against the traditional subjugation of women and seek to have similar opportunities as boys. Unlike other South Asia countries there is no strong 'son preference' among plantation families but girls experience a dual agenda in socialising both at home and at schools (Jayaweera 1999:178). They are expected to be passive, modest and obedient (Ibid). Educating girls not only incurs financial costs to the family but also nonpecuniary costs in terms of sociocultural norms, women's integrity and finding prospective spouses (King and Hill 1993; Khan 1993).

South Asian women are expected to marry men with more education than themselves. While middle class parents believe an education is important for their daughter to secure the hand of a white-collar worker in marriage, lower middle class families regard education as a costly expense (Khan 1993:227). Therefore, there is a deep-seated fear of marriages where the wife has more education than the husband (Boserup 1970:122). In a series of interviews conducted by Boserup (1970) in order to
ascertain the relationship between marriage and education among Indian female students at an American university, she found that while education improves girls' chances of marriage, to proceed beyond secondary school was to decrease their chances of marriage.

The reproductive capabilities of women continue to be viewed as being of primary importance. Recent studies (Ainsworth et al 1996; Jejeebhoy 1995; Jeffery & Basu 1996) on fertility and girls' education argue that this relationship is complex and mediated by social, cultural and political contexts of girls' and women's lives within a patriarchal social structure. While the impact of girls' education benefits not only the individual but also her future family in terms of health and decreased fertility (King & Hill 1993; Schultz 1993), education is viewed as changing the structure of patriarchal family arrangements.

Although economic theory does not deal with the impact of sociocultural forces on the individual behaviour it does predict behaviour adjustments to changes in incomes and prices (King and Hill 1993:26). For example, it predicts that a rise in women's wages which in turn increases return on their education tend to increase parents, investment on their daughters' education. King and Hill (1993) state, however, that unless daughters transfer part of their future income to their parents, who bear the cost of education, they may not have sufficient incentives to invest in their daughters' education. Daughters get married and leave the parental household to her husband's patrilineage (King & Hill 1993; Papanek 1990). Her economic contribution, thus, goes towards the husband's family. Sons, on the other hand, are responsible for their old aged parents and contribute to family finances. Therefore, education of boys is viewed as having future benefits for the family while girls' education does not. However, there is some evidence that suggest
that when girls do not get married at a young age and spend time in the work force, parents are more willing to educate their daughters (Schultz 1993).

In South Asian countries, patrilineal kinship and descent rules, the performance of religious obligations and the care of parents influence parents need for sons. Since sons support their parents in their old age, parents are willing to spend their scarce resources on them to ensure their financial security in the future. They generally understand that an education provides a better future in terms of employment opportunities for their children. However, where there are no acceptable job opportunities for educated women and where the benefits of women’s education are reaped by her husband’s patrilineage, parents are unlikely to spend their scarce resources on educating their daughters. If women perceive no alternative to these norms they may see no other way to assure a good life for their children than to continue the cycle of inequality (Elahi 1993). Women therefore, become active participants in continuing the cycle of subordination for their female children by providing greater access to resources for their sons. This as Sharma (1985) argues in the case of India, the roots of inequalities are to be found at the level of the household. The inferior status of women compared to men in labour market and their low skill level are influenced by gender disparities in access to education and training in skills which further disadvantage them in the workplace.

Bourque and Warren (1990) assert that there is more to girls’ education and empowerment than mere access to education. Women need the ability to use tools and machines as well as literacy and education (Bouque & Warren 1990:84). In 1995 primary schools enrolment in Sri Lanka for boys was 105% and 106% for girls (Heward 1999:203). Of these children 78% of girls and 71% of boys continued on to the
secondary level of education (Ibid). Jayaweera (1999) also agrees that girls’ enrolment and participation in schools in Sri Lanka has increased over the last few years. However, there is a growing unemployed, educated population in Sri Lanka (Alailama 1992 cited by Jayaweera 1999). Despite efforts to find suitable employment, girls have less access to employment opportunities. Boys also do have a problem with regards to retention but this is also because they are able to find some jobs in the labour market (Jayaweera 1999:182).

2.5 Conclusion

The shift from subsistence to cash crop farming exacerbated already existing inequalities within the family and between the genders by taking advantage of the gender division of labour and by creating new divisions such as class. In Sri Lanka, the introduction of capitalist relationships within colonial situation introduced labour for wages for a community of South Indians who were kept isolated in plantations under a rigid structure of authority. South Indian women, who are traditionally engaged in subsistence agriculture and under feudal landlords as agricultural workers, entered the plantation wage labour force as a cheap, docile and easily controllable labour force.

Although Boserup (1970) and Sen (1990) posit that women’s increased participation in the public sphere leads to women’s visibility in the household, the situation of plantation women acts in contradiction to this argument. Despite women’s earning they do not control their income or become involved in household decision making. This will be addressed in detail in the chapter on household dynamics.
The increased focus on development in light of the varying gender approaches to development have focused on the education of women and girls. The strong patriarchal ideologies in the household indoctrinate boys and girls into their respective roles in society. Women are primarily viewed for their role as wives and mothers of the future generation. Thus, given the emphasis placed on women’s reproductive role their contribution to the productive sphere often goes unnoticed.

Although education is seen as benefiting all members of society in many developing countries, parents are sceptical about educating their daughters. The cost of family resources when the outcome can not be guaranteed is seen as a primary deterrent for parents not sending their daughters to schools. Marriage, direct and opportunity costs related to education and uncertainly of employment that meets the educational qualifications of girls all contribute to parents’ decisions to send their daughters’ to school. Thus, development programmes and approaches must take into consideration the culture of communities, gender ideologies that curtail women’s participation in development. In the case of education, development efforts to increase infrastructure and schools will be of no benefit to women if the problems of culture and gender ideologies are not addressed. Thus, as Amartya Sen (1990) notes, the importance of gender in economic or development analyses is complementary to the variables of class. In the following chapters an attempt is made to draw on these various positions to examine girls access and impediments to their participation in education among the tea plantation community of Sri Lanka.
CHAPTER 3

WOMEN'S WORK ON THE TEA PLANTATIONS

Women constitute over 50% of the labour force in the tea plantations and around 90% of women work as tea pluckers. There is a high level of economic activity among women in the estate sector (67.1%) compared to women in the urban (27.1%) and rural (31.5%) sectors (Jayaweera 1991a:3). In 1995, the plantation sector employed 302,954 workers of whom about 69% are permanently employed and living on the estates (MEDA 1998:4). A total of 838,518 people representing 5% of Sri Lanka’s workforce reside on the plantation (Ibid). Women provided cheap labour for the British planters in the 19th century; they were viewed as passive, docile and easily dispensable. Given the lack of education for the older generations of women in the plantations, many had no option but to work on the estate as tea pluckers like women before them in order to support their families financially. After the privatisation of management in 1992, tea plucking has become the single most important activity in the production of tea, which is given priority over the sundry work of men. Managements’ concerns with increasing production and making quick profits are some of the reasons for the increased focus on plucking.

This chapter deals with the employment of women in the plantation sector. The first section describes the plantation labour regime. The purpose is to analyse ethnic disparities in the acquisition of higher level positions in the plantation labour regime and particularly on the gender differences in accessing positions of authority. The strict labour control by supervisors, the change in wage structure and its implications on the
estate resident workforce especially women will be discussed in the second and third sections.

3.1 Structure of Employment

The employment structure of the plantations is hierarchically organised according to gender, ethnicity, caste and class. It consists of three hierarchical levels.

- **Management**: Executive body of the estate, which consists of a Manager, a Senior Assistant Manager and one or more Assistant Managers. All management executives are males.
- **Staff**: Includes office, field, factory and welfare staff on the estate (both genders, mainly Sinhalese).
- **Estate Resident Workers**: Unskilled workers who belong to both genders from the resident Indian Tamil population.

Symbolic and non-symbolic markers of hierarchy and separation maintain the social differences between the three levels. There are four axes along, which management, staff and workers are divided: caste, class, gender and ethnicity.

3.1.1 Management

At the apex of the employment structure is the manager (superintendent) or *periya dorai*10 (big lord). During the British period, the British estate superintendent had absolute power and authority over the working of the plantations, which was viewed as his ‘small kingdom’. Plantations today continue to exist as ‘total institutions’ where residence and labour is combined to produce an effective system of labour control based on class, caste and gender hierarchies (Hollup 1994). The plantations remain a separate entity from the outside community.
(M – Muslim, S – Sinhala, T – Tamil, IT – Indian Tamil)
Figure 3.1 Structure of Employment at Silver Hills
The British planters separated themselves from the South Indian labourers by using symbolic markers (Kurian 2000). They lived in spacious bungalows compared to the linerooms, which housed the estate labourers. Workers were subjected to a strict code of conduct and were not permitted to speak directly with the British superintendent except through the *kanganies* (supervisors, Kurian 2000). Estate labourers also had to maintain a distance from the European planters and had to keep their eyes focused down when spoken to by the European planters. In addition, estate labourers were subjected to a dress code and were not allowed to wear any footwear. Therefore, European planters maintained their distance and status from the South Indian plantation labour force by denying the workers access to facilities and needs which was available to the planters.

Estate management is almost exclusively recruited from among the Sinhalese. There are some Tamils of Sri Lankan and South Indian origin who occupy management positions but the numbers are few. Most managers and assistant managers come from privileged families. They have attended a leading boys’ school in Colombo or Kandy, played a sport (cricket or rugby) for their school, speak English and have a O/L or A/L education. While recruitment is based on educational qualifications and interviews, it is a well known fact that social and kinship contacts and recommendations by influential managers, Members of Parliament (MPs) and political party members play a crucial role in determining who gets these positions (see Hollup 1994). The estate residents who are primarily wage labourers have few chances of moving into positions of authority on the estate. Despite the nationalisation of tea plantations in 1975, privatisation of management in 1992 and reports of decentralisation and delegation of power to include the plantation resident community not much has changed in the management regime.
since the British presence in the plantations. The primary change that emerged after nationalisation was the replacement of the white, foreign superintendent from Britain with a local, mainly Sinhalese manager. At present, there are a few changes in terms of relations between the management and labourers but these changes are not overtly visible.

The superintendent of Silver Hills is referred to as “manager”. Discussions with the estate residents suggest that compared to previous managers at Silver Hills, the present manager is among the few executives who can communicate in Tamil with the workers. Soon after taking control over the management of the estate, the present manager of Silver Hills, had held a meeting for community leaders to address issues regarding low production, increasing the number of working days for estate labourers and opening positions in the estate labour force for the unemployed. However, estate residents feel that the implementation of these changes has been slow.

The manager is a private sector employee whose performance in the estate is monitored by the management company who hired him. He is expected to report to the regional director and other senior officials of the company on a regular basis on the production of the estate. The manager sets weekly, monthly and yearly targets for the production of tea, which must be met by the workers, particularly women who are the tea pluckers. The manager’s own position depends on meeting these targets. Profits, cost reduction, climate, elevation, production of the land and age of the tea bushes are all factors that influence the production of tea. These factors also influence the number of working days provided for the workers.
The manager of Silver Hills was also responsible for organising workshops for management, field staff and thalaivars (trade union leaders) from the tea estates managed by the same private sector company. According to him a number of interactive workshops were held to improve relations between management and the community as well as increasing management’s awareness to community issues. The management, field staff and trade union leader positions are filled by men. Therefore, I did not see any women who participated in these workshops from Silver Hills. Women, however, have the opportunity to meet with the manager during labour days at the estate office.

Each estate is divided into several divisions. At Silver Hills there are three divisions which are managed by two assistant managers who are generally referred as sinna dori (small lord). The senior assistant manager who is responsible for the management of two divisions on the estate due to his higher level of experience belongs to a high caste and middle class Sinhalese family from the Central Province of Sri Lanka. His father had been a planter prior to his entry into the estate sector. The second assistant manager is an Indian Tamil like the workers but is from a different caste and class. He comes from a privileged family and has a grandfather who is a leading figure in politics and trade union activities. It is generally known that very few Indian Tamils residing outside the estate will be considered for managerial positions, unless they have strong trade union contacts. Both assistant managers are fluent speakers of Tamil, they have studied up to the A/L grade and can also speak fluent English.

The community has little access to the management. Generally, those who wish to speak to them have to show up during the labour days assigned on each month or have to go through the thalaivars who act as the intermediary between managers and workers.
Women's access to the estate management is virtually non-existent since many women are doubly burdened with estate and housework and have little time to spare to air their concerns. Some managers insist that women speak via the thalaivars (Philips 2000, personal communication). Despite attempts to improve relations between the estate community and estate management through the organisation of workshops, implementing programmes that are supposed to ‘empower’ estate labourers through the provision of uniforms and titles (to different tasks on the estate), they remain far removed from the community.

One assistant manager (different estate but managed by the same management company) viewed his position as powerful because he managed 4000-5000 workers who in his opinion are ‘uneducated’. In his view, efforts are being made to improve the welfare of workers on the estate but the workers are not taking advantage of the services due to their lack of literacy and education. Therefore, despite the use of the term ‘empowerment’ in relation to power sharing on the estate, there has not been a significant change in the hierarchy of the estate. For example, since Silver Hills had an assistant manager who is of the same ethnicity as the resident community, I assumed that he would have better relations with the workers. When I had told a resident that they should directly address their problems to the assistant manager who is Indian Tamil he claimed “Oh him. He can not even talk in Tamil”. Many residents on the estate felt that he was far removed from the community while the other assistant manager who is Sinhala had better relations with the community.

The rising education among the younger generation of the estate residents has resulted in their decreased subservience to the management. Many youth do not hesitate
to challenge the authority of the management. Therefore, while the manager and assistant managers today continue to be referred as *periya dorai* and *sinna dorai*, the usage of the terms ‘big lord’ and ‘small lord’ does not denote the same level of subservience and reverence as before. With increased access to the community outside the plantations, the younger generation is more aware of the functioning of society outside the estate and resents the rigid control of management over their lives.

### 3.1.2 Staff

The staff occupy a middle position between the management and estate workers. They are divided into two categories, junior and senior, based on experience. The senior staff occupies positions in the field, factory and office. They have greater responsibilities, more experience, more power and authority, receive higher salaries and spacious housing compared to junior staff. Junior level staff engage in more manual work, have less experience (due to fewer years of job training), receive lower wages and modest housing.

The office staff is responsible for keeping books and the records, carrying out correspondence, accounting and typing. The chief clerk who heads the office supervises the work and hands over reports and accounts to the manager and assistant managers for verification and signatures. As in most plantations, the chief clerk of Silver Hills is Indian Tamil who is from a town close to the estate. The chief clerk enters the manager’s office through the side entrance when he is called by name or by the ringing of a bell. The senior assistant clerk, the next in command in the estate office, works in association with the chief clerk to prepare reports and accounts for the regional and head offices as well as for the management. At Silver Hills, this position is held by an unmarried,
Sinhalese woman in her 30s who has been employed in this sector for the past eight years. Office staff is recruited from among the residents of towns or cities close to the estate. Most of the estate staff are Sinhalese men. Females who enter staff level positions are also Sinhalese. The recruitment of staff members appears to be done wilfully so that labour does not get an opportunity to socialise with the staff. The layers of employment are rigid and separate.

The field officer or kanakapulle (K.P., bookkeeper) is in charge of the daily field operations as it relates to the production of tea. Since Silver Hills has three divisions, there is one senior field officer and another two or three junior field officers for each division. Those recruited for these positions consist of Sinhalese and Indian Tamils. The Sinhalese have to learn to speak fluent Tamil in order to control the labour under their authority. They control the workforce with authority. Many carry a stick around while supervising male and female workers in the field. While there was no reported incident of field officers assaulting labourers, the stick does signify control and repercussions if a worker regardless of gender does not heed the field officer.

The Head Teamaker (Head Factory Officer) is in charge of the daily activities concerning the manufacture of tea. A Sri Lankan Tamil is the tea maker at Silver Hills. He has several senior and junior factory officers under his supervision who inspect work in different areas of the factory. These factory officers are males who belong to either the Sinhalese or Indian Tamil ethnic group. No women hold supervisory positions in the factory. Sometimes staff is recruited from the estate but are immediately transferred to another estate, so that they do not socialise and collaborate with estate residents.
The Estate Medical Assistant (EMA) is in charge of the health of the estate resident community and is a Sri Lankan Tamil. He is a trained Rural Medical Officer (RMO) and has been employed as an EMA at Silver Hills for over 30 years. Since the dispensary at Silver Hills is an outpatient dispensary (OPD) the estate workers and their families received treatment and medication for minor ailments. In the case of more serious illnesses including the birth of the first child of a woman the patients are referred to the hospital in Wahugupitiya (before Pussellawa town located in the Central Province). While medicine is provided free of charge to the estate community, many claimed that in order to obtain ‘good medicine’ they had to pay him (EMA) fifty or one hundred rupees. Those who can not afford to pay him or do not want to pay the money received ‘cough syrup and Panadol’ according to some community members.

The family welfare supervisor and a midwife are under the supervision of the EMA. The midwife does field visits to different divisions of the estate during the week to make inquiries about the health of women and their families. She advocates a permanent family planning method for women with more than two children and encourages others to use some form of temporary family planning method. Although she is Sinhalese, she speaks fluent Tamil since she grew up on this estate where her mother was the previous midwife. The family welfare supervisor is an Indian Tamil and is responsible for the general welfare conditions of the estate community.

Women who move into staff level positions obtain positions that are an extension to the traditional gender role positions for women such as stenographers, secretaries and welfare positions.
3.1.3 Workers

There is a caste and class distinction between the estate resident community. Most of the estate labourers belong to the lower castes, since the early migrants from South India were from the lowest castes in the South Indian caste hierarchy\(^{15}\). There is a strong gender division of labour among the estate labourers. Men are sundry workers who engage in work related to pruning, weeding, spraying fertiliser and work in the estate factory. Women workers on the estate primarily work as tea pluckers although there are some who work in the tea factory. Both men and women receive the same daily wage of Rs. 107. A kangany or kanakapulle has a higher level of authority and a slightly higher monthly wage attached to the positions since it involved supervising labour gangs. In the British era, kanganies belonged to a higher caste than estate workers, controlled every aspect of workers lives and were the chief intermediaries between management and labourers. As labour recruiters, they also recruited members of the same village, kin and caste group as themselves. The relationship between the workers and immediate supervisors operated along the lines of patron/client relations. Thus, some labour gangs under high caste kanganies were also high caste but they are in a minority today. Today, kanganies are recruited from among the lower castes as well their authority is limited to supervising labourers in plucking, weeding, pruning and other activities. Any hard working individual who shows the ability to learn a particular skill and understands the working process can become a kangany. They reside in linerooms like the other workers but most have striven to improve their living quarters by adding extensions to the existing structure. Chandran, a kangany on one of the divisions of the estate, manages a small private shop, which sells basic necessities to estate residents. He also raises cattle for the
purpose of selling milk besides working as a kangany on the estate. He recently finished building a small house on the estate, which houses the private business shop. There are other kanganies like him who strive to make a better life for their children by using privileges (close relations with management executives) that go with their supervisory position. Generally kanganies are men.

There are no women who are kanganies on the estate. A kangany position requires certain leadership qualities, such as the ability to control labour and settle disputes. It also requires some level of education. Therefore, this position is closed to many women because of their lower level of education. Women in the plantations are also perceived as lacking knowledge, responsibility and the power it takes to be able to control labour gangs. Most women believe that they lack the qualities necessary to become kanganies. Women have few chances of becoming kanganies because of their lack of political power and leadership. They face a double standard when entering into the occupation of a kangany, firstly due to their gender and secondly due to standards of moral conduct that males are not subject to. Even if this occupation because open to more women, it does not effectively address women’s exploitation daily in the tea plucking fields since there are only a finite number of job openings.

The work of female tea pluckers are time jobs compared to male workers on the estate who generally work at a piece rate (Kurian 1998:71). They have an eight hour work day where they report for work at 7.30 a.m. and finish their day at 4.30-5 p.m. Men engage in activities such as weeding, pruning and sundry work on the estate but only work for about 5½ hours a day. Men also have opportunities to work in the different sectors of tea estate: as ‘tea boys’ or mail men in the office; mechanics or labourers in the
factory; cooks (*Appus*), gardeners, house boys, labourers taking care of poultry and cattle in the bungalows of the manager and as helpers in the estate dispensary. Estate labourers work as housekeepers in the bungalows but no women are hired to work in the bungalows. The only avenues open to women are as tea pluckers and tea factory workers. Women's work in the estate factory is limited to transferring tea from the troughs to the tea firing machine or to working in the sifting room.

As depicted in Figure 3.1 women are the lowest levels of the employment structure on the estate. They have little opportunity for upward mobility. Most of the few opportunities available are open to men. They have the ability to move up the chain of command and become supervisors while women do not have access to the same opportunities. Some men who receive occupations of authority such as staff positions in the office shy away from it due to the lack of respect from fellow estate residents. For instance, as one man noted:

\[
\text{Working in the same place as where one was born does not make the people respect you. They get jealous and spread false stories.}
\]

Community perceptions about estate residents who receive promotions to staff level positions is one reason for them transferring out of the estates in which they were born. Plucking tea is the primary income earning occupation for most women and to move away from this occupation would lead to a loss in their income.

### 3.2 Conditions of Labour

Women continue to suffer from the adversities of nature while plucking tea since they are not provided with adequate protection for the cool climate. Their traditional attire
consists of a sari worn above the ankles and a sack wrapped around their body as protection from the rain. They seldom wear footwear. Their clothing provides little protection from the cold, heavy rains or leeches in the field. The chemical pesticides and fertilisers, which are applied to the bottom of tea bushes, have adverse effects on female tea pluckers. Since most tea pluckers have been working in the fields since their teens, many are constantly exposed to these harsh chemicals, which further contribute to their ill health. Devilatha\textsuperscript{17}, a young woman in her mid twenties linked her mother's inability to work to the use of harmful pesticides in the tea fields.

...My father passed away so now my brother works...my mother used to work as a tea plucker but she has small wounds on her feet. When she works in the estate they get worse because of the chemicals they put for the trees.

The constant exposure to harmful chemicals, climate and hilly terrain over time takes its toll on women causing them to suffer from coughs and pneumonia, age prematurely and since lately suffer skin diseases due to chemical fertilisers.

There are some women who work in the estate factory, who, although are not exposed to the harsh climate are still exposed to poor working conditions. One 18 year old girl was observed spending up to eight hours working in the firing room transferring crushed, fermented tea from the troughs to the firing machine. She felt she had no alternative but to work on the estate as both her parents had passed away, leaving her as the sole guardian of her brother. Although she does not work in the tea fields, she is still subjected to harsh working conditions in the estate factory.

Men generally find work in weeding of fields or pruning tea bushes or sundry work in the estate executives' bungalows. Their workday begins at 7.30 a.m. and ends at 2 p.m. while women continue to work for another 2½ hours more to obtain their wages.
In order to receive a daily wage, women tea pluckers have to pluck the daily norm of 18 kilos. Their wages are calculated daily but are only made available to them in two instalments in the middle and end of each month. If women do not pluck the required norm then their wages are calculated at a per kilo rate, which is not carried to their wages at the end of the month. Women pluck tea amidst heavy rains to reach their daily quota because according to many “If I do not go to work when it is raining then I have no work. No salary. If I do not work who will take care of my children?” These women are paid at a rate of Rs. 5.60 per kilo. Some women who are expert pluckers pluck over and beyond their daily requirement to earn an extra income but the per kilo rate for overpoundage (Rs.4-5 per kilo) is not much higher than the average rate of pay for each kilo. The quality and quantity of tea plucked depends on a number of factors such as seedling yield\textsuperscript{18}, climate, land and the quality of tea bushes.

Estate work is run like an army regiment where strict time is kept. Workers are expected to arrive at the muster shed to be assigned their tasks at 7.30 a.m. daily. Workers who arrive late at the muster shed are chased away by the kanganies and lose a day’s work. Female tea pluckers have to complete numerous household duties such as preparing breakfast, feeding their children, preparing them for school, taking younger children to the crèche, cleaning the house, washing the pots and pans from the previous night’s meal before arriving at the muster shed. The double burden of work which women workers face daily make it difficult for them to arrive at work on time face the brunt of angry comments from the kanganies and may loose work for the day. Pregnant women who arrive at work late receive a scolding but in general are not denied work. Women pluckers have to walk for long distances to reach the fields and then have to
carry their heavy baskets to the weighing stations located in different areas of each division. Tea leaves are weighed at three different times during the day at 9.30 a.m., 12 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. respectively. Since the final weighing of leaves takes place in the muster shed, women pluckers in distant fields finish their work later before reaching their homes to engage in household and childcare responsibilities.

Labour days have been implemented by management for estate workers to come and meet them and air their concerns regarding work. However, not many workers attend these meetings. Women are rarely seen at these meetings given their multiple tasks as wageworkers, wives and mothers.

The rudimentary level of education or the lack of education of most women of the older generation relegated them to work as tea pluckers on the estate. Women were and continue to be seen as cheap, docile labour. Some of the older women began work as tea pluckers as children when they followed their mothers to the fields. This is reflected in the low education of the grandparents’ generation, where women had no access to educational facilities because they were kept at home to take care of household tasks and their younger siblings. In the parents’ generation, safety of girls, family finances and large families led to boys gaining access to education while girls were sent to work on the estate at an early age. After leaving work many mothers rush home to prepare the evening meal for their families and rarely have time to engage in other activities. Generally, mothers keep their daughters from school to attend to household duties and to lessen the burden on them (Kurian 1982). Therefore, women’s work has a negative effect on their daughters who have difficulty pursuing their education.
Women are not interested in talking to the management about their working conditions since women believe the working conditions to be their fate, which they cannot change. Many women work without proper protection from the harsh environmental conditions and access to clean water, food and toilets close to the tea fields. They feel that speaking to management would not change their circumstances and also do not want to rebel for the fear of loosing work and wages. Most women are passive and docile and despite their contribution to family income do not believe their work is harder than their male counterparts. However, there was one reported incident of a woman who took the initiative to meet with senior management regarding a work-related issue. Since workers and even estate staff are not permitted to enter the houses of the management without authorisation her actions resulted in her loosing a few days of work. The following is an excerpt of the incident narrated to me by a management executive at Silver Hills.

This woman from...division went to see the manager the other day. The manager was having some visitors from Colombo at the time and she came to the front door carrying the child. He sent her away because no labourer is allowed to visit us in our bungalows. The manager told me this, and I found out who the woman was and stopped her work. But the manager told me ‘Do not do that (name)’. So I told the kangany that she can start work again.

The fact that she was carrying a child and stood at the entrance to the house while the manager had visitors made her actions more problematic. Although the estate management at Silver Hills has taken an initiative to improve worker-management relations, they still do not seem to welcome workers visiting them in their bungalows.
3.3 Wages

Since the inception of the tea plantations in Sri Lanka there has been a disparity of wages between men, women and children. Women’s work was not considered equal to men’s work. Their work was less valued and was reflected in the wage structure. In the mid 1800s women received a wage of 25 cents per day’s work while men received 33 cents for the same amount of work (Kurian 1984:7). It was not until 1927 that a law was passed to regulate the rates of wages paid to estate workers. This ordinance for the first time clearly defined several conditions of work, which included a minimum wage, a legally defined normal working day and the minimum age of employment in wage determinations (Sinnathamby 1984:68). According to the Estate Wages Board the minimum wages recommended for the up country plantation workers in 1927 was 54, 43 and 32 cents for a male, female and child respectively (refer to Appendix X). This ordinance further assured the workers of six days of work and if work was not available then a payment equivalent to the minimum wage was given to them calculated according to the number of working days. This statute was succeeded by the Wage Board Ordinance No. 27 of 1941, which apart from setting minimum wages also established hours of work, weekly and annual holidays, and payment of overtime wages (Ibid p.71). Although the minimum wages for estate workers went through a series of changes from 1927 until the early 1980s, there still remained a vast disparity in wages between male and female workers. For example, if a man and woman plucked tea for a period of eight hours and if they both pluck the same quantity of tea leaves, the man would receive Rs. 17.71 in wages while the women received Rs.16.26 (in January 1984) reflecting a difference of 16% (Kurian 1984:7). Although both men and women engage in manual
labour occupations on the estate, women’s contribution to the plantation economy continues to be undervalued.

1984 saw the largest strike in the history of the plantation sector where all estate workers together with their trade unions agitated for equality in wages for men and women. The estates under the government at the time conceded this victory to the workers who also guaranteed 300 workdays per year and 1½ times the wages when estate labourers worked on statutory holiday (Kanapathipillai 1992:5).

The estate wage rate is much lower than that in the urban and village settings. Sinnathamby (1984) argues that while there are more residents employed in the estate sector than in a rural (village) or urban sector, the income earned by an estate worker is much less than the wage of a worker who goes out of the estate to work in a town or nearby village. A 1996 WUSC survey of manpower requirements and opportunities for women and youth in the plantation sector in the Badulla district (in the Uva Province located in the hill country) found that estate residents who worked outside the estate as labourers were paid between Rs.100-175 per day with meals compared to the Rs.78 paid on the estate. Today, an estate resident from Silver Hills who goes to work in the town or village receives a daily income of Rs.200 per day with meals. Thus, it is more advantageous for men to work outside the estate than within the estate. Low wages of parents have a negative impact on their children’s access to education. Thus, during times of economic hardship, female children are the most likely to be kept from school. However, increased income by working outside the estate provides a family with necessary funds to educate both daughters and sons.
According to the 1998 Collective Agreement estate workers received Rs. 106 in wages per day which included Rs. 95 as a base wage and Rs.11 as subsidies but this agreement expired on December 31, 1999. In order to draft a new Collective Agreement, the three major trade unions; Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU) and the Joint Plantation Trade Union Centre (JPTUC)\textsuperscript{19}, were compelled to resort to a joint action to demonstrate the strength and determination to reach an agreement with plantation companies and Employers’ Federation. This agreement signed on June 20, 2000 commenced on the 1\textsuperscript{st} of July and will be in force for two years. The new collective agreement increased the daily wage to Rs. 121 (Bass 2000; Maliyagoda 2000). However, the base wage was just Rs. 101 with a Rs. 6 price supplement (Bass 2000). If a worker worked for over 85% of working days offered in a month, they would get an extra Rs. 8 per day (Ibid). If they have an attendance rate of over 90% then an extra Rs. 14 was given (Ibid). Workers who do not have a 90% attendance rate receives a daily wage rate between Rs. 107 (Rs.6 on gratuity) and Rs.115 (Maliyagoda 2000). This collective agreement also binds the management to provide a minimum 25 days work. According to Bass (2000) the new contract and wage structure were very much in the management’s favour. He further states that the major reason for signing the contract was due to the devaluation of the rupee by 5%, which occurred the afternoon after the new collective agreement was signed. Thus, although workers got an increment of 7% to 20% in terms of real value of wages, they lost because the prices for most goods increased by 30% (Bass 2000).

The present agreement regarding working conditions of the estate labourers reached by the management companies and trade unions failed the estate workers in two ways in
terms of the number of days of work. Firstly, given the additional responsibilities faced by women workers it is hard for them to secure a 90% attendance rate. As discussed previously, women engage in household tasks before reporting to work and on some days stay home because of a sick child, old mother or being sick herself. While getting paid Rs.121 per day would increase women’s income, 90% attendance on part of women is not realistic. Secondly, the negotiators of this agreement seem to have the idea that 25 days of employment a month for twelve months can be guaranteed for the workers when in reality the number of days of work available depends on yields, climate, land and the quality of trees. In the following quote Puvaneswari, a tea plucker for over 15 years, describes variations in plucking depending on the season.

When there are leaves about 25-30 kilos. Now there are no leaves. Some days we pluck 10. Today I plucked 13. We are supposed to pluck 18. If we pluck more we get more money. But if we pluck less only the days wages. They do not reduce the salary. But they log in as a half day. We say ‘we will pluck more when there is more tea leaves’...but now the work is less. For two days this week I was at home.

Thus, while the new collective agreement has called for 25 days of work per month, the opportunity for women to earn a higher income during the dry season is less. While trade union laws ask for an increase in working days the primary objective of private sector companies is profit maximisation which involves exploiting workers. A staff member in response to a question regarding the number of work days available to estate labourers told me “we can not give work on Sundays and pay 1½ times when it hard to give them work during the week”. During the dry season it is hard to find work for all the workers and hence it is impossible to guarantee 25 days of work. If women are not working as tea pluckers then they should be provided with alternative employment to guarantee a 25
days of work per month. Women's lack of employment not only affects her but her entire family. If a woman can not make enough money to support her family then its impact is felt most by the female children. They are withdrawn from school and either sent to work as domestic servants in cities or will be kept at home because of their mothers' inability to support their education.

Workers also ask for holidays for religious festivals, which also cause a stoppage of work on the estate. I heard the same staff member tell some leaders who asked for a day off "there is work to be done on the estate. This estate is also yours. Did you not get shares? Now you want a holiday?" In essence while work can not be guaranteed in the dry season, women workers are over exploited in the monsoon season when there is a lot of tea to be plucked.

Women who have a low level of education have little options as to the kinds of employment they can find. Many enter work in the estates as tea pluckers because of restrictions on their movement due to cultural ideologies and also because educational qualifications is not a requirement to work as a tea plucker. Most of the older generation of women belonging to the grandparents' and parents' generation already disadvantaged in their households, in terms of education and restrictions on mobility enter the work force economically, socially and psychologically disadvantaged. The cultural ideologies, which are enforced at home, continue to pervade their actions in the work force. They seldom participate in trade unions and have no time for the inclination to participate in discussions or development programmes introduced by the NGOs. Hence, despite the equality in wages and increase in wage rates women continue to be exploited as tea plantation workers.
The younger generations of plantation residents are reluctant to work on the estates. Young girls who are better educated than their parents consider plucking work as a low status job. Further, the conditions in the estates, the climate, the distance to the fields discourages young women from seeking estate employment.

3.4 Conclusion

The labour regime in the tea plantation sector still remains rigid and hierarchical despite the changes in the management of estates. Since the management of plantations was privatised the primary goal of these private sector companies is profit maximisation and not increased worker welfare. The manager and his assistants are also employees of private sector company and as such try to increase the production in the estate in order to maintain their employment. While the management company of Silver Hills has taken an interest in worker welfare much more has to be done to help the workers and their families such as ownership of linerooms, employment opportunities for educated youth, and improved health care and labour relations.

Workers continue to be exploited to reach the targets set by the management companies. Women workers who generally work as tea pluckers are overexploited in the household and place of work. At work they are expected to pluck the daily quota of 18 kilos in order to receive a monthly wage or else are given a wage on the basis of the weight of the tea leaves plucked. As wives and mothers they engage in numerous tasks in the household before arriving for work each morning. Thus, the increased wages does not have a direct result on the income level of women since many have difficulty being present at work 90% of the time each month.
Women workers were recruited from South India as a cheap, docile and passive labour force. Most teapluckers belonging to the parents' generation have a low level of education while women belonging to the grandparents' generation had no access to education. Most women in the parental generation followed their mothers into work in the tea fields as children. Therefore, most women with low levels of education enter the estate workforce as teapluckers to support their families. The double burden of work suffered by many women led many mothers especially those belonging to the grandparents' generation to withdraw their daughters from school to attend to household chores. Thus, their daughters due to their low level of education entered the estate labour force and have continued the cycle of exploitation of women. However, increased access to education has led to increased aspirations for employment for girls and many seek work outside the estate. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.
Notes

10 The terms *periya dorai* and *sinna dorai* were not willingly given by the workforce. These terms were extracted and imposed through punishment and control of the labour by British planters (Janakiram 2000, personal communication).

11 Office staff listen to the number of times the bell is rung by the manager before entering his room. Each series of rings is associated with a particular staff member.

12 It is fairly uncommon to find an unmarried woman working and residing on an estate alone.

13 The exchange value of a Canadian dollar is about Rs. 50.

14 Similar to Tylenol.

15 Caste continues to play a role in marriage among the residents of the tea plantations but I did not find it to be a determinant of girls’ access to education. Most estate residents told me that they could not afford to give dowry for their daughters because of their poor finances. In my study I did not focus on caste and dowry.

16 Although men may not engage in housework in their own homes, they learn to do these tasks when working for management. The trend has been to hire men to work in the manager’s household since the British control over plantations. British ideals about sexual restrictions and morality determined the hiring of male workers in the bungalows. Community restrictions on women’s movement inside the estate have also had a bearing on the hiring of male employees for the manager’s and assistant managers bungalows. Even today only men continue to be employed in the estate executives’ bungalows. However, some management executives who are married do employ females in their official residences but evidence of this was not seen at Silver Hills.

17 This young woman lives in the Madulkelle area in the Kandy district. The problems caused by the lack of adequate protection are not limited to this estate alone.

18 VP tea fields or vegetative propagation produces much tea in a shorter period of time while the ‘old tea’, which was planted by the British take a longer time to produce good quality tea. On most estates there is a combination of different varieties of tea.

19 The JPTUC consists of two other trade unions: the Up-Country Workers Front (UCWF) and the National Union of Workers (NUW).
Tea Plantations and Women Tea Pluckers
CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE PLANTATIONS

When British planters recruited South Indian migrants to work in the tea plantation sector in Sri Lanka, the provision of social welfare services was not considered a priority. They were provided with basic necessities in terms of accommodation. To provide children of estate labourers with an education was inconsistent with the capitalist mode of production, which was profit maximisation. Moreover, by keeping the workers illiterate, colonial managements ensured the services of a passive and docile workforce. Only a rudimentary level of education was required of workers. At the same time, sympathetic planters and missionaries nevertheless provided some type of education for the children.

This chapter outlines the evolution of schools in the plantation sector and the underlying ideologies that influenced the plantation residents' access to education. The chapter is divided into four sections, which will focus on the early agents of education in the 19th century, literacy levels in the 20th century, the impact of the educational ordinances of the colonial government and the integration of estate schools into the national education system.

4.1 Agents of Education in the 19th and 20th Centuries

4.1.1 The Kanganies

The tea plantations were hierarchically organised by British colonialists with the superintendent (a British national during this time period) at the apex of this structure and
the *kanganies* (labour supervisors), *kanakapulles* (bookkeepers) and other staff grades in intermediary positions. These individuals were from higher castes and classes. The field workers were at the lowest end of the plantation hierarchy also belonged to the lower castes and classes. The workers had to maintain a physical distance from the superintendents, lower their faces in his presence and use respectful terms of address when speaking to them. The workers were confined to barrack type residential structures known as the 'lines' while the plantation superintendents lived in spacious bungalows. The British viewed themselves as being superior while the South Indian workers were considered inferior, passive and childlike.

During the 19th century, the *kanganies* in addition to being the labour recruiter, supervisor (of labour) and moneylender also adopted the role of an 'educator' at the community level. He organised two types of school, which reflected and reproduced the social division of labour in the plantations (Gnanamuttu 1977:15, 1979:3; Little 1999:103). The first was geared towards the children of *kanganies*, conductors, *kanakapulles* and clerks who were the supervisory classes among the South Indian residents who occupied high status positions in the labour regime. They were taught the three 'Rs' and a little English. The second school known as 'line schools' was geared towards the sons and daughters of estate labourers. Their curriculum was based on reading and reciting the *aathi soodi*²⁰ (words of wisdom) and similar verses from popular Tamil stanzas that contained ideas of the popular moral precepts. Some viewed this type of schooling as a reproduction of the traditionally Tamil *thinnai pallikudam* (verandah school), which was in existence in South India and Jaffna, in Northern Sri Lanka, until the mid 20th century (Gnanamuttu 1977:15). In addition to teaching the children in the
verandah, the *kangan* also read letters from home (South India) and recited the *puranas* (ancient tales) in the line schools in the evening. The *kanganies* who provided a two-tiered education system in the plantations positioned themselves as patrons and adopted paternalistic attitudes towards the workers. The workers were treated as 'children' requiring control and discipline.

Gnanamuttu (1977:16) argues that line schools “kept the community together, preserved its institutions, its values and its unwritten codes of conduct and were a bulwark against integration”. The education provided by the line schools were viewed as adequate for children of labourers given their subservient position in the estate and future employment as tea plantation workers. Although there is very little information on the educational situation of female children at this time, given the patriarchal culture of the South Indian communities on the estates, it is likely that girls would not have acquired equal access to education as boys.

4.1.2 Schools by Missionaries and Other Religious Groups

In the 19th century, missionaries out of their zeal to seek Christian converts established a number of missionary schools surrounding the plantation areas. While the earliest record of missionary activity in the plantation sector was that of the Baptists in Kandy, it was the Anglican missionary work that assumed greater importance in providing education on the plantations from the mid 1850s (Little 1999:105). The Tamil *Cooly* (menial labour) Mission (TCM) set up by the Anglican Mission established two types of schools similar to those operated by the *Kanganies* on social and economic class lines. Schools for children of staff grades were located outside the estate in urban towns such as Kandy,
Badulla (both located in the Central Province) and Colombo (Western Province) outside the estate. The second type of school geared towards children of the worker class was located inside the plantations. The numbers of schools for children of staff grades inside the estate were considerably lower than the schools attended by children of labourers. The children of staff members and kanganies were more privileged. A good example is the son of a Head kangany from an estate located close to Silver Hills, who went to a missionary school in Kandy, graduated from Cambridge university in 1916 and qualified in London as a Barrister (Jayawardena 2000:207-208). He became the first president of the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union in Sri Lanka. Some of the children of staff members represented the next generation of clerks and field officers on the estate (Gnanamuttu 1977). Others migrated outside the estate to find suitable employment (Ibid). Since children of staff grades were not compelled to work in the plantations in order to help their families with additional income, they were able to attend school on a regular basis.

The Methodists and Roman Catholics are among the other missionaries who worked in the plantations to promote education in the plantation sector. Although the Roman Catholics like other missionaries built schools in the plantation areas they did not construct schools inside the estate. The Buddhists also established several leading schools in this area, which were attended by Tamil Hindus from the estates. Following the lead of the Buddhists, Hindus expanded their activities in the 1890s and constructed schools in several areas in the hill country. These schools attracted many children from the tea plantations who were generally from the higher caste and class families on the estates (Little 1999:107-108). These children were the children of staff members.
However, the situation was different for children of working classes who had to drop out of school on the estate and contribute to family income. The first report of the Tamil *Cooly* Mission in 1857 refers to attempts made to establish schools in the plantations and identifies the reason for the poor results achieved by students. According to Gnanamuttu (1977:19):

> Children who were old enough to learn were old enough to work. After working 10 hours a day the poor children had little inclination to learn.

The hierarchical structure of employment and social relations in the plantation structure provided little opportunities for children of estate labourers to rise above their social standing. As a result, missionary attempts to improve education in the plantations failed, as education was not a priority for worker class families. For instance, in 1920, 16% of children between the ages of six and ten attended school. The numbers increased over the years but in comparison to the 67% of boys, who attended school in 1939, only 36% of girls attended school (Kurian 2000). Thus, girls continued to be disadvantaged due to cultural perceptions, which placed a low value on the education of girls because girls were needed for domestic tasks and to provide their labour for the plantations.

**4.1.3 British Government Efforts**

In order to promote education inside the plantations, the missionaries and *kanganies* needed the support of the estate owner or superintendent/manager. Angela Little in her ethnography *Labouring to Learn* (1999) notes that there is little evidence which suggests that there were tensions between the superintendent/manager and the *kanganies*. The lack of opposition was because of the heavy reliance of the British management on the Head *Kanganies* to control the labour to act as intermediaries between the management
and the workers. They also feared a loss of labour gangs if they showed opposition. Little (1999) does suggest that there is evidence which points to opposition by some planters towards missionary work on the estates. British planters were extremely territorial about their space and were very protective of outside forces that might disturb the migrant workforce. Although some planters resisted the work of missionaries there were those who tolerated them (Little 1999:108). Some planters belonging to the latter group through their own initiative began to promote education among plantation residents by visiting liners, distributing religious pamphlets and holding discussions with the workers. In A Hundred Years of Ceylon Tea: 1867-1967, Forrest (1967) makes reference to several British planters who in their role as superintendents or having resigned their posts and entered holy orders served as missionaries among plantation residents to promote education and conversion to Christianity. However, as in most countries to which missionaries went, education was perceived as a means of proselytisation.

In general, the education of workers’ children was not given much importance by the management of the plantations. Although philanthropists in England in the early 20th century wanted to improve education, planters were hostile to their efforts arguing that children were useful as workers on the estate. They also insisted that the labour of children proved to be an important means of income to their parents.

As discussed previously, education in the plantations in the 19th century was provided on the individual initiatives of kanganies, missionaries and planters. No outside assistance was provided towards improving education in this sector until the second half of the 19th century. J.S. Laurie, the first secular Director of Public Instruction (DPI), in 1869 recommended that the estate owners be obligated to provide education of labourers’
children (Little 1999:110). The estate owners did not follow his recommendation but they did offer a modest grant-in-aid to support the operation of schools on the estates.

Little (1999) discusses the impact of these grants-in-aid on education especially the education of girls’ on the tea estates. She cites the Spring Valley School in Badulla (Uva Province located in the central highlands) established by A.T. Rettie, the superintendent of the estate as an example. The total enrolment to this school between 1886 and 1903 varied between 23 and 66, and the annual enrolment of girls varied between 20% and 43% (Little 1999: 110-113). When asked to comment on the advantage of educating the children labourers and its effects on workers by the chairman of the Planter’s Association, Rettie responded with the following comments regarding the perceived importance of education for boys and girls.

...the *coolies* and *kanganies* – although not prepared to take much personal trouble themselves in the matter of educating their children – are very glad that their boys, especially, have a chance of being educated.....some *kanganies* on neighbouring estates, some three miles away , have asked me to allow their sons to attend my school. None of them are (sic) very keen to have their daughters educated, but I insist on boys and girls who are old enough to go to school, attending...(Little 1999:110).

The education of girls was not considered important by the workers in the plantation sector but daughters of estate staff parents were able attend schools located outside the plantations. However, concerns with girls travelling outside the estate to pursue an education led many parents to keep their daughters home from school (Little 1999:130). In many colonised countries, girls received formal education that was limited to attending missionary schools that focused on religious instruction, teaching domestic skills and elementary literacy. The educational level of girls in the plantation sector was not much
different from the educational situation of girls in the rest of Sri Lanka, which will be discussed in the next section. During an interview with Little, one labourer’s daughter who attended Spring Valley school claimed to have dropped out after five years in order to get married. Marriage was clearly of more importance for a daughter than education. Child marriages were also common in South India from where workers came and this custom continued on the estates as well.

After the need to educate the younger generation gained root among the plantation community, the British government focused more attention on education in the plantation sector beginning in the early 20th century. As a result, several ordinances were passed with the hope of promoting education in this sector. The first was the 1907 Rural Schools Ordinance. This Ordinance set the scene for the development of rural and estate schools and also made provision for estate education. The burden of providing proper schools and education was placed on each individual superintendent in each estate and not on the village school committees. The central government appointed and paid for teachers. Parents were ‘required’ to send all their children aged between six and twelve years to school, with the exception of Muslim and Tamil girls, for whom age limits were six to ten years (Little 1999:121). However, attendance was not compulsory and neither were the qualifications of teachers appointed in the estate schools. Government policy in the early 20th century clearly discriminated against girls’ access to education in the plantation sector.

The succeeding Ordinance of 1920 made education compulsory for the first time and obligated superintendents to appoint competent teachers in estate schools. This Ordinance for the first time managed to restrict the hours when children between the ages
of six and ten could work on the estate (Little 1999:125). The number of schools registered for grant in aid with the Department of Education also steadily increased during this time period. The enrolment of students, especially girls in the estate sector rose from 167 in 1903 which was 9.5% of all those enrolled to 30% by 1928 after the passing of this Ordinance (Ibid p.128).

The 1939 Education Ordinance was the first passed after the Donoughmore Commission21 recommended the removal of the literacy and income franchise criteria and enacted universal franchise (Little 1999:90, 130). This Ordinance mainly dealt with the control of education and administration and its implications for estate schools were limited in practice. However, in principle it did increase the control of the Director of Education over the curriculum in estate schools (Ibid). It also made provision for superintendents to fine parents for the non-enrolment of their children in schools. The access of tea plantation children to education depended on the manager. An uneducated, passive and docile labour force is easier to control and also ensures that their progeny would also work on the plantations. Therefore, while this provision should be merited for its recommendation, it had little impact on the education of children since the regulation of this provision lay at the hands of estate management.

4.2 Literacy Levels at the turn of the 20th Century

At the turn of the 20th century the national literacy rate of Sri Lanka was 31%. In terms of education, Europeans and Burghers (descendants of Dutch colonialists) had a far superior level of education compared to the Sinhalese and Tamils (Little 1999:112). There was also a wide discrepancy in the educational levels of populations in different
provinces in Sri Lanka. The educational level of children in the Western Province (along the western seaboard) the early 20th century was twice as high as that of the Uva Province situated in the up-country region of the country. Women's literacy rate in the Uva Province (which consisted of primarily South Indian Tamils) during the same time period was 2% in comparison to 15% among women in the Western Province (Little 1999:114). Sinhalese men residing in the Uva Province outside the plantations in 1901 had a higher level of education (25%) than Tamil men inside the plantations (15%) (Ibid). Since the Western Province was the hub of economic, political and social activities, education developed at a faster pace in this area than in any other province in the country. Education was not a priority for girls in the late 19th and early 20th century. The low educational status of the plantation sector was similar to the educational level in the rural sector, except that the plantation sector was worse off than the rural sector.

4.3 The Free Education Act of 1947

After the 1931 elections in Sri Lanka, C.W.W. Kannangara became the first Sri Lankan Minister of Education. He is hailed as 'the father of free education'. The Free Education Act was introduced in 1947. The Act was aimed at providing education free of cost for all classes, ethnicities and caste groups, yet the major beneficiaries of this law were Sri Lankan elites and the higher classes. English-medium education which guaranteed better employment opportunities for children was not available to the majority of Sri Lankans who ‘continued to receive poor quality education that had all along been free to them’ (Jayasuriya 1979:475 cited by Little 1999:91). A two tiered education system was created in Sri Lanka. The Minister did not address the situation of estate schools in the
1947 Ordinance. In fact when debating the Free Education Ordinance in 1944, he dropped the issue of estate schools (Jayasuriya 1979:467 cited by Little 1999:131). In 1951, it was E.A. Nugawela, Kannangara's successor, who reiterated the government's commitment to take-over estate schools. The amendment to the Education Act (No.5) in 1951 obligated estate superintendents to meet building and land requirements set by the Education Department. This ordinance also required all plantation superintendents to provide a school building, a house for a married teacher, at least an acre of land for rent by the government and removed the obligation of estate managements to provide a teacher for estate schools.

The 1947 and 1951 Ordinances met with strong resistance on the part of the estate managements. In a meeting held by the Planters Association in 1952, the estate management passed a resolution stating that the education scheme for estate children was unsound and that the implementation of requirements was injudicious (Ibid p.133). The association also objected to the transfer of valuable tea land and the erection and/or repair of building(s) to meet government directives for estate (Gnanamuttu 1977). Despite the hinting of a government take-over of estate schools in 1947 the process proved to be extremely slow. The income generated by the plantations during the 20th century was of vital importance to the economy and also helped support educational provisions to the rest of the country. The government being mindful of the economic significance of tea plantations made concessions to the plantation superintendents. They included separate clauses in the education ordinances pertaining to estate schools but the management ignored them (Little 1999:141-142).
4.4 Integration of Estate Schools into the National Education System

Promises continued to be made by the Sri Lankan government after independence in 1948 and then there were periods of inaction. Various commissions continued to recommend the take-over of estate schools and integrating them into the national system of education (Gnanamuttu 1977:53). Between 1951 and 1954 only 24 out of 942 schools were transferred to government control (Little 1999:133). The 1962 National Commission on Education recommended the take-over of estate schools. It also recommended that children from the tea plantations be admitted to schools with children from neighbouring villages, provided that the estate children be educated in the medium of Sinhala (Little 1999:136). This issue of language surfaces many times in the development of education in Sri Lanka. All schools were required to teach in Sinhala or Tamil from the primary grades in 1948, in secondary schools from 1953 and in universities from 1961. Therefore, despite the enactment of the Sinhala-only law in 1956 which required Tamils to be proficient in Sinhala to obtain government jobs, the right of Tamils to be educated in Tamil from primary school to university was never in serious jeopardy (Ibid p.137). However, the disenfranchisement of plantation Tamils in 1949 left them in a vulnerable position in terms of citizenship and social welfare such as education. The 1964 White Paper on Education repeated the recommendations made by the 1962 National Commission on education but neither of these recommendations were implemented.

The take-over of schools became an election platform in 1970 when a Communist Party (CP) trade unionist, S. Nadesan persuaded the party leader Pieter Keuneman to include the take-over of estate schools in the party manifesto. The CP aligned United
Front (UF) came into power in 1970 but the take-over of estate schools remained an unfulfilled promise. No estate schools were taken-over between the 1956 and 1970. Finally, when elections were around the horizon in 1976/7, the government, realising that they stood to lose the votes from the plantation Tamils hastily took over 266 estate schools (Little 1999:140) but lost the elections. It was the United National Party (UNP) that was elected into office in 1977 that began the gradual process of take-over of estate schools. This take-over which began in 1977 ended in 1994 (Ibid p.280). According to Little (1999), a majority of schools were taken over in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For the first time students of estate schools followed the same curriculum as student outside the plantation sector.

Since then the welfare and infrastructural aspects of estate schooling has received substantial funding from many overseas funding agencies. International development organisations such as the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), German Agency for Technical Co-operation (GTZ) and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) provided funding for improving the infrastructure of schools located in the plantation sector. The improvement of school infrastructure and the implementation of legislature have increased the enrolment of students from the plantations in schools. The impact of these changes on increased access to education of children on the estates will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter on formal education.
4.5 Conclusion

From the start of tea plantations in Sri Lanka in the mid 19th century, the aim of the British colonial government was to increase its profit through the export of tea. The South Indian migrants served the labour needs of the British managements. Educating the children of labourers meant the loss of valuable labour in the plantation sector. Hence, education was not given priority by British planters in the 19th century. Basic education was promoted as a method of keeping young children away from the tea fields.

Gradually, education for older children was introduced and divided along social and economic lines. However, the education of girls was largely neglected both for cultural reasons and because the labour of girls was useful at home and at work.

Missionary activity and increased enrolment of children in schools led to the colonial government’s involvement in education. Several educational ordinances were passed with regard to children’s education in the plantation sector. They had few impacts on the education of the plantation community since the obligation to provide education was in the hands of the estate management. The 1947 Free Education Ordinance and its subsequent amendment in 1951 provided fee free education for all who wanted to gain an education in the country. However, the lack of Tamil trained teachers in estate schools created further stumbling blocks for children’s education in the plantation sector.

It was not until the ruling party of 1976 saw the benefits of plantation sector votes were efforts made to take-over some schools in the plantation sector. This was a gradual process, which was completed only recently as 1994. This ensured that children in this sector followed the same curriculum as students in the rest of the country. Foreign donations have largely been involved in creating better infrastructural facilities for
schools located inside the plantations. In the next chapter we take a closer look at the formal education system at present and examine the question of educational access and participation of plantation women and girls in education.

Notes

20 So called because the first couplet begins with these words, and is a call to worship the Lord who wears on his head a couplet of Aathi flowers (Bahunia racemosa) i.e. Shiva (Gnanamuttu 1977:115). The couplets are arranged in alphabetical order of their initial letter and are among the first lessons a Tamil child learns to recite (Ibid).

21 A committee of British nationals who made recommendations on improving the economic, social and political conditions in Sri Lanka during colonization.
CHAPTER 5

HOUSEHOLD, GENDER AND EDUCATION

Gender socialisation begins at the level of the households and families. The socialisation for inequality also begins at this level and influences how households allocate resources and determines who has access to resources of the household. Many studies (Heward & Bunawaree 1999; Jayaweera 1999; Jejeebhoy & Jeffery 1995; Khan 1993; King & Hill 1993) have shown how cultural ideologies shape girls’ access to education, which is an important development resource. Cultural ideologies, sex role stereotyping within households and norms regarding entitlement have an impact on the education of women. This chapter will discuss the gender and household dynamics of the educational experiences of girls and women to assess the extent to which they have a bearing on their educational access and participation.

5.1 Household Structure

Residence on the estate is tied to employment on the estates. Workers reside in barrack style housing known as ‘lines’. Lines consist of 12x10 feet units with one door, one window and a small kitchen. Depending on the size of the family, a worker will receive either a single line room for two adults and three children or double room cottage sufficient for four adults and four children (Kurian 1982:107). Due to the increase in migration of youth and men into urban centres in recent years, many have lost their claims to live in a room separate from their parents. Therefore, when these young men
get married, their wives take up residence with the in-laws unless they take up work on the estate as tea pluckers and become entitled to a lineroom.

Today, housing shortages, natural increase and migration of families into the estate due to the ethnic insecurity outside the estates have changed the family structure of estate households. Household structures consist of two types of families: nuclear and extended. Nuclear families consist of parents and children while extended families includes consanguineal (blood relatives) and affinal (relatives through marriage) kin living in the same line room. Forty-three households in the sample population of Silver Hills were nuclear family households. There were 16 extended families comprised in-laws, siblings and married children who lived with a nuclear family. These extended families are largely patrilocal.

The tea estate resident community is strongly patrilineal. The male is the head of the household. Hindu culture and religion according to most estate residents’ gives more power and authority to men than women. At Silver Hills, 88% of households were headed by men while only 12% had women as heads of the household. These women obtained this position due to the death of a spouse or by divorce.

Men’s and women’s experiences in the household are determined by age, sex and position in the family (husband/wife, father/mother, son/daughter, father-in-law/mother-in-law or widower/widow). Younger women, especially daughters and daughters-in-law are subjected to male authority and control. They have little control over their earnings or decision making power except in the case of older women who have considerable power within the family.
5.2 Division of Labour

Traditionally, plantation women received no education and were discriminated against due to their secondary position in the family. Elderly women on the estate are generally illiterate. They were married young and took on the double burden at home and at work in the plantations. Women in the parental generation had more access to education in comparison to the elderly generation. Most women who belonged to the middle aged generation generally had a grade five or six standard of education and continued to lag behind males in their educational levels. Women learned the art of plucking tea as children when they accompanied their mothers to the field. Women contributed to family income through their work in the fields and thus, female children were valued for their earning potential. Education was not a necessary requirement for work in the fields and there were less job opportunities for women within and outside the estates.

Many women noted that they stayed at home to take care of children at a young age when their mothers were at work in the field. Parents justified the greater value placed on the education of sons because it led to increased family earnings, especially since they could migrate outside to find jobs. Marriage was important for girls regardless of their level of education. Since many women lived with their husband’s family after marriage, parents saw little benefits in educating girls. Most women admitted to not having higher aspirations in terms of employment outside the estate but instead followed their mother’s occupation as tea pluckers.

There is a clear division of labour on the plantations with a majority of women workers engaged in tea plucking while the men work in maintenance work or sundry
work (*silarai velai*) and in the factory. Men also tend to cattle and vegetable gardens while women also help them out.

Women’s activities in the household are not considered ‘work’ but rather as an extension of the ‘natural’ function of women (Kurian 2000:16). Most women in addition to working as tea pluckers also engage in household tasks such as caring for children, cooking, cleaning, washing pots and pans, collecting firewood and fetching water on a daily basis. They lack time for leisure and are constantly working from the time they wake up in the morning (4.30/5 a.m.) until they go to sleep at night (10/10.30 p.m.). When asked if men engage in household work such as cooking and cleaning, Sivalingam, a father in his mid 40s replied “I only go for work. I can not do the cooking”. Since his mother-in-law, Packiam, lives with his family and is not employed on the estate, she does all the household work. In most households cooking, cleaning and other household activities are women’s responsibilities.

While women engage in work in the public and domestic arenas, men largely work in the public domain. Going to the shop is seen as a primarily male activity. In the case of an emergency women go to the shops located in line rooms inside the estate to buy a few necessities but most do not go to shops located outside the confines of the estate. Women’s lack of knowledge about accounting and experience in purchasing goods in town shops are cited as reasons for them not engaging in shopping. Men believe that if women go shopping they would be duped into paying high prices for household necessities due to their ignorance on these matters. These cultural perceptions regarding female movement in public spaces restricts them from engaging in activities that are not considered ‘women’s work’. Gender norms regarding household tasks also reduces
women's ability to control their earnings, since male prerogatives in purchasing good for the home also entitles them to control the individual earnings of female members of the family.

Some of the older men admitted to taking care of their grandchildren while some younger men claimed to assist with their wives with cooking during interviews and group discussions. During a daily routine exercise with grade nine and ten school children at Golden Tips Tamil Vidyalayam the students wrote down the daily activities of each parent. The analysis of the drawing showed that from the perspective of the children, mothers were more involved with household work than fathers. Men too realise that women work harder than they do but are not forthcoming in their assistance with household work. Some men claimed that to engage in household tasks such as cooking and cleaning would be to set oneself up for ridicule by neighbours. This dissuades men from helping their wives and mothers with household tasks.

Women acquiesced with the division of labour in the household and are also agents of its maintenance. Packiam, Sivalingam's mother-in-law noted "We can not expect men to cook. It is a woman's job". Culturally, young girls are socialised to believe that household duties are women's work. Therefore, many consider it unusual to have their husbands, fathers or brothers participate in activities such as cooking and cleaning. While all women acknowledge that they work harder than men do and complain about their responsibilities, they are reluctant to change the system. In fact, when asked if the division of labour within households should be changed to include more help from men, one woman laughed at my questions and responded "why should we change it?" To them it seemed incomprehensible to have men engage in household
work. Another woman challenged my questions by stating “even in Colombo women do all the work in the houses and men go to work so why should we do anything different?”

Regardless of whether a woman is literate or illiterate, employed or unemployed, household work is seen primarily as ‘woman’s work’ and is not likely to be susceptible to change in the near future.

Girls and boys are socialised into their gender roles from a young age. Kurian (1982:108-109) in Women Workers in the Sri Lanka Plantation Sector indicates that women tea pluckers faced with the double burden of work transfer household duties to a daughter who is old enough (seven or eight years) to clean the house, prepare the food and look after the younger children “just because she is a girl”. Girls relieve older women of household chores because it is ‘natural’ for a daughter to perform these tasks instead of a son. Parents socialised their children to believe that boys are superior to girls, which in turn translates into a secondary position for girls in the family. This secondary position leads to many girls being kept at home to engage in household tasks, which result in absenteeism from school. During line visits with the welfare officer, I met several girls who stayed home from school to engage in household activities and to take care of a sick family member while their mothers were at work on the estate. Through socialisation girls are made to accept additional responsibilities in the family in addition to attending school, which affect their continued participation in school.

5.3 Gender Perceptions and Socialisation

At Silver Hills men and women’s position in the household and society is often referred to as ‘first and second’. Men were referred to as being ‘first’ because of their position in
society, mobility and access to opportunities while women with restrictions placed on their movement, position in the family and gender are called ‘second’. While a majority of families see men as being superior to women, there were some families that saw gender relations from a different perspective. When Puvaneswari, a 42 years old female tea plantation worker with two adult daughters was asked to comment on the status of women within her household and the society, she explained the differences in the following manner.

In my family men and women are seen as equals. It is different in the society. Women are second class. Society sees men as ahead of women.

Puvaneswari comes from a family that considers education to be of vital importance to both male and female children. Education, therefore, has led to a change in the belief system in her family. Her personal views, however, can not be generalised to the entire community. Many male informants claimed that men and women gained equality when women received the same level of education as men. However, when women gain the same level of education as men, they continued to be denied equal status in the household.

In the estates, men control and collect the earning of all family members especially women (Kurian 1982:84-85). The reasons given by the sample population of Kurian’s (1982) study for women not collecting their wages were that they worked too late, they worked too far away on the estate to go to the paydesk and had work that had to be completed in the domestic sphere (Ibid). Although estate work ended at a relatively early time\textsuperscript{22} at Silver Hills, so that workers could come to the estate factory to collect their wages, it was mainly men who lined up to collect wages. Despite women
constituting a large portion of the estate labour force, there were few lined up to collect their wages on payday. This is so, despite the fact that new labour regulations require women to collect their own pay. The employment structure in the plantations as discussed previously is male dominant. Estate management mainly deals with male and not female workers. Therefore, by not enforcing the labour regulations for women to collect their own wages, the management perpetuates the male ‘breadwinner’ and male ‘household head’ image.

Men’s control over women’s earnings is consistent with the prevailing image of the ‘male breadwinner’ role. Thangavelu, a father of four adult children, discussed his position as head of the household as “I am in command in the family. My children give me their salaries and I give them money for expenses”. Although Thangavelu works outside the estate, his ideas about the male as head of the household have not changed. Women generally do not challenge men’s control of earnings. It was only when I questioned women about men’s use of alcohol that they expressed displeasure in men taking their earnings.

Sen (1990) and Boserup (1970) claim that women’s autonomy is related to wage labour and contribution to the family. Women plantation workers have been employed on estates since their arrival from South India in the mid 19th century. Today, women earn more money than men because they work longer but this has not translated into women gaining control over their wages or greater autonomy. Women in the plantation sector seem to be an exemption to the idea that labour market integration would result in increasing women’s autonomy. Women’s acquiescence with the ‘male provider’ image, and male control of earnings are all areas in which women co-operate with male decision
making, since the outcome of cooperation maybe mutually beneficial (Sen 1987; 1990). However, pace Sen (1987; 1990) women also co-operate when the outcome does not benefit them. For example, men’s use of money to purchase alcohol or cigarettes does not benefit their families but women also have little control over the purchase of these goods. Therefore, women’s position and behaviour can be explained by their lack of control, socialisation for inequality (in terms of compulsory emotions) and perceptions towards men’s contribution to the household.

In most families it is the men who make all the decisions. Some men claimed they would support decisions made by women but ‘if only it was a good decision’. The general sentiment of the community is that women were better decision-makers than men. However, as discussed previously, men and women thought that women’s lack of experience in dealing with the outside community would result in them getting ‘duped’ by crafty shopkeepers trying to make extra money by manipulating women’s ignorance of money. While this is not essentially true, women feel that they lack the ability to make sound decisions and to engage in activities such as shopping outside the estate. There are some young, married couples who believe in making decisions together but these families comprise a small number. Cultural ideologies and socialisation play a crucial role in determining who has the ability to control income and make decisions in the household. The following narrative is an excellent example, which explains the socialisation and reasoning of a girl with a high level of education regarding issues pertaining to control of income and household decision making authority.

Chandra is 16 years old and will be sitting for her O/L examination soon. She does not want to work on the plantations as a tea plucker after finishing her studies. She wants to work outside the estate in a company as
a manager. If she can not work as a manager she will
look for work in the garment factory but refuses to work
on the estate. In her family, her father makes all the
decisions and this is the way she wants it to be when she
gets married. When asked why she would not want to
change the system she replied “we do not like to. We can
not go over their [men’s] control.” She thinks it is troublesome
to take her own decisions. According to Chandra ‘taking
children to school, cooking can be done by women. But making
decisions and controlling of finances must be done by men.’
The only time she thinks she will make her own decisions is
if she works and has to live outside the estate.

Chandra belongs to the younger generation of estate residents. However, her views on
decision-making and control of income have not changed from her parents’ generation.
She feels that it is the man’s duty to make decisions. The culture of the community
socialises girls to accept a secondary status in the household which later transfers into
their low status in the estate workforce. Therefore, despite the different careers girls
enter due to their higher level of education today, it has little impact on changing their
position and value in the household the gender perceptions of the community.

The present generation of girls has more access to education than their mothers
and grandmothers. There are several reasons for the increased access of girls to
education. The successive implementation of legislative enactments such as the Free
Education Act of 1947, the Amended Education Act of 1951, the nationalisation of estate
schools from 1977 and the integration of the estate schools into the national education
system in 1994 have led to increased access to education for children, especially girls in
the plantation sector. More recently, the Compulsory Education Act of 1998 made
school attendance compulsory for both boys and girls. Parents found to be negligent
under this law face legal repercussions. Thus, parents show consistency in enrolling both
girls and boys in school on the estate from five years of age. All tea plantations today
have at least one school, which provides education up to grade five. Silver Hills has one primary school in each of its three divisions. Since education is available within a close proximity to the lines, it makes little sense for parents to keep a five-year-old child at home. Since Silver Hills is located close to a major urban centre, their exposure to the outside communities influences parents’ ideas of education and employment. Parents have high aspirations for their children, which does not include estate work. The impact of these changes is seen through the growing population of Grade ten educated girls in the tea plantations. According to residents at Silver Hills, a larger population of girls today have studied up to grade 10 compared to the previous generation. The adoption of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention by the GOSL in 1991 against the use of child labour on estates and as domestic servants in middle and upper class homes below 14 years has given children more access to education.

5.4 Cultural Barriers

Today, attending school from 5-14 years is compulsory for both girls and boys but there are problems associated with retaining girls at the secondary school level. Factors such as position in the family, number of children and household income have a bearing on girls’ education in the schools. The position in the family plays a key role in determining the responsibilities of girls and boys. Often, a sick parent or sibling results in a girl being kept at home to perform domestic chores and to tend to the needs of family members. It is considered far more ‘natural’ for a girl to be kept home from school to engage in household tasks and take care of the sick than a boy.
Some of the girls noted that while they had the opportunity to stay in school until their Advance Level (A/L) examination, they chose to drop out of school to help their parents save money to spend on the education of their younger siblings. They felt that finding employment to support their families and younger siblings in school was more important. Thus, girls are socialised through compulsory emotions to be nurturing and self-sacrificing which results in girls’ sacrificing their future aspirations for a better life in order to support the aspirations of the younger siblings. Family income plays an important role in the retention of girls in schools. In many families with a single income earner, the female child was sent to work as a domestic to the city. While the present regulations of child labour has to an extent controlled the flow of children, especially girls to work as domestic servants in middle and upper class households in Colombo and Kandy, there were girls who were sent to work at a young age due to the economic circumstances of the families. The argument made by parents is that “it is easier to find a girl to work as a domestic than a boy since she is already used to taking care of children, cooking and cleaning”. While girls have the same level of access as boys, in times of necessity, girls are the first to be taken out of school to either engage in household, work to take care of the sick or help supplement family income by working as a domestic servant.

At Silver Hills, the schools only provide an education until Grade five. Therefore, those who wish to pursue further education have to travel to the nearest town or to Golden Tips estate to continue their education. Parents worry about the safety and security of daughters who travel on estate roads. Jeyakumari, a 23-year-old estate resident, claimed “girls can not walk alone on the road. It is the culture.” In essence girls
travelling alone on estate roads face the possibility of rape. The safety of the sons is not an issue. In the case of daughters cultural ideologies regarding modesty, sexual purity and physical safety influence parental decisions about keeping girls in school.

Boys comment on the sexual appearance of girls, tease and make sexual advances towards girls when they travel without an older chaperone. This is a common occurrence. I too witnessed this first hand when on several occasions estate boys passed comments to me while I was walking along the estate roads on my own. Once girls attain puberty their sexuality becomes an issue while travelling on the estate roads. Through culture girls are taught to be modest and careful about their sexuality. If a girl is viewed as being 'overly friendly' with a boy, she becomes the target of criticism in a small community such as this. News about such matters spread fairly quickly and affects a girl's future prospect of marriage. A boy's sexuality, however, is not an issue because their sexual purity is not questioned at the time of marriage. An episode of a teledrama I watched frequently while in Sri Lanka captured the difference in the way sexuality is viewed between men and women. In it a statement was made regarding this difference.

Wherever a boy goes and whatever he does you can always wash him and take him into the house. But you can not do the same with a girl.

Girls also spoke of the harassment they suffered when travelling in buses and on the roads. A girl's modesty and sexuality are issues of grave importance at the time of her marriage and, therefore, girls are especially mindful of their safety. Since secondary schools are located further away from the lines at Silver Hills, girls' daily travel to and from the school become a concern for parents. Parents do not want to send their daughters to obtain higher education if it means her reputation could be compromised.
During my research I socialised with a young, unmarried woman who was my age at Golden Tips. She is very outgoing and forward compared to most estate girls. A woman residing on the estate told me, that people had made stories about this young woman because of her behaviour. In essence she was going against the norm and socialised with boys too much. While this story had no truth to it, there is always the possibility that it could diminish her personality at the time of marriage.

5.5 Conclusion

Cultural barriers restricted the access to educational facilities for the older generations of women in the plantation sector. However, access to schools for girls today is not a problem. The younger generation of girls have greater access to education partly due to the legislative enactments, supply of schools, language factors and the nationalisation of schools, which will be discussed further detail in the chapter on formal education.

However, the socialisation of children into their respective gender roles affects girls' full participation in schools. It is the girls who are very often taken out of school in order to take care of a sick relative or engage in household work. Hence, absenteeism among female children in schools is higher than that for boys.

Finally, parents' decisions to send their daughters to school are also influenced by cultural ideologies pertaining to sexual modesty and safety. Marriage is of considerable importance to a girl whatever the level of her education. Therefore, due to the growing teasing and sexual harassment of boys, parents are especially concerned over girls travelling especially when the schools are located away from the lines. Thus, cultural
ideologies, perceptions and socialisation of both genders have a significant impact on girls’ participation in education.

Notes

22 The assistant managers after visiting the bank to collect pay roll came back to the estate around 4 p.m. at which time estate workers would be lined up close to the estate factory to receive their wages.
Line Rooms
Kitchen in the Verandah of a Line Room

Hindu Temple (Kovil)
CHAPTER 6

UNIVERSAL EDUCATION FOR ALL: FORMAL EDUCATION AMONG THE TEA PLANTATION RESIDENT COMMUNITY

Since gaining independence from the British in 1948, the Sri Lankan Government has been committed to upholding the goal of providing universal education for all ethnic groups in the country. Although compulsory education for children over the age of five years was first introduced in the plantations of Sri Lanka in 1907 (Ordinance No. 8 of 1907) it was never enforced (Jayaweera 1991:25; Kanapathipillai 1992:15). C. W. W. Kannangara who became the first Minister of Education of the State Council in 1931 introduced legislature known as the Free Education Act of 1945, which provided free education for all in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education (Jayaweera 1991:26; Little 1999:90-91). However, it was not until the 1951 that estate schools were included in the Free Education Act.

Social conditioning and patriarchal ideologies act as barriers to girls’ and women’s retention in educational facilities. The secondary and often subordinate role of women in all sectors of production are reflected in areas of wage control, decision-making powers, double burden of work and denial of basic necessities, including education. Female workers experience discrimination at several levels: as members of a largely marginalized ethnic group; as landless labour operating within a well-established system of social control including traditional caste and class hierarchies; and as women workers within a patriarchal plantation culture with its own system of resource ‘allocation’ and ‘distributive justice’ based on social consensus about the ‘value’ of women’s labour and
needs (Papanek 1990). Women’s access to education and other basic necessities are adversely affected by patriarchal perceptions which undervalue women. The improvement of women’s education requires much more than schools and money to narrow the gender gap in education. This situation is emphasised to a greater degree among female tea plantation workers because they also belong to a largely marginalized and peripheralized ethnic minority.

This chapter focuses on formal education among girls in the plantation sector. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section will provide an overview of studies conducted in the formal education system. Section two analyses the availability of educational infrastructure for students at Silver Hills. The impact of foreign aid in the expansion of school facilities, the inefficient transportation system, the increasing numbers of teachers from the community and the effects of extra curricular activities on students will be the segments analysed in this section. The use of educational facilities will be discussed in the third section. Gender is one determinant in educational access and retention within the plantation resident communities. The fourth section presents the perceptions on the value of education from the points of different generations of plantation residents. The final section deals with the dilemma faced by the educated female youth on the estate and its impact on the future of girls’ and women’s education in the future.

6.1 Overview of Studies conducted on Formal Education

Sri Lanka has gained one of the best developed education systems in Asia with a literacy rate of 91.8% at the turn of the 21st century compared to 31% at the dawn on the 20th
century (Haq 1997; Hollup 1994; Jayaweera 2000a; Little 1999). As a result, in literacy and education, Sri Lankan women enjoy a much higher literacy rate than many other South Asian women (Papanek 1990). According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka Consumer Finances and Socio-Economic Survey, in 1996/7 the gap between male and female literacy rates was 94.3% and 89.4% respectively. Despite the implementation of legislation to provide education for all and the contributions by international donors such as the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and NGOs, education in the plantation sector lags behind the rest of the country. Estate Tamils in the plantation sector have the lowest literacy rate of 76.9% compared to the literacy rates of the urban (94.5%) and rural (92.3%) sectors of the country (Jayaweera 2000a:75). Women in the plantations have a considerably lower literacy rate (67.3%) than women living in the urban (93%) and rural (90.4%) sectors of Sri Lanka (Ibid).

In further comparing male and female educational patterns in the tea estates, 58.5% of male children enter Grade one and 20.8% continue their education up until Grade ten only. Fifty-seven percent of female children enter Grade one while only 6.7% will continue their education until Grade 10 or above. There is, thus, a disparity between male and female levels of education (Atkin 1995). More male children attend school and pursue their education up to Grade 10 (Ibid.). In 1990/1, 5.7% and 8.3% of the urban and rural population aged 5+ years had received no education (Little 1999:11). Little (1999) claims that 22% of the estate population over 5+ years have no education. The statistics from the Department of Census and Statistics for the same year lists 14.6% of males and 30.9% of females in the estate sector as having received no schooling. According to the
3000 households surveyed in ten districts for the Labour Force Survey of 1996, 4.6% of male children five years and older and 22.4% of female children received no schooling in their lifetime. In the “no schooling” category in the estate sector there is a continuous drop in the rates over the past thirty years from a rate of 51.8% in 1969/79 to 13.7% in 1996 (Jayaweera 1991a; Seneviratne 1996). Since the transformation of physical facilities of estate schools, the enrolment of girls in primary grades increased from 45% in the late 1980s to 48%-49% in 1997 (Jayaweera 2000a:68). Jayaweera (2000a:68) also notes that the transition rates to secondary schools are higher for girls (over 80%) than for boys (67%-83%) in these schools. While the participation in secondary education is very limited, the national trend of more girls than boys enrolling in secondary school has been replicated in this sector (Ibid).

S. M. Burrows, the Director of Public Instruction at the turn of the century, reflected the colonial sentiment towards plantation workers in the following statement.

...for all the education the ‘Tamil cooly’ required was one that would enable him ‘to sign his name, recognise signatures, read and with simple sentences in his mother tongue and do such arithmetic as implied in the very simple accounts that come into his daily life, e.g. his pay and daily expenses’ (Gnanamuttu 1979:6-7).

After gaining independence from the British the Sri Lankan government passed several ordinances focusing on education in the plantation sector, yet the benefits to the community was limited. Until the nationalisation of schools the plantations provided an education up to Grade five only (Kanapathipillai 1992; Samarasinghe 1988,1993). Due to the lower level of education among the plantation community, teachers for the estate schools had to be recruited from the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.
The teachers belonged to the Sri Lankan Tamil ethnic group, the largest ethnic minority in Sri Lanka. Tamils from the North and East of Sri Lanka differentiated themselves from the Indian Tamil workers on the estates, through culture, timing of migration, separation from India and their emphasis on education. However, the prevailing ethnic conflict and transfers to schools in cities with more resources has decreased the numbers of teachers in the plantation schools (Little 1999). As a result, a severe lack of Tamil medium teachers in the plantation sector has resulted in most schools struggling to provide an education beyond Grade Five (Hollup 1994:212; Kanapathipillai 1992:15; Samarasinghe 1993:142-144). In 1984, less than one third of the 78% of the teachers in the plantation schools who were permanent government employees were trained (Little 1987:31). Twenty-three percent of teachers were volunteers who were paid a small stipend by parents and voluntary organisations (Ibid).

In the 821 plantation Tamil schools in Sri Lanka (in 1996) 4848 teachers are employed to teach 200,000 students (Mookaih 1997:4). This results in a Teacher to Pupil ratio (TPR) of 1:41^{24}. This ratio varies from 1:61 in Nuwara Eliya to 1:34 in Homagama^{25} (in the Colombo district) while the national level TPR is 1:23 (Mookaih 1997:4; Thanaraj 1997:2). Thanaraj and Mookaih claim that the 3140 vacancies for teachers represent 35% of the 9210 teachers in plantation Tamil schools.

The Labour Force Survey (1996) further examined the reasons for low levels of education among children in the tea estates. An overwhelming majority (46%) of respondents who were surveyed claimed that they could not afford to send their children to school. Oddvar Hollup (1994) in his research noted that expenditure on education becomes increasingly higher after Grade five when children have to attend schools
outside the estate in the town or bazaar. Nineteen percent of parents in the Labour Force Survey also claimed that they were not interested in providing their children with an education. Although education is free, expenditure on school uniforms, exercise books, and bus fare is essential for a child to continue his/her education. A school uniform including dress, shoes, socks, and a blue tie for a girl and boy in the Grade six costs Rs. 100 and Rs. 75 respectively (Hollup 1994:128). Seven percent claimed they kept their children, especially daughters at home to help with household chores (Seneviratne 1996:13-16). Samarasinghe (1988,1993) and Hollup (1994) both found that more girls than boys are kept at home after Grade three to help with household chores and in the raising of younger siblings. In Learning to Labour this expectation for girls is illustrated through the example of Vijayaranie, a girl in the plantations. Since she was the oldest daughter in the family it was expected that she would not overburden the parents with costs related to education but would rather take on household responsibilities. Another 10% mentioned the distance to schools as a reason for not sending their children to school. In most cases the children not sent to schools because of the distance factor are females. Patriarchal ideology regarding public and private domain, gender roles as well as issues pertaining to security are listed as the primary reasons for females lack of access to schools located outside the plantations (Kanapathipillai 1992; Little 1999). Therefore, more than income and legislature is needed to improve the education system in this sector.

Aspirations of the youth due to education have changed compared to the parental generation. In the survey conducted by the Institute of Policy Studies, estate male youth in the Badulla District (located in the Uva Province) reported wanting to find
employment as drivers or security guards while girls wanted to be seamstresses/dressmakers, or go to the Middle East as housemaids or teachers (for those with secondary education). The parental ideal for employment was for their children to work in the government sector (Dunham et al 1997:38). In a similar study conducted by Siron Rajaratnam (1992) in the Talawakelle region (Hatton, in the Nuwara Eliya district), fathers who worked outside the plantation sector had higher aspirations for their sons (as grama-sevakas, engage in business concerns, join the armed forces) than the aspirations of fathers who were estate labourers. The latter group aspired for their sons to become teachers, clerks, mechanics, drivers or factory officers. If their sons were good in studies the fathers employed outside the estate wanted them to go into the hotel trade or be lawyers where they could earn a lot of money and enjoy a high status in the community. Their wives wanted the sons to be drivers or factory officers. For girls, most fathers wanted them to be clerks in offices, typists, teachers, work in a pharmacy or a respectable business establishment while their mothers expected them to be teachers, midwives or crèche attendants if they were good in their studies. Among parents who were estate labourers many wanted their daughters to be teachers (Rajaratnam 1992:61). In Little’s study (1999) an overwhelming majority of labourer-parents interviewed from Nayapane estate (located in the Kandy district) wanted their children to become teachers while a vast majority wanted teaching, or other professional jobs such as a doctor or bank manager. Some of the youth mentioned employment opportunities in shops and self-employed agriculture. Children studying in Year six and above were unanimous in their aspirations for paid white-collar/professional employment. While studies on the aspirations of Sri Lankan students outside the plantations for many years have indicated
the rising aspirations among both boys and girls, the students in the plantation schools are rapidly nearing the life expectation patterns of students in the education mainstream (Little 1999:164).

6.2 Educational Facilities at Silver Hills

6.2.1 Infrastructure

Three primary schools are located at Silver Hills estate; one for each division so that children belonging to each division can attend school within a short distance of their home. These three schools were established by estate management and individuals who migrated to the Hill Country from the Eastern Province. While at the beginning each school was located in one building with no formal structure after the nationalisation of schools in the plantation sector a uniform model was used for all schools where students are divided into different levels of study by age. The funding by international donor agencies such as SIDA increased the number of schools buildings in each of the estate schools.

The primary schools at Silver Hills have a population of 354 students. Since these are primary schools, children from each division can attend the school located in their division only up to Year six/Grade five. According to estimates given by teachers 50 to 60 children of school going age do not attend school. Children who want to pursue their education beyond Year six attend one of the schools located outside the estate in Pussellawa town or the school at Golden Tips estate which is located two kilometres from Silver Hills. According to the teaching staff at the estate, there has been an increase in the number of students attending school, those attending primary school has decreased27.
The lack of funding at the early stages of estate sector meant classes had to be held in abandoned buildings. However since the nationalisation of schools and the foreign aid from international organisations the infrastructure of schools have seen vast improvements over the past 20 years. One of the goals of SIDA’s Plantation Sector Education Development Programme (PSEDP) initiated in 1986 was to assist in infrastructural development of disadvantaged primary schools in limited geographical areas similar to schools located in the plantation sector (Little 1999:228-229). Due to the rising concern about the rehabilitation of Tamils at the wake of the 1983 Tamil insurgency, the funding of a project benefiting the Tamil minority was seen as being timely (Ibid p.230). This programme simultaneously focused on the universalisation of access to and improvement in the quality of schools and was concluded in the mid 1990s (Ibid). Funding from SIDA contributed to the upgrading of existing school buildings, building new classrooms to accommodate more students and clearing land to construct a playground for the students at Silver Hills. According to Little (1999) SIDA provided funding for all schools located in the plantation areas.

6.2.2 Distance and Transportation

Transportation, which was a problem for most residents at the start of the plantations, continues to be a problem today despite the changes to the transportation and highway system in Sri Lanka. Travelling to schools located outside the estate continues to be a problem for children attending school beyond grade five. Most of the land surrounding the linerooms and main roads has been cleared for growing tea. Many students from Division II and III travel to the Golden Tips school located 2 ½ to 3 km away to pursue
their education beyond Year six. Others especially students from Division I travel outside the estate to Pussellawa to attend schools which proceed up to A/L or Year 13. According to the English teacher on this division all children from the school attend schools outside after completing their Year six level of education.\textsuperscript{29}

The public transportation system leading in and out of Silver Hills is not very efficient. While the public system is supplemented by small vans carrying residents into the estate and outside to the closest town, their times of operation are not predictable. For students going to school outside the estate walking and the bus system are the methods of transportation. One day I witnessed several students being left behind by a bus heading outside the estate. These students then had to walk three kilometres before getting to the town where they could take a bus to reach their respective schools. As pointed out by an estate employee these children would miss the first period of classes before reaching their school. Since these incidents are a frequent occurrence for many students during the school semester many miss valuable class time.

The other option is to walk to school daily. In order to go to Golden Tips School, it takes 30 to 45 minutes one way depending on the location of the student's home. The travel time generally cuts into time spent on learning at school and time spent on doing homework since most students are tired from the travelling after returning home. The teachers who live outside the plantations also experience a similar situation. Many have to walk the entire distance of 5 km to and from schools until the town or their homes. During a discussion one teacher informed me that she used to walk about six kilometres a day to and from her home to school while she was pregnant with her second child. She claimed that walking along the mountain terrain in the hot sun made her daily trips to
school very hard. Similar experiences are shared by many females including teachers who were harassed by males while walking along the road leading out of the estate. Due to these circumstances many seek transfers to schools located outside the plantations close to towns.

6.2.3 Teachers

There are very few teachers from the plantation community because of the years of neglect of education in the plantations. Therefore, most teachers for estate schools were recruited from among the Sri Lankan Tamils. However, due to the present ethnic conflict in the country it has become increasingly difficult to recruit teachers from the Northern and Eastern provinces. As a result, the Educational Department decided to recruit teachers from within the plantations and lower the educational qualifications needed to enter Teachers College\(^3\). As a result members of the plantation community have been given the opportunity to attend Teachers College especially Sri Pada College located in Badulla (a few miles from Talawakelle in the Uva Province) where preference was given to students of Indian Tamil ethnicity (Little 1999:211-213). All the teachers at Silver Hills are of Indian Tamil origin and the majority follow the Hindu religion. All teachers speak Tamil as their mother tongue and a majority have a working knowledge of English while some can also converse in Sinhala.

Presently, over half the teaching population at Silver Hills has successfully completed their Advanced Level examination while others have finished their Ordinary Level examination. Early literature on the plantation school describes English trained teachers as not being able to teach to the children in the plantations due to their lack of fluency in
Tamil. Today, all English teachers speak Tamil since many are of Indian Tamil origin. Some youth from the plantations have chosen to follow a career as a teacher, there is still a shortage of teachers to teach Science, Maths and English subjects in these schools (Mookaih 1997; Thanaraj 1997).

Yet, a common problem faced by all schools in this area is the shortage of teachers in the plantation schools. All teachers who pass out of Teachers College are expected to teach areas with fewer resources than schools located in cities for three years before being transferred to another location. Most of the teachers at Silver Hills are natives of this region and, therefore, welcome the opportunity of teaching close to their place of residence. This explains the reason behind many teachers spending 10-15 years teaching in one location in the plantations.

6.2.4 Extracurricular Activities

Plantations even today continue to function as ‘total institutions’, where residence and labour combined to produce an effective system of social control based on class, caste and gender hierarchies accentuated by economic and social isolation (Hollup 1994). While men are more mobile within and outside the estate, women and children lack the freedom to share in the same privileges due to ideologies that persist regarding their movement in the public and private domain. Realising the restrictions placed by societal norms, teachers organise field excursions for primary schools and secondary school students in keeping with the school curriculum. This new syllabus, which came into effect make it essential for school going children to learn about their surroundings, but
the financial support from parents necessary to organise trips to cities is not forthcoming according to some teachers.

According to the new syllabus it is hard for us to teach...... take the children to the town, kovil, etc. From the beginning to the year I asked for money to go on a trip but they did not bring the money ...there are some children who have not even gone out of the estate or this division. They have no idea what (town) looks like or even Pussellawa.

Other extracurricular activities in which students participate are the annual sports meets of each school and special religious ceremonies such as the *Saraswathy Pooja*[^31]. Schools have taken students on day trips to the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens located in Kandy, 50 km away from the estate. Last year (1999) in order to celebrate International Children’s Day on October 1st, children attending the crèches who were proceeding to the primary school the following year (January 2000) in all three divisions were taken to the Botanical Gardens. Some of the older children have also visited the Zoo located in the City of Colombo, which is approximately 200 km from the estate. Secondary school students are also encouraged to participate in different quizzes sponsored by the Education Department as well as different NGOs active in the plantations. These activities increase the students’ knowledge of their surroundings and goes beyond classroom teaching to help students understand the facilities and life beyond the estate.

### 6.3 Factors that affect Girls’ Participation and Retention in Schools

#### 6.3.1 Gender

Fifty-four percent of the 354 primary school student population at Silver Hills are girls. Many female children are sent to school at present compared to the low numbers in the parents and grandparents generations (Atkin 1995; Gnanamuttu 1977, 1979; Kurian...
1982; Little 1999). More female children also attend secondary school but their retention is low. Children of school going age not attending school have to be reported to the education office in the area by teachers according to recent regulations by the Educational Department. The teachers are also expected to lodge an entry at the police station since it is compulsory for children under the age of 12 years to attend school. In the past children dropped out of school at 12 years to become employed on the estate as tea pluckers and manual labourers. However, with the current regulations children have to attend school until they are 15 years of age and gain an education that will improve their access to opportunities available to all people in Sri Lanka.

Only 40% of all students at Silver Hills have continued their education past Grade five. Of those who proceeded beyond Year six, 15% are girls (See Appendix VIII). Daughters of families who were interviewed had a higher level of education than the parents. Most families had access to resources and the interest in education to encourage their children’s higher education. Division III which is located furthest away from the nearest town, has the highest level of students who proceed beyond primary school among the younger generation than the other two divisions at Silver Hills (See Appendix IV-VII). After engaging in research in Division III, I concluded that this division has a higher school going population especially among the children who attend primary school. It is Division I located close to Pussellawa town that has the highest level of education among the younger generation.

Presently, more and more parents are interested in educating their daughters up to or beyond their O/L. Equal numbers of students from both sexes attempted their O/L examination on the estate (See Appendix IV). The present generation of estate youth has
a higher level of education than their parents (See Appendix VII & VIII). This is a result of the increased access to schooling in the plantations today. In fact, in both the urban and rural sectors, children have higher levels of education compared to their parents due to legislative enactments and increased schooling facilities. In most cases, female children have been more diligent in passing their exams than the males. Only one student from the sample population sat for his A/L exam. During my field visits at Silver Hills, I did meet several girls who had taken the exam. Many youth felt that boys were more successful at the exam than girls. Those who go up to A/L end up attending tuition classes in Gampola (a town about ½ hour from the estate) or Kandy to supplement the knowledge learned in school. Most students feel they need to take these classes in order to grasp an understanding of the subject matter and pass the exam. Teachers and youth in this sector cite ‘the lack of ability’ as the primary reason for failure at the O/L and A/L exams. However, I felt that in most instances it was the lack of trained teachers that led to the low performance of children at national exams.

6.3.2 Employment

The migration of the Indian Tamil family unit to Sri Lanka not only provided the necessary labour at the inception of plantations in Sri Lanka but also provided a steady source of labourers for the future. Since the beginning of plantations until the mid 20th century children over the age of 12 years have been employed in estate work such as plucking, weeding and other sundry activities in the estates. In addition, for many years the plantation sector served as the place where children are sought out as domestic servants for middle and upper class families. As a result many children especially female
children were withdrawn from school at the Grade three or five to work as tea pluckers or domestic servants in middle and upper class families in the city (Kurian 1982). With the adoption of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No.10 by the Sri Lankan Government in 1991, the employment of children below the age of 14 years became illegal (Vijesandiran 1999:6-7). Strict penalties have been imposed on those who break this law, which include fine and legal ramifications\textsuperscript{32}. In addition, the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act in 1998 for children between the ages of five and fourteen years has increased the participation of girls in schools.

6.3.3 Safety

All schools in the plantation sector are co-educational. The integration of both boys and girls in schools begin at Year one and continues until A/Ls. Therefore, the security of the girls who have stepped into womanhood becomes an issue especially when they have to travel great distances before reaching school. During an interview Anuratha, a married women in her mid 20s, explained the relationship between education and security as the following.

\begin{quote}
If you want to get married you must marry only once.
But when you go to school in buses and in other places boys try to influence you. So I did not want to study.
\end{quote}

The roads on the estate are very lonely and a girl travelling alone becomes an easy target for a person wishing to harm them. There have been a number of incidents where girls have been molested either while travelling to school or while staying home from school. Many are afraid of their safety\textsuperscript{33}. As a result many parents become reluctant to send their daughters to schools outside the estate unless they are accompanied by other female
children attending the same school from the lines. The cultural ideologies regarding girls’ sexual purity and modesty are important concerns for parents with unmarried daughters. Since marriage is important for all girls, parents withdrawn their daughters from school after puberty (at the secondary school level) if they perceive girls being harmed or harassed. However, girls travelling outside the estate to attend school with family members are not discouraged from their studies.

6.3.4 Family Duties and Obligations

Kurian (1982) and Samarasinghe (1988) found many girls dropping out of school at Grade three or five in order to work on the estate as tea pluckers or to stay at home and take charge of household responsibilities including raising their younger siblings. Today more girls are attempting to pursue an education beyond Year six but still continue to receive a lower level of education than boys. In a family in which I conducted a series of interviews three of the nine children received a higher standard education than the other six. All three of these individuals are boys. The oldest son is employed as a teacher and has also completed his undergraduate degree while the other two have a Year eight education. Among the six girls, most completed Year five, while two girls completed Year eight and O/Ls. A similar trend was seen in another family and when asked for the reason a young father replied:

We think boys and girls should have the same level of education…but in the society it is not like what we think …we need sons because they carry on the family name and perform ceremonies at the father’s funeral.

A sense of duty influences parental decisions on who gets access to a higher education. Male children are bound by religious customs to perform certain tasks at their
parents’ funerals. Sons bring wives into the family and directly contribute to household expenses. Therefore, parents see the benefits of having sons. Girls, on the other hand, are given in marriage at a young age and take up patrilocal residence, which generally located on a different estate (Little 1999). However, this system has been changing over the past few years. Very often the sons migrate to cities and towns in search of employment leaving their families to fend for themselves. In most instances it is the girl child who takes care of the parents. When I pointed out this trend to some of the older parents during interviews, many acknowledged the trend and stated that the expectations for girls and boys in the present society was changing rapidly compared to the previous years. While children adhere to family obligations, parents are presently trying to encourage education among the two sexes and the students entering primary school exemplifies this trend.

6.3.5 Position in the Family

Letchumy discussed her position in the family and its effect on her education during my interview with her in the following way.

I am the oldest in my family. I have four younger sisters and a brother...only I have not studied because I was taking care of the house...I wanted to study but situations did not allow me to study.

Among the parental generation the oldest female in the family played the role of ‘second mother’ to her siblings while her mother juggled the tasks of mother, wife and income earner. Subsequent families still heavily rely on the contribution of the older child, in most instances the daughter, for the raising of children and as a wage labourer to supplement the family income. Letchumy’s granddaughter, the older child in her family,
is presently employed as a domestic servant in a middle class house in Kandy since her father is paralysed. Despite being the conscientious student in the family she was sent to work because she was the oldest, says her Aunt. When asked if the boy would have been sent to work if he had been the oldest, the family assured me that he would have entered the workforce. Presently, it seems that children enter the workforce due to family circumstances and that many parents want their children to stay in school longer. It is the position in the family that determines who enters the workforce earlier than expected.

Menaka, a young woman in her early 20s is among the increasing numbers of young women who end their educational career early to help save parental income for the education of their siblings. This young woman pursued her education up to O/Ls but was not successful in passing the examination in Maths and English. When asked why she did not want to retake her exam, she replied:

Amma (mother) wanted to me to study and do my A/Ls. But since I am the oldest and I have to think about my younger brother and sister. I thought I should find a job to help my mother. If I am in school then she has to spend about 500 rupees on tuition fees for me. Now that money can get spent on my younger sister.

While she anticipated that her younger brother would continue to study, he too dropped out of school after doing his O/L exam and is presently employed as a waiter in a hotel in the suburbs of Colombo. The socialisation of girls to be self-sacrificing and nurturing women influence retention in schools as many girls drop out of school to save money for their younger siblings education. Presently, the hopes of Menaka’s family are pinned on her younger sister whom they would like to see take her A/L exam. She also claimed that despite her mother being a single parent that she encouraged all her children to study up to their A/Ls. Like Menaka, a female translator I used during the early period of my
fieldwork also mentioned that she stopped her education amidst opposition by her father. The younger sister is now the hope of the family for continuing her education up to the A/L exam.

6.3.6 Parents' Education

The educational level of parents is considerably lower compared to their children. While parents in the rural and urban sectors have a lower educational level compared to their children, the situation in the plantations is unique. Until 1977 estate schools operated outside the national curriculum. Therefore, the parents' generation in the plantation sector did not receive the same facilities as parents in the urban and rural sectors. At Silver Hills 13% of parents are uneducated. Women represent 10% of this uneducated population. Among families interviewed fifty-eight percent have at least one family member who is uneducated. Of those parents who are uneducated 10% are women whose ages ranged between 34 and 85 years. Most of the women who are uneducated are above the age of 50 years. When Letchumy, a retired tea plucker over 65 years with nine children was asked for the reasons for being uneducated she cited lack of interest, household responsibilities and the raising of her younger siblings as her reasons. Packiam a 53 year old mother of three who is presently helping raise her grandchildren was asked the same question. Her response is as follows.

Those days only the boys were allowed to go to school. Men go to work and if females go to work then there will be no one to cook food. So men went to work. Women stayed at home to take care of the children and cook...in my family one was left at home. That was me, I had to do the housework.
As discussed by Kurian (1982) and Samarasinghe (1988) education was not considered a priority for women at the time. Therefore, boys received more education than girls who were kept at home to engage in household duties. Only 3% of the male population among the parental generation are uneducated and they are all over the age of 40 years.

The level of illiteracy among youth at Silver Hills is very low. All children in Divisions I and II have received some level of education but in Division III there are two children over five years who are not attending school (See Appendix V-VIII). Remarkably all the girls in this generation were sent to school despite most not proceeding beyond primary school. There are children who are currently under the school going age in all three divisions and it is likely that they will attend primary and secondary levels of education due to the growing awareness among parents regarding the importance of education. The younger generation of parents with children attending primary and secondary schools especially realise the value of education more since they have ventured outside the plantations and have seen the opportunities available to individuals with education. These parents send both their sons and daughters to school, as they believe both should get educated.

Forty percent of the parental generation dropped out of school between Year one and Year four resulting in fewer parents proceeding to secondary school (See Appendix VIII). Although a larger group of parents (30%) in Division three completed Year five and six in comparison to parents in Divisions I and II, only 25% of these parents entered secondary school. Over 85% of children from surveyed families have had access to primary school while 40% proceeded to secondary school\textsuperscript{34}. Having a Year 11 or O/L education is becoming the standard when applying for jobs in Sri Lanka. Realising the
importance of education for their future in terms of finding employment outside the estate. More children from the younger generation are attempting their O/L examination.

All parents with whom I held a series of discussions described education as being an increasingly important factor in the lives of their children. While previously estate work was the norm for most estate residents in the past, today things are changing on the plantations. Estate work is no longer the only avenue open for estate residents and education is viewed as the key to accessing other opportunities. According to one parent, as the estate community comes into contact with the outside community, the higher the opportunity to witness the changes caused by education. Due to parental aspirations as well as compulsory education legislation girls have the same level of access to schools as boys.

6.3.7 Income

The average income earned per day by both male and female plantation workers is 106 rupees. The net income for a month for each estate labourer is around Rs. 2500 rupees. Since the income earned by parents has to be distributed for food, fuel, clothing, paying loan sharks and other expenses, the expenditure on children’s education becomes limited. Many parents cited income as the primary factor preventing their children from obtaining a higher education. As discussed by Hollup (1994), education for children of all denominations and ethnicities is free but money has to be spent on buying exercise books, pens, pencils, sewing school uniforms and other incidental fees.

A child attending school has also to be provided with a breakfast and a mid-day snack. Those students preparing for their O/L and A/L examination also attend tuition
schools to supplement the knowledge gained in school. All these needs of children have
to be met in order for them to do well in school.

<table>
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<th>List of Expenses</th>
<th>Value (Rs.)</th>
<th>% of Total Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>3500</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betel</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuel</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>5000</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 Monthly Expenses of a Family with Two Income Earners

Only four- percent or Rs. 200 (per month) of the income of family with two income
 earners is spent on education. More money is being spent on addictive substances like
 cheap alcohol, cigarettes and betel. While this situation can not be generalised to the
 entire estate population, it does highlight an important issue. The prioritisation of
 family’s needs for a month is the key to making income available to help children with
 their education. Increasing family finances for children’s education by decreasing the
 money spent on alcohol, cigarettes and betel can ensure that more finances available for
 all the children of the family to receive an education.

In families with five or six children, only one may receive a higher education. Parents tend to think that the education of one child will help the entire family. Therefore, rather than sending all the children to school and allocating family resources accordingly most parents choose which child they want to receive higher education. Male children receive the necessary family resources for higher education because
parents perceive their contribution to the family in the future as being greater than if a
daughter was educated. The image of the ‘male provider’ is still prevalent in the estate
sector as is in the community outside the plantation sector. Girls also leave the estate
after marriage and, therefore, her income becomes part of the husband’s family. Today,
there is an increase of male migrants to cities. Therefore, it is their sisters and wives who
take on the responsibility of taking care of the old aged in-laws.

When asked if parental income has an impact on children’s education, one mother
replied “her grandparents were living when she was schooling and I was the only one
working”. Daily survival becomes the key issue facing all families. While education can
provide better opportunities for the family in the future it takes a back seat to daily
necessities. Therefore, parents try to influence the decision of their children who have
completed O/L by encouraging them to find work quickly even if it means working as
estate labourers. While they want their children to earn high incomes, the increasing
unemployment among youth is also a problem for parents. Parents do not want their
able-bodied adult children to stay at home without contributing to the family income and
would rather see them work on the estate for a daily wage until they find more substantial
employment outside the estate. This income earned by older children can be used to
promote education among the younger children.

Middle East migration over the last few years has become increasing popular for
women seeking employment outside the plantations. A higher standard of living for the
family and increased family income are often cited as the reasons for women migrating
overseas. Packiam’s daughter works in the Middle East and when asked if income from
her daughter will help with her grandchildren education, she replied:
For our children it (money) is useful…the woman (mother) is writing letters asking the children to study more.

The situation in Packiam’s family is unique since both the father and grandmother are actively involved in the children’s lives. However, this is not the case for most families. Education for their children and improving family welfare seems to be of utmost importance for most Middle East migrants. Despite these intentions most families of Middle East migrants are not as well off as the rest of the community. The loss of a mother has serious ramifications on the attitudes and behaviour of children. While families gain material wealth such a television or a radio, the welfare of children is at a low level. Teachers in plantation schools find a difference between children of families where the mother works on the estate and children whose mothers have migrated to the Middle East. They claim that children of Middle East migrants are not appropriately dressed for school, less attentive in class and irregular attendees of school. Therefore, while income can aid children in gaining a higher education, the presence of female, a mother, grandmother, aunt or older sister, is essential for families especially in those where the mother has migrated to the Middle East.

6.4 Views on Education

6.4.1 Grandparents

Most families in this generation have large extended families where the husband or wife’s parents lived in the same household with their children, in-laws and grandchildren. Family support in terms of social and economic benefits was necessary for these families. Many families had four or more children causing the older daughter to share in the family welfare in terms of taking care of the younger siblings and household responsibilities as
reflected in the stories by of Packiam and Letchumy. The tight control exerted by management over the employment opportunities, daily lives of residents and restrictions against migration outside the estate from the beginning of the tea plantations to the nationalisation in 1975 kept Indian Tamils segregated to the plantations. Education had little use when they were subjected to work as manual labourers and tea pluckers on the tea estate. For many, their destiny was to work and die on the estate and education did not seem to contribute much to their daily cycle of poverty. Since families were large and required income to sustain their daily lives children, especially girls began to enter the workforce at age 12 (Little 1999:146-149). While girls followed their friends into employment as tea pluckers, boys worked as manual labourers. Family finance was the key for this generation not attending school. Since access to education was segregated by gender girls had a casual idea towards education while it was the boys who ventured into this area.

The expectations that these parents had for their children, however, are different from their own. Girls continued to receive lower standards of education compared to boys but education was gradually becoming a priority. Girls were entering educational institutions despite dropping out at an early level. The importance of education is manifested among Letchumy’s children who were sent to school despite her (Letchumy) illiteracy. Kanna, her husband added that despite the negative attitudes of their neighbours they had managed to educate their children. Their expectations for their grandchildren are higher than the expectations they held for their children. Presently, the increased migration of estate residents from the plantations as well as the influences from the outside community have led many to realise the importance of education.
6.4.2 Parents

Parents of the present generation of youth on average have a higher educational level than their parents. As discussed previously, many of these parents dropped out at Year five or Year six due to their own lack of interest, lack of encouragement by their parents and financial difficulties at home. Many of these parents want a better quality of life for their children. When asked about the importance of education over the generations Sivalingam, a father of three gave the following answer.

Those days it was not important. What was important was to get a job in the estate. Only now it seems to be important. There was nothing called civilisation. They did not wear trousers. Even students went to school in sarongs.... you can not survive without education. if you do not get an education people do not mind you. We buy the children everything they ask for. If they do not study there is no point in it.

“We do not want our children to do the same jobs as us and work on the estate. We want them to get different jobs” was a recurring statement made by parents in reference to the expectations they held for their children. During discussions and informal conversations parents told me that their children should get jobs which suit their qualifications. In essence, education provided their children with the opportunity to access jobs outside the plantations.

Most parents felt that it was the children’s choice as to which level they wanted to continue their education. Some parents thought they could do very little if their children stopped going to school on their own accord. According to one parent “they should develop better attitudes towards education”. Most parents do not share this view but they do feel powerless when their children stop attending school despite their encouragement. In most families with whom I held interviews, it was the female children who dropped
out of school at the secondary school level. The lack of employment opportunities and cultural ideologies about suitable employment for educated girls led many to drop out of school. Parents cite laziness as the primary reason while children feel that they can not continue education due to the financial burden on the family. Despite the long-term goals for their children, many families realise that the short-term necessities such as food is more important for the sustenance of the family. Therefore, many parents try to influence their children who have an O/L education. However, when children reach this level of education but remain unemployed due to the lack of suitable employment parents begin to complain about their investment in education. Thus, education that will benefit their children in the future and daily family welfare are two conflicting positions for most families who depend on daily work to assist family needs.

6.4.4 Children

The attitudes of children towards education are very different from that which existed among their parents. While many children have a Year nine education, there are some who sat for their O/L examination and failed the exam (See Appendices V-VII). The combination of less resources in plantation schools, lack of qualified teachers and the low parental participation in education and schools do not allow them to pursue their education to the fullest potential. Girls and young female youth who were interviewed claimed that a high secondary school education was the key to access employment opportunities that exist outside the plantations.

Since teachers have to cover a large amount of material during a school year, many students do not fully comprehend what they are being taught. The schools in the estate
sector follow the same curriculum as schools in the other parts of Sri Lanka. However, there is little relevance between the school curriculum and the daily lives and experiences of the students. Youth who came to me for help in their English language skills told me that they had difficulty understanding the material in class because they did not pay attention and also because of the lack of individual attention they receive in class caused by the lack of teachers. These groups of youth felt that parents should focus more attention to their children and encourage them to study. Several youth thought that parents of children attending school were more likely to listen to individuals who advised the community about the value of education, than those in their own community. Since I was an outsider, they felt that I was the most suitable person on the estate at the time to advice parents especially parents whose children were sitting for the Year five scholarship exam about their role in making children harness their potential at schools.

In most families’, parents try to influence their children by constantly telling them to enter the workforce in the plantations. However, for a youth that has completed his O/L exam this is not an avenue they wish to pursue. Most youth would rather seek employment outside the estate. Their aspirations are determined largely by the incentives offered in the labour market for entrants from different educational backgrounds (Jayaweera 1991b:59). They understand the value of education and its benefits for their future. Many youth, especially girls put off marriage to pursue a career and become finally secure. A local social service officer once told me that he could not think of getting married despite having a girlfriend until he had built his own house and could provide for his family. Positive views of education influences not only their aspirations
for employment but also all other aspects of life including marriage, raising a family and attitudes towards the community welfare.

6.4.4 Teachers

The teachers in the plantations have considerable knowledge about the changes in education among the plantation community. Over the last 10 years the interest in education has increased among parents. The high rate of enrolment of students in schools in this sector and continuation of education until O/L or A/L exams are indications of these changes. As reflected by a teacher in the plantation sector the young children are smart about saving and earning an income while being in school.

...the young fellows now a days are trying to save money... the children have brains. They come and ask us if there is some work they can do. They try to make money. A few days ago we told that a person was coming from Samurdhi. For that they brought 25, 50 and 100 rupees but not the seven rupees for exam papers. When a mother asked if the child gave the money the child did not say anything. They have brains. The money given to them they are trying to save. It is the mothers we can not teach.

According to the teacher, this particular child put all the money in the bank instead of giving the remaining money back to his mother. Hence children realise the importance of savings especially for their future more than their parents do.

Despite the increasing interest in education, teachers at Silver Hills did not see an increasing parental involvement in school activities.

We called parents meeting and asked the parents to contribute what they can to paint the school even one rupee or 25 cents or something like that. But they said “We are not even going to give 25 cents for the school. It should be the government giving the money for that”.

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Parents take advantage of opportunities given to their children in the way of free school uniforms materials. Some parents do not buy ruled books, pens and pencils for their children attending school but rather expect the teachers and the government to help with their children's education. Many development programmes implemented in the estate sector have taken a welfare approach, where the community has been the beneficiaries of development aid not agents of change. A similar approach was also used by the British planters to keep the community isolated from the rest of the population. Therefore, many parents are used to being given their basic needs instead of striving to obtain them. Many expect outside agents, teachers and the government, to provide for their children's education. The estate community were recipients not agents of development. Nearly all the teachers claimed they felt sorry for these students and ended up buying pens and pencils for the students. The teachers also said that some parents take advantage of the free material given by the government for the school children by selling it in order to obtain money to spend on alcohol. Children in these families end up dropping out since they do not have the necessary uniforms to wear for school.

There is also a growing concern over the children of women who have recently migrated to the Middle East in search of employment. Teachers viewed this as detrimental to the development of children since they said, "Fathers are the ones who look after the children. They do not care about the children". While the situation can not be generalised to the entire population where the mother has migrated to the Middle East, they found that children of these families were the worst affected. Although the mothers sent money, children, specifically female children did not attend school regularly. Some teachers as well the community members felt that children could attend school regularly
only if the father had help of a female relative. In situations where there was no female relative, then daughters were kept at home to take care of household tasks (Philips 2000, personal communication).

Therefore, while the views and attitudes towards education are changing among families in the plantations, it is a slow process. Children have a better grasp of the uses of education compared to their parents as reflected by the teachers' comments. The promotion of education in the plantation sector is a slow process given the years of government neglect and the continuing ethnic marginalization of the community.

6.5 Present Dilemma of Educated Girls

There is a large population of girls between the ages of 20-24 who have completed their grade ten standard of education and are currently staying at home because of their inability to find jobs. Whereas previously, a girl with a low level of education had no choice but to work on the estate as a tea plucker, the present generation of educated girls are overqualified to work on the estates\textsuperscript{40}. They also see estate work as low status jobs. However, the lack of employment opportunities outside the estate has resulted in a large number of girls with higher levels of education than their parents being without employment. With increased access to education, girls have put off marriage in order to pursue a career and become financially secure. However, without employment these girls will become candidates for early marriage. The dilemma faced by many of the youth on the estate is their inability to find employment despite being better educated than their parents. While, male youth have the same problem, girls are also restricted by the kinds of jobs they can take and by cultural ideas about the proper jobs for women.
This invariably has an effect on how parents' see the education of girls and the value of the education for girls. The efforts of the Government and NGOs to improve education have not been paralleled by the creation of employment opportunities for educated girls in the plantation sector. In fact, many parents of educated girls at Silver Hills have already started to complain about the problem of educating girls. Some question the value and the point of educating daughters if they can not find jobs.

6.6 Synthesis of Changes in Formal Education: Facilities, Use, Views and Voices

Changes to the formal education system in Sri Lanka began with the implementation of the Free Education Act introduced by C. W. W. Kannangara in 1945 at the State Council. This Act which was amended in 1951 slowly paved the way to the nationalisation of schools in the country, which eventually led to the nationalisation of schools in the plantation sector in 1977. Since independence in 1948 the Sri Lankan government has been committed towards providing education for all at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Financial and human resources have been invested in improving the infrastructure and expansion schools in the tea plantation sector. Foreign assistance from SIDA, especially helped improve school facilities in most schools in the plantation sector. Assistance from SIDA played a crucial role in improving infrastructural facilities of schools in both Silver Hills and Golden Tips. While estate school infrastructure has improved vastly from the start of the plantations, compared to schools located outside the plantation sector, these changes are minute.

Recent changes to the recruitment technique of teachers for estate schools have increased recruitment of teachers from among the Indian Tamil community in and around
the plantations. Therefore, unlike the situation in the past where the language barrier caused ineffective communication between students and teachers, all the teachers in schools in this sector are fluent speakers of the Tamil language. However, there is still a shortage of trained teachers in this sector due to the lack of resources in schools and an inefficient transportation system.

The use of educational facilities are based on gender, social and economic factors of each household in the estate sector. Today, gender ideologies remain a factor in the retention of girls in schools. All parents at Silver Hills mentioned that both boys and girls should receive an education. However, when hardships strike these households it is generally the girls who are withdrawn from schools to help at home and not boys. Family dynamics especially duties and obligations as well as the position in the family determines which child will be able to access educational facilities. The socialisation of women into their secondary positions in the family very often results in their withdrawal from schools to engage in household activities. Since recently many girls have withdrawn from school after writing their O/L exam on their own accord to help save family resources for their younger siblings education. The income level of a household determines the level of expenditure on education. The expenditure of males on “adult goods” (cigarettes, alcohol) takes income away from children’s education. Although women quarrel about men’s spendthrift ways, many do not have the ability to curb these expenses and divert income towards educating their children. In order for children to gain a higher education parental support financially and psychologically is very important.
The views and voices of the different generations in the plantations describe the changing attitudes towards education over the last century. For the grandparents’ generation life began and ended in the tea estate. The women of the grandparents’ generation had little access to education due to cultural perceptions of gender and their work in the plantations. Only basic numeracy and literacy skills were made available to this generation. The parents’ generation received a slightly higher level of education than the generation before them but was mainly limited to primary school. Gender distinction in accessing education was prevalent among their generation. Therefore, boys were able to access secondary education while girls went to work on the estate as tea pluckers. Women who wanted different employment opportunities migrated to the Middle East as domestic workers since the work did not have a high educational requirement.

The unemployment of girls with a high level of education is a growing concern for girls as well as their parents. While education has increased the generation of suitable employment has not increased at the same pace. The ethnic and political marginalization of the plantation community compounds their access to suitable employment. Women face further problems due to constraining cultural ideologies about the ‘proper’ jobs for them. Thus, the lack of employment for educated girls could lead to the decrease in investment for girls’ education in the future. However, education is the single most important basic need that will improve the life of the estate resident community in terms of health, education, employment and integration with the outside community. Education is not just a basic need – it is a basic necessity. From a gender standpoint education will also lead to women’s empowerment and will break the cycle of gender inequalities that exist within the households.
Notes

23 Colombo, Kalutara, Kandy, Matale, Nuwara Eliya, Galle, Matara, Badulla, Ratnapura and Kegalle.

24 In 1984, the average pupil-teacher ratio was 55:1 while the national average was 34:1 (Little 1987:31).

25 While Nuwara Eliya is a predominantly tea plantation district in the hill country, Homagama is a town in the Colombo district.

26 Vijayaranie dropped out of school at Year nine (Grade eight).

27 The reason for this decrease has been cited as the decreasing birth rate and the higher age at marriage among the younger generation.

28 The classes in this school only extend to Ordinary Level or Year 11.

29 This is the largest school in the Pussellawa area and all other schools especially those located in the plantations fall into the Saraswathy school cluster. A cluster system was introduced for the better supervision of schools (Little 1999:151).

30 Previously the educational requirement was passing the Advanced Level examination. However, this was lowered and the necessary qualification at present is the passing of the ordinary level examination.

31 The entire festival is the Navarathri (meaning nine nights) is celebrated in honour of the goddess Shakti (energy). Shakti is manifested in three forms; Durga (strength and courage), Lukshmi (wealth) and Saraswathy (education/creative science) (Little 1999:159). On the tenth day is the celebration to all three forms and also the time at which small children who will attend school the following year are taught to write the first letter of the alphabet in rice.

32 The young Persons and Children Act No. 47 of 1956 strictly prohibit employing children under 12 years of age in Sri Lanka. However, the law permits children between the ages of 12 and 14 years in certain types of employment such as domestic service and family undertakings and agricultural occupations (Vijesandiran 1999:6-7).

33 I was advised by a girl my age not to travel alone on the estate road but rather to travel with another companion.

34 Since a percentage of children included in these statistics are presently in school, it is likely that would proceed beyond Year 6. As a result enrolment in secondary schools could increase over the next few years.

35 The exchange value of a Canadian dollar is approximately Rs.50.
36 From this income for employees provident fund and employees trust fund. As a result the income earned is considerably less given that most family have over five family members.

37 According to teachers at the schools in Silver Hills, very few parents attend Parent-Teacher meetings.

38 This exam is held for children nationwide in Year 5. The exam has two components, mathematics and Sinhala/Tamil. Therefore, those who get the required marks are given the opportunity to attend schools with better access to resources to pursue their education.

39 This is a grassroots development organization founded by the present government. There is a Samurdhi officer for several estates in this area who promotes saving among children as well as adult. The officer is a person from the South Indian community.

40 Today most estate youth and estate management has the same level of education. However, positions of authority are denied to educated youth. Those who become estate managers and assistant managers generally have established contacts with the plantation management companies in order to obtain their positions. As discussed in a previous chapter, family background, class and contacts helps access management level positions on tea plantations.
Pre School at Silver Hills

A Child Learning to write the Alphabet at the Saraswathy Pooja
Children Travelling to Schools outside Silver Hills
CHAPTER 7

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION: BENEFITS AND CONSTRAINTS

A number of programmes have been introduced in the plantations to promote non-formal education to plantation youth of which one is vocational training. Social, cultural and economic factors affect the level of accessibility of these programmes to youth, especially to females. Unemployed, educated plantation youth who seek to develop marketable skills in order to find employment outside the plantation sector face problems due to the lack of educational qualifications, financial support and equipment and training in marketable skills.

In this chapter, I will focus on vocational training programmes as a method of non-formal education at Silver Hills. In section one, the need for vocational training in the plantation sector will be examined. The second section discusses the availability of vocational training programmes at Silver Hills. Access to vocational training by gender and its impact on the unemployed, educated female youth in the plantation population will be discussed in the third section.

7.1 The Need for Vocational Training Programmes in the Plantation Sector

Since their arrival in Sri Lanka the majority of the Indian Tamil community has been confined to employment in manual labour in the plantations. The integration of the estate schools from 1977 onwards as well as the initiatives taken by international donor agencies and the PHSWT has resulted in the increase in the numbers of students entering
the schools. These educated youth are reluctant to work on the plantations today, because more youth have studied up the O/Ls. Many of them drop out of school because of poor labour market conditions for prospective education youth from the estates. These youth also perceive employment in the plantations as low status jobs, without any room for upward mobility.

However, estate residents have a lower level of education compared to the urban and rural sectors in Sri Lanka. Youth unemployment is, therefore, as high as 45% in the plantation sector. There is a lack of facilities, training in marketable skills, access to vocational training sites, equipment and funds for youth skills development (SLBDC 1998:1). Father Maria Anthony, the Coordinator of the Centre for Social Concern, which operates in the plantation sector in Hatton (Central Province) claims that plantation youth are deprived of opportunities for acquiring vocational and technical skills. The present trend for young, unmarried men and women is to seek employment outside the estates (WUSC 1996:21). The main expectations of many who venture outside the estate are to earn a steady income and to improve their social status and living conditions (Ibid). However, their lack of trained skills leads many of them to take up employment as waiters, jewellery store assistants in cities and housemaids in the Middle East or Singapore (Dunham et al 1997; Little 1999; Rajaratnam 1992; WUSC 1996). Although these jobs provide an income they do not translate into increased financial benefits for their families residing on the estates. The high cost of living associated with major urban centres such as Kandy and Colombo, results in little to no savings after income is spent on accommodation, transportation and meals. Thus, the benefits to their families are meagre.
Recognising the need to provide the growing youth population of Sri Lanka with skills training, the Ministry of Higher Education set up twenty-one technical institutes throughout the country in 1981 (Caspersz 1988 cited by WUSC 1996). These institutions, however, attract very few members of the plantation community due to the lack of instruction in Tamil. The only technical institute, which uses Tamil, as the medium of instruction, is the Congress Technical Institute (CTI) in Kotagala located in the Nuwara Eliya district (in the Central Province), managed by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC). The entry-level qualifications to enter technical colleges is the O/L exam with passes in maths and science but given the low percentage of students who pass these subjects at the exam, very few gain entry. Those who gained entry to the CTI receive 12-18 months of training free of charge and are provided with living quarters, but money for subsistence needs have to be found by each participant. Although the CTI is located in close proximity to the Silver Hills estate, I did not meet any youth who are attending or had attended the institute.

Vocational training programmes are now funded by NGOs due to the rising cost associated with learning technical and vocational skills outside the estate. Most programmes funded by NGOs are located within the estates so that skills training does not cost extra for cash strapped families. Given the present educational levels of youth and increasing unemployment among educated youth in the plantations, vocational training programmes provides them with free training, which leads to increased access to a higher quality of employment outside the estate. Skills’ training also provides the opportunity to start income generating projects inside the estate. Given the cultural and social impediments restricting girls from venturing outside the estate to earn an income,
vocational training (i.e. sewing, poultry, etc.) can help them earn an income by engaging in these activities inside the estate.

7.2 Vocational Training Programmes at Silver Hills

Community participation especially through youth volunteering is important in informing estate residents about vocational training programmes to be implemented on the estate. The international development organisation funding vocational training programmes at Silver Hills is CARE International, which believes in using community members to promote awareness of the training to unemployed youth and their families. Housewiring, welding, sewing, goat rearing, mushroom cultivation and poultry training are among the programmes offered on the estate. These programmes are implemented with the input of the community and not according to decisions made by the funding agency. The training is provided free of charge to the participants while the instructors and cost of learning materials are paid for by CARE International. The CARE International representative for the Kandy district regularly meets with the estate management to obtain permission to conduct new projects on the estate, space to conduct classes and to review ways in which training can be used to benefit the community and the estate.

In addition to the technical vocational training programmes by CARE International, CDA has sponsored a pre-school teacher training programme at Silver Hills. It is specifically geared towards unemployed, educated females with a grade ten level of education in geographically difficult areas in the Kandy district. Classes are held in both Sinhala and Tamil languages. For the Tamil stream, girls are chosen from the plantation sector and several girls from Silver Hills and Golden Tips estates were regular
attendees of the classes held in Peradeniya, located in the City of Kandy every Sunday. The training lasts for a period of six months after which they receive a certificate. This training provides young girls who are unemployed with the knowledge to conduct their own pre-schools in their respective estates. Parents whose children attend pre-schools would pay a monthly fee of about Rs. 50 to support the wages of the teacher. Presently, since there are no pre-schools at Silver Hills this gives the participants the necessary knowledge to start one for the children above two years of age.

7.3 Limitations, Views and Impact of Vocational Training for Female Youth

Vocational training programmes at Silver Hills are based on community demand and does not necessarily reflect the market demand for labour. Although training is open to both male and female estate residents, very few females participate in programmes and tend to drop out of the class after a few weeks. The housewiring training course, which began with fifteen youth, was reduced to five by the end of October (1999) due to the high drop out rate of students. All girls who attended in the class in the beginning (of instruction) dropped out after a few weeks of training. Distance from the lines, language of instruction (youth are mostly taught in Sinhala not Tamil) and lack of other female participants were factors named by the students for dropping out of class. Some girls said they preferred to work as welders, carpenters or masons if they could find work on the estate or in sheltered places (WUSC 1996:24). Concerns about personal security outside the estate and the low employment opportunities for women in male dominant technical fields are among the key reasons for girls’ lack of interest in vocational training.
Silver Hills has a population of over 3000 and youth population of over 200 but only fifteen participated in the housewiring training programme. Whenever I approached the estate residents with information about vocational training most claimed naivete on the issue. In a community where both good and bad news travels fast it is hard to concede that most members do not know about the training programmes. Some volunteers blamed the ignorance of the community on certain youth leaders who did not pass the information along because they wanted to get a good name for themselves. They believed that doing the work themselves would result in prestige for themselves. A few parents did know about the training and noted that the lack of participation in vocational training programmes continues to be a weakness on the part of the community. On the one hand, parents have high aspirations for their children and want them to gain access to employment outside the estate, while on the other hand, parents want their children to earn an income during the training period instead of being depended of them.

The low-level of attendance for the training programmes has been attributed to the low levels of family income among estate residents. Ravi, a young estate resident, noted:

Parents can not see the benefits of the children getting six month training. They scold them to find work even if it means working on the estate. What is the point of feeding them and clothing them they say.

Making ends meet every day is more crucial to the survival of each family and, therefore, short term necessities gain precedence for long term benefits to the family. Parents do have high expectations for their children in white collar or skilled employment positions but they can not also escape the reality of their poverty.

Cultural ideologies dictate girls’ appearance and attire when they venture outside the lines. Girls are expected to act with modesty and maintain sexual purity until
marriage. Therefore, girls’ attending vocational training programmes puts more strain on parental income since they have to be supplemented with proper attire when they venture out of the lines. Girls are also influenced by the way other girls are dressed and, thus, ask parent for money to buy the necessary clothing.

...it is enough to have one or two dress [sic] for girls to wear at home. But when they go out there are going to be other people. So they think ‘we need to go and look good’. Other people bring money to buy this and that. They think we will have a party with friends, a birthday party ....you have to go for these as well. When you are in training you have to go for these.

Youth who pursue vocational training depend heavily on their parents for support dealing with food, clothing, shelter and an allowance during the six months of training. Parents who invested a considerable portion of their finances on their children’s formal education find this an additional burden given the responsibilities to their other children and extended members. While four percent of family income is directly spent on education (refer to Table 6.1), parents spend a considerable portion of their income on food, clothing and transportation.

Therefore, some male youth work as casual labourers on the estate during weekends and holidays to earn money to meet their needs. Sasikumar, a young male volunteer with CDA and resides at Silver Hills faced a similar dilemma at his house. His mother constantly asked him to seek employment either inside or outside the estate to support the family. Working as a waiter or shop assistant in the cities would be among the options opened to him when seeking employment without any skills. However, he felt that finishing the housewiring training programme would benefit him when finding employment in a skilled environment. Similar pressures are placed on girls. However,
their movement outside the estate is restricted due to cultural ideologies regarding public and private space. Community perceptions about acceptable jobs for girls further restrict their access to positions that are opened to boys.

After completing formal education most parents prefer their children to enter the workforce to supplement family income. After six months of training in housewiring, welding and sewing, youth receive the necessary skills to find employment in their area of training outside the estate. Therefore, parents prefer their children to be trained soon after leaving school but many want an allowance given to them during this period (WUSC 1996:25). The programmes at Silver Hills do not offer a monthly stipend for the trainees since they training free of charge. Most estate residents are aware of trainees who get paid by government vocational training institutes like the National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA) and some NGOs (not CARE International or CDA). The low income and larger family size adds more pressure for families in which older children want to pursue skills training.

Language acts as a deterrent for youth who wish to pursue vocational training programmes. Most programmes are taught by instructors who speak Sinhala and not Tamil, which is the mother tongue of the estate residents. The most recent training programme, which began during my fieldwork, was the sewing classes for female and male youth who were interested in developing their skills. When this particular instructor began to describe the methods she would be teaching in the class, a female youth leader turned to me and said, “Language is the problem. Not everyone can understand Sinhala”. Male youth have the freedom to move outside the estate and associate with Sinhalese however, cultural ideologies regarding private and public space places restrictions on
girls' movement. Therefore, their knowledge of Sinhala is very limited. Although increasing numbers of the estate population speak Sinhala today compared to the previous generations, not all can comprehend the language. Sinhala language skills are developed through the association with the community outside the plantations. Since many who venture outside the estate are boys they are the ones who reap the benefits of the training. Due to social and cultural restrictions on girls very few leave the estate for extended periods of time unless they are employed as domestic servants in the cities. While some can comprehend the language very few are fluent speakers of the Sinhala language.

In the pre-school teacher training programme for girls, language is not a barrier since trainees have the option of following the training in either Sinhala or Tamil. In addition, these classes are held outside Silver Hills, in Peradeniya (in the Kandy District) where finding instructors is a much easier task. Not many instructors who are of Sri Lankan Tamil ethnicity would want to move into the plantations from the Northern and Eastern parts of the country where they reside because of the current security tensions in the country. Therefore, the language of training does create barriers for more youth participation in vocational programmes; the problem is especially greater for girls.

For youth who obtain vocational training finding a suitable employment in the area of their training is another barrier. In discussions with management, investigators for the World University Service of Canada (WUSC 1996) found that there was no special demand for trained labour on the estates. Generally, people from outside the estate with the necessary skills and experience always gained access to employment in the factory and administrative office (Ibid). Even if trained youth were able to find employment in
the estate office, many are reluctant to work because they feel they will not receive due recognition and respect from their fellow community members. Instead of welcoming changes and being happy for those who obtain jobs in the same estate that they were born to, some estate residents are jealous of those who succeeded in gaining staff positions according to a group of youth. At Silver Hills, youth with skills training have difficulty obtaining work contracts because they are usually given to an outside contractor with whom the management has established a business alliance. Therefore, skilled labourers have to leave the estate to seek employment. However, gaining employment in their field with no contacts and little experience can make the process arduous. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has devised an experimental project for a resource centre for estate youth to match needs and resources at CDA as part of the plantation feasibility project. While this project was still at its infancy during my affiliation with CDA, the goal was to address issues such as finding suitable solutions to the unemployment problem for vocationally trained youth.

Today, vocational training is considered a necessity for girls with grade ten or lower education to find employment. However, at present the unemployment rate among vocationally trained girls is very high and is a growing concern in Sri Lanka (Alailama 1992 cited by Jayaweera 1999). One fifth of all those received vocational training obtained it in crafts (Ibid). Girls at Silver Hills face a similar situation. Many receive training in crafts such as sewing and not in a technical field. However, they are unable to transfer these skills into a lucrative business venture since there are many seamstresses and tailors located inside Silver Hills and outside in the town. In addition there are many
girls who earn an income by working as seamstresses in each division. Therefore, being skilled as a seamstress is not a lucrative opportunity in the plantation sector.

Learning crafts through vocational training is tied to the traditional role of girls’ as future mothers and wives. Community perceptions about acceptable employment for girls’ plays an important role in determining the skills they acquire. While some girls want to become skilled in housewiring or welding, they realise that their ability to find employment is virtually non-existent. Since the plantation sector is strongly patriarchal, girls’ access to male dominant professions is limited. Very few estate residents would also want to hire a female when it is generally males who are associated with technical skills.

The political and ethnic marginalization of the estate resident community acts as a further barrier to seeking employment outside the estate. While the situation affects both girls and boys, its impact on girls’ is more acute. Girls who migrate outside the plantations are faced with problems related to language, accommodation and personal safety. As discussed in chapter four, a girl’s modesty and purity is extremely important at the time of her marriage. Therefore, given the prevailing situation in the country parents are not as willing to send their daughters to work outside the estate after they learn a vocational skill. Parents also begin to complain about the lack of financial support from their daughters who previously would have become employed on the estates.
7.4 Non-Formal Education at Silver Hills: A Synthesis

Non-formal education has the capacity to reach a larger and more diverse audience compared to formal education. It has the capacity to reach both through different levels of education, age groups and genders. Non-governmental organisations realise that formal education alone does not guarantee employment opportunities especially for those who may not succeed in passing their O/L examination. Therefore, vocational training was introduced in the plantations to provide an alternative to estate work and to provide unemployed, educated youth with skills training. Vocational training does not necessarily guarantee employment in the field in which the training was received (WUSC 1996) but provides access to a field which at point in time was not open the estate community.

Girls’ who access vocational training programmes face problems related to language, personal safety and access to training in marketable skills. Most programmes that secure female trainees are in fields that reflect the cultural values and traditional ideologies regarding the role of women. When girls want to enter technically oriented vocational training programmes they face problems caused by community perceptions on acceptable employment for girls. Therefore, while vocational training does provide access to skilled employment, the accessibility of these jobs to girls is limited. Many who reject estate employment seek alternative employment opportunities that are outside the estate.

The dilemma of girls in the estate today is they are better educated than their parents but because of poor job opportunities outside the estate, labour market sex segregation, sexuality and modesty issues, they are without jobs and without incomes.
Although estate work is hard, less lucrative and exploitative, their mothers and grandmothers before them were productively employed in this sector as pluckers. They had little opportunity to venture into other areas of employment. The educated, unemployed female youth population on the estate view tea plucking as a low status job requiring low skills with no opportunity for mobility. Thus, estate work is not an option open to young women in the plantations today. Young women, therefore, are not able to translate the benefits of education, formal and non-formal, into suitable employment opportunities for themselves.

Notes


42 The CWC was the first trade union, which represented the tea plantation workers founded by the late Mr. S. Thondaman.
CHAPTER 8

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEMALE YOUTH

With the expansion of educational opportunities, the children of estate workers have been able to receive an education and obtain higher educational qualifications compared to their parents and grandparents’ generations. The cycle of factors that led to women’s work in tea plantations could now be broken as many estate youth have begun to enter schools. However, the problem today is not so much one of access but retention of female youth in the schools. Most female youth dropped out after reaching a grade nine or ten level of education. For many women, cultural barriers and community perceptions about youth employment opportunities are factors in their retention in schools. Presently, there are two trends among female youth in the plantations. Firstly, women who have pursued an education and obtained a high education are reluctant to work on the estate and seek employment opportunities that suit their qualifications. Secondly, the availability of employment outside the estate has caused some of the girls to drop out of schools due to the low educational requirements for these positions.

This chapter focuses on the access to alternative employment for female youth in the plantation sector. Given the current labour market conditions for educated youth, girls and parents are reluctant to pursue a higher education because it would delay their earnings. Secondly, there is no guarantee that a higher education would lead to employment. Given these concerns girls access to alternative employment will be discussed in three sections.
The first section will discuss the changes in attitudes towards estate employment by educated female youth. The impact of domestic labour, Middle East migration and garment factory work on the education of girls will be analysed in the second section. The third section discusses the employment opportunities available to girls with formal and non-formal education.

8.1 Female Youth attitudes towards Estate Employment

Given the physically demanding nature of work on the estate, the premature ageing and frequent illnesses faced by their parents, female youth dislike estate work. According to the Presidential Committee, which investigated the socio-cultural problems in the plantation community, 70.4% of those who are currently unemployed in the plantation sector, aspire to obtain work outside the estates (SLBDC 1998:1). Seven and a half percent of unemployed youth sought opportunities for self employment while 6.9% expected any type of employment and 1.8% wanted to pursue employment in greener pastures through foreign employment (SLBDC 1998:1). Since Silver Hills is located close to a major urban centre, most youth on the estate visit Kandy (urban city) frequently. They also notice the different lifestyle and opportunities that exist for the community outside the estate and follow the life pattern of youth outside the estate.

Today, girls who have sat for their O/L exam no longer want to work as tea pluckers like their mothers who had a lesser level of education. They view estate work as low status with no room for mobility. There is a higher unemployment rate among girls in the age group of 20-24 than boys of similar age (WUSC 1996:22). Most O/L educated women opt to stay at home and help with household chores instead of estate work. They aspire to
become teachers, seamstresses and garment factory workers while others want to work as community development workers or as managers. Educated girls in the 20-24 age group who helped me with my research activities strongly disliked the work offered to them as tea pluckers. They find remaining at home, unemployed a better option to estate work.

Although many youth have reservations towards estate work, boys end up working on a casual basis until a better opportunity comes their way. When asked the reason for the reversal of their position, Sasikumar, an educated, unemployed youth in the process of completing his vocational training programme replied “we have to earn money to live no Miss”. For many the low family finances are a reason for entering the estate labour force as casual labourers. While there were several male, unmarried youth who engaged in estate work on a casual basis, I did not meet any educated, unmarried girls who took part in estate work in order to supplement family income.

There are girls who take up estate work after marriage. Anuratha, a married woman who is 25 years listed her reasons for taking up estate work for the following reasons.

I have studied up to Grade 10. My sisters’ were not interested in studies due to financial difficulties. I tried to go to Sri Pada College but I did not get in. I tried for 5 years but now I work on the estate. I have a daughter so I have to earn money to buy milk for her...now those who studied or not pluck tea because they have no job.

She claims that her neighbours ridicule her by stating the only job she could find with an O/L education is tea plucking. I found that she was very frustrated at not being able to enter teachers college after passing her O/Ls. After marriage she was forced to enter the estate workforce to support her family although she is not skilled in the area of tea plucking. Despite being discouraged with her own situation, Anuratha wants her
daughter to have better life and a high level of education. The situation is somewhat bleak for this young family. While she works as a casual work, her husband works as a labourer in Pussellawa (Central Province). They do not have permanent employment positions, no savings but manage on a day to day income. While I did not meet many young married women who were working as tea pluckers, the lack of suitable employment for girls results in many entering jobs (i.e. domestic labour, Middle East migration, garment factory work) that further exploit women’s labour.

In recent years, the unemployment and underemployment of educated youth in the plantation sector has been an issue of great concern. A recent study by the Ministry of Livestock Development and Estate Infrastructure (1993) revealed that despite the plantations being the largest employer with a workforce of nearly 350,000, 19.6% of men and women who were residents on estates were unemployed (SLBDC 1998:1). Youth unemployment is said to be as much as 45% due to their difficulty in obtaining employment outside the plantations.

There are many educated female and male residents at Silver Hills who are presently unemployed. There are some alternative employment opportunities open to educated, unemployed female youth from Silver Hills. Some engage in these jobs for a long period of time while others choose to give up after a short time period. Education is not the key determinant for all these positions. Some jobs as that of a domestic worker, is obtained due to women’s gender and not because of additional skills or education they possess.
8.2 Impact of Employment on Education

The estates are the recruitment grounds for employment in three other sectors of the Sri Lankan economy. They are domestic labour, Middle East employment and factory work. This section discusses the implications of employment in each sector on the education of girls' in the plantation sector.

8.2.1 Domestic Labour

Historically, the tea plantations have been the recruitment grounds for domestic servants for the middle and upper class households in Kandy, Colombo and its suburbs. Along with the image of the woman as a "tea plucker" is also a stereotype of the Indian Tamil female as a "domestic". Since most estate workers had large families, families sent their children to work as domestics as it helped them financially. Parents also felt that their children would be taken care of in terms of having better access to food and clothing. The cultural perceptions on gender roles influenced the work that women did in the household and outside the house. The socialisation of gender into their respective roles is a result of the naturalisation of domestic tasks as female. Work as domestics, therefore, disrupts children's education. Girls are withdrawn from school while boys are allowed to continue with their education. Thus, the expendability of girls' education led many girls to be exploited as child labourers. Child labour was also used in the plantation sector. Many estate residents belonging to the grandparents' generation narrated stories of how they entered the estate workforce at age 12 years by lying about their age in order to support their family.
An Act was recently passed in the parliament of Sri Lanka increasing the basic minimum age of employment to 15 years\textsuperscript{43} (Jayaweera 2000b:101). However, according to the Young Persons and Children’s Act of 1956 children between the ages of 12 and 14 years can be employed in certain areas of work such as domestic service, family undertakings and agriculture (Vijesandiran 1999:6). The recently implemented Compulsory Education Act (1998) has played a crucial role in increasing children’s participation in education. While the implementation of these laws does not imply that domestic servants are not sought from among families in the plantations, it does place legal restrictions on the employment of child labourers. Therefore, those who search for domestic servants are concerned about the legal ramification of employing an under age child for domestic work and seek those who are 15 years or above. The following story explains the role of one staff member in searching for a young girl to work as a domestic servant in a nearby city.

Kamini works in the estate office and is originally from Kandy. Her sister was about to have a new baby and needed a servant to take care of the household work and her other two children when she entered the hospital. Since Kamini worked on a estate, she was pressured into finding a servant girl. After talking to residents and staff, she finally secured a girl who was about 17 or 18 years. This girl returned to the estate after about two weeks claiming that she did not have anyone to talk to in Kandy. The problem was that the language spoken by employers was Sinhala while she spoke Tamil. Kamini talked about this situation with me saying “the girl I found for my sister has come back. Now they are calling me and asking me to find another girl. Where will I find one? You go to line rooms why do not you look for someone for me? All this girl had to do was stay at home and take of the children. They can not even do that.” Finally, Kamini did manage to secure another girl after a week to send to her sister’s house in Kandy.
Many who seek domestic servants from among the girls on the estate perceive their willingness to hire them as a way of helping them leave the estate. Like Kamini, many employers can not understand why girls would rather remain unemployed when they are given a chance to earn an income by doing domestic work. The low status of domestic work, laws on compulsory education and child labour as well as problems associated with knowing Sinhala have resulted in few girls being sent as domestics to middle and upper class families. The present trend, therefore, is the recruitment of elderly women to work as domestics in major cities in the country (Philips 2000, personal communication).

8.2.2 Middle East Migration

Labour migration to the Middle East has become a popular choice of employment for plantation women. Migration to the Middle East as domestic labourers is also a popular choice among women in the rural sector (Herath 1997). Most plantation residents who migrate to the Middle East as domestics have a low level of education. Middle East employment guarantees women a higher income for an ‘unskilled’ job compared to the salary they would receive if they had worked in Sri Lanka as a domestic servant. Thus, many opt for this opportunity where they are employed on a two-year contract. Women migrants want to improve their family welfare, which includes financial stability, increasing children’s access to education and opportunities outside the estate and also savings that could allow them not to be as dependent on estate work.

Many of these women viewed Middle East employment as a suitable occupation for themselves but not for their children. When asked if a higher education would
increase women’s access to alternate employment opportunities in the Middle East,

Anuratha responded in the following manner.

If you study you will get a good job (to her husband), Housemaid only we will get. Even in our country after studying we do not get a job what [sic] we like. Will we get a good job in another country? Now in Sri Lanka those who have not studied do a better job than who have studied...they will ask us to clean house, to look after children. That is what they will ask us to do.

There is a high demand for skilled workers as mechanics, drivers and heavy machine operators in the Middle East. Men hold most of these positions since there are restrictions faced by women who enter into the public sphere in the Middle East. The situation is similar to that in Sri Lanka where men from the plantation sector have more freedom to travel and hold different occupations while women have limited opportunities. Anuratha’s frustrations were also evident from her statement. Although she successfully completed her O/L education she was not able to get a job besides working as a tea plucker. Domestic work is the main avenue open for women who migrate to the Middle East.

According to the socio-economic and civil status survey of Silver Hills, 13 women are presently employed as domestic servants. Seven are currently employed in the Middle East while the rest are working in Colombo or Kandy. Due to the ‘unskilled’ nature of domestic work most men feel that their wives have a better chance of gaining employment compared to them. Therefore, many persuade their wives to go the Middle East while they themselves are unwilling to make such a trip. Sivalingam whose wife migrated to the Middle East to work as a domestic servant noted:

If I got abroad I can not do anything. I have not studied anything. I am not willing to go.
His response is ironic considering that his wife has a lower level of education than he does. Two clear statements can be drawn from this statement. Firstly, women have a better chance of gaining employment due to the high demand for domestic workers in the Middle East while men who migrate are expected to have an employable skill. Women are also seen as cheap labour. A low level of education seems to be a characteristic of many of these domestic workers in the Middle East. Secondly, women continue to be the primary caretakers of their families. They are willing to migrate to the Middle East in order to provide better opportunities for their children and their families. However, the migration of mothers to the Middle East does not necessarily increase their children’s, especially daughters level of participation at school. Girls replace their mothers in the domestic arena and take over their household responsibilities.

Women who return to the estate after finishing their overseas contracts are very reluctant to return to work as tea pluckers on the estates. They have more exposure to the world outside the estate and are used to working within the household. Most women are capable of speaking several languages, have learnt a different culture and have seen husbands provide for their wives. Some women return to the Middle East on different contracts since they do not want to work on the estate and save money to own land to build houses. Kamala, a wife of a *kangany* at Golden Tips who worked in the Middle East for over six years told me that she saved money to build a house outside the estate and also to buy a plot of land. She wanted to return to the Middle East to work although her family did not think she needed to go again. A mother of another youth that I knew narrated a similar story. It seemed to me that these Middle East returnees wanted the
freedom and the ability to leave the estate and country despite having provided for the welfare of their families and leading a comfortable life.

Despite Middle East employment providing women with an alternative to estate employment, it is generally the married women who go the Middle East. For unmarried, educated girls, Middle East employment is not an option since the work is low status where women continue to be exploited. Only two of the seven women working overseas are unmarried. Most parents are concerned about the security of their daughters since it is easy for the community to start rumours about the behaviour of a girl and cause problems at the time of marriage. Therefore, Middle East migration after marriage is seen as being better for women. While women's sexuality is or rather their purity is valued at marriage, the same is not a requirement for men. A double standard exists for women while men and their sexual activities never seem to be commented on even after marriage. Therefore, while Middle East migration does result in higher levels of income, there are considerably more negative than positive impacts of working overseas.

Although Middle East employment is associated with low status positions for women, the income is higher than in the plantation sector. Families of women who migrated to the Middle East claimed the women earned over Rs. 4500 each month. Thus, given the availability of employment as domestics in the Middle East and the lack of employment in Sri Lanka for educated female youth, this is becoming an increasingly viable alternative employment opportunity for women. It requires very little education and most women already have the knowledge of domestic tasks due to the socialisation of gender roles. Girls, therefore, may end up taking up work domestic workers in the Middle East to supplement family income.
A mother’s migration to the Middle East also places a severe strain on the education of girls. They very often replace their mother in the domestic arena and become responsible for all household tasks including taking care of their younger siblings. Therefore, while the aim of most parents is to increase access to education for both their daughters and sons, it is the education of females that becomes easily expendable when mothers migrate overseas. Some parents who have the help of other family members are able to promote education among their children of both genders. A mother’s migration to the Middle East according to most plantation residents is having negative repercussions on her family.

8.2.3 Garment Factory Employment

Work in garment factories has become an alternative to estate work among youth since the implementation of the 200 garment factory programme in the early 1990s by R. Premadasa, a former President of Sri Lanka. The aim of the programme was to open factories all over the country instead of having them primarily segregated in the Free Trade Zones (FTZ) in and around Colombo to increase youth employment in rural areas. There are several garment factories located in the close vicinity of Silver Hills that provides unemployed, female youth with employment opportunities. Although workers must have some exposure to educational institutions, they do not need additional skills training. One youth commented on the fact that the low educational qualifications for factory work makes girls leave schools early in order to earn an income.

To work in garments you do not need any qualifications. Do not need to study. Because of that many wait without wanting to study. When they finish their O/L they go to work in the garment. Now I met a friend of
mine and talking to her. I asked her what she is doing. She said she finished her O/L and is going to work in the garment. What to do? You get about Rs.4000 there.

More and more girls from the plantation sector are drawn to factory work since it is outside the estate. This is considered more dignified due to the provision of uniforms and also the benefits such as a cafeteria for lunch and tea. For these reasons there are some girls at Silver Hills who have ventured into this sector of employment in order to break the cycle of working as tea pluckers.

Security and transportation are key concerns of families whose daughters work in garment factories. As discussed previously, the purity and modesty of unmarried girls are important concerns with regards to employment outside the estate. I had the opportunity to meet the families of two girls who work in this sector, one in Gampola (located before Pussellawa) and the other in Colombo. While their families were concerned over their welfare they also believed that the girls were capable of taking care of themselves. The alternative would be to stay at home in the lineroom and even then their daughters were not safe, claimed one father. A girl I had met at the beginning of the field research in July had decided to stop working in the garment factory by September because of the distance from the lines to the place of work. Although the factory was located in Gampola, which was half an hour from the estate, the transportation system leaves much to be desired. There are few buses and vans that operate in the morning and are generally full with residents going outside the estate. Daily travel to and from the factory can cost between Rs. 20-22. Soon after starting work this girl also started to have problems with her feet preventing her from going to work. Thus, the cost of transportation in addition to issues pertaining to security and the time taken for daily
travel discourages girls from considering garment factory work in terms of long term employment.

The local representative for CARE International during a monthly meeting advertised positions in a garment factory in Nawalapitiya (located close to Gampola in the Central Province). The manager of this factory was willing to help the girls financially with the cost of transportation to and from the estate. However, after a month of advertising local leaders could not find 15 girls who were willing to go out to work. In addition, during a PRA workshop it became evident that there was an inefficient method of transferring information to the community about the work available at the garment factory. Although there were about 3-5 youth willing to start work, many wanted to work as Juki machine operators despite their lack of previous experience. It seemed that youth were not willing to begin work at a lower level such as packaging and then after gaining experience move into higher positions which involved sewing garments.

Factory work, which is different from estate work, still takes advantage of the cheap, docile nature of women’s labour. Young women face similar exploitative conditions as in the plantation sector in terms of meeting daily, weekly and monthly quota for the production of garments. Since most girls who enter factory work do not have a high education, many put up with poor working conditions such as lack of lunch breaks during times of increased workload, poor ventilation in the working area, abusive supervisors and lack of food, in order to earn an income to support their families financially. Thus, although young female tea plantation residents gain access to employment outside the estate, the conditions they face are similar to that which exists inside the estate. Their work is less valued and is seen as being easily expendable.
Ethnicity creates further problems for youth who venture outside the estate. Due to the civil unrest in the country, Indian Tamils often get mistaken for Sri Lankan Tamils and are thought to be in league with the Tamil separatists fighting for a separate state. Therefore, estate Tamils who venture outside the estate are expected to be registered at the police station in the nearby vicinity and also to carry their NIC at all times. There are still many plantation residents who do not have the proper documentation needed to obtain their NICs. Some lost their NICs during the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurgency in the early 1990s where estate residents were systematically persecuted because of their ethnicity by Sinhalese extremists from the southern region of the country.

The estate residents especially, the older generation and women, lack sufficient knowledge of the Sinhala language. Since males have the freedom of movement inside and outside the estate, they are able to socialise with the Sinhalese community residing outside the estate and to learn Sinhala. However, cultural ideologies on girls’ movement in public spaces restrict their access to the outside community. Hence many women lack knowledge of the Sinhala language, which is essential in order to deal with the community outside the plantations. As a result, many women who migrate to cities for work in garment factories often return after a short period of time due to fears of security threats, suspicion by the police, inability to integrate with the larger society and lack of personal safety.
8.3 Alternative Employment Opportunities for Educated Female Youth

The following table represents the gender division of occupations open to male and female tea plantation residents in Sri Lanka. In this section, I will focus on specific alternative employment opportunities that exist for young women within and outside Silver Hills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle Rearing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Servant</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate Labourer</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate Peon/KG/Watcher</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment Factory Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable Cultivation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker @ Hotel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Seven women work in the Middle East as domestic servants.

Table 8.1 Occupations of Silver Hills Residents by Gender

8.3.1 Self Employment

Vegetable gardens, sewing and small business shops are some of the self-employment opportunities open to residents within the estate. While self employment supplements income earned by working on the estate, it is also an alternative to working as a labourer on the estate. School teachers from the school inside and outside the estate as well as development workers have suggested self employment as an opportunity for girls who wish to remain within the estate to earn an income instead of following in the footsteps of
their mother and entering the estate workforce. However, engaging in self employment raises a grave concern for the younger generation regarding their claim to linerooms. Estate residents despite being born and living on estates for many generations do not own their living quarters. The claim to linerooms is contingent on working on the estate. Many youth even after marriage continue to reside with their parents who previously worked on the estate. However, in order to maintain the claim to linerooms after their parents’ death, at least one member of the household has to take up estate work. This system automatically makes estate residents work on the estate resulting in fewer chances to engage in self employment.

Women’s access to resources such as land, capital and labour are limited. Men generally control these resources as discussed by the participants at a PRA workshop on resource allocation by gender. It is the men who seek permission from management to begin vegetable gardens, raise poultry and cattle and other small-scale projects. However, most women help their husbands in raising cattle or poultry as well as in the vegetable gardens. Women do have the skills to operate businesses but do not have the confidence to leave the estate to obtain supplies due to fears associated with personal safety and cultural ideologies regarding women’s movement in the public and private spaces. Those tasks are left to men who are considered to have the skills necessary to bargain and deal with the community outside the estate.

The area in which most women are comfortable to start self-employment projects is in sewing. They can work from home and do not have to deal with the community outside the plantation sector. Several vocational training programmes have been conducted by CARE International to improve sewing skills among young girls and even
boys. While there are several seamstresses on the estate who specialise in sewing dresses, sari blouses and salwar kameez, many do not have the finances to buy a sewing machine by obtaining a bank loan. One young woman who was able to obtain a loan to purchase a sewing machine was able to successfully complete paying it in a relatively short period of time due to help from her family. A second concern is also the increasing number of girls engaging in sewing on the estate. More seamstresses mean there is less of an opportunity to conduct a lucrative business. The increasing competition between male and females also results in low wages for their work.

8.3.2 Government Sector

The access to government employment is based on the quota system in addition to educational qualifications. Since the improvement of physical facilities of schools teaching has become an area of employment open to O/L educated youth from the plantations. The aim is to hire youth from estates to fill the vacancies for teachers in schools close to tea plantations. Those entering this field are required to pass their O/L examination in science, maths and English. I encountered very few women from among the population of Silver Hills who chose to become teachers. The quality of education in the fields of science, maths and English provided by teachers in schools is a reason for the low level of success in these fields. More boys than girls seemed to have retaken the exam until they obtained passes in all subjects. Girls I met did not sit for the exam a second time after failing in two or more subjects after the first sitting. The lack of qualified permanent teachers, female teachers and curriculum are among the reasons for girls’ lack of interest retaking their examination. However, the encouragement of some
teachers' lead some girls to attend Sri Pada College of Education in Badulla (in the Up Country) where they follow a year of training prior to beginning an internship at a school located in close vicinity to their home. The low educational qualifications of girls have acted as a barrier to those who wish to pursue teaching as an occupation.

In recent years there has been an increase in A/L educated youth. Many of these are boys who become volunteer teachers in schools on the estate. At Silver Hills, many youth became volunteer teachers at either Golden Tips Vidyalayam or in another school outside the estate. None of these youth showed any interest in estate work but tried to obtain employment in a more 'dignified' profession as teaching or community development. I only met one girl at Golden Tips who had considered pursuing a career as a teacher but prior to that she wanted to finish her undergraduate degree at the university in Peradeniya. Her father was a kanakapulle on the estate and, thus, seemed to have more resources to support the education of his daughter compared to other families. Although estate schools have a higher proportion of female to male teachers in plantation sector schools. Most of these teachers are of Indian Tamil ethnicity but reside outside the estate. The increasing level of education among the girls and boys in estate schools presently will most likely increase the number of teachers from among the plantation community in the future. For the present, there are still a higher percentage of teachers from the community outside the estate.

Other government sector work that estate youth are presently employed in includes working as a Samurdhi Development Officer in community development field and in a hospital as an attendant. The following is the story of a girl who found employment in a government hospital after successfully completing her O/L education.
Megala is 23 years old and is working as a hospital attendant in Kandy. She is intelligent, outgoing and speaks fluent Sinhala. She lives in a boarding with several other girls and responsible for their welfare. She has passed her O/L exam in just one sitting and wanted to pursue her A/L when this job opened up for her. She earns Rs.6000 and gives her 1000-1500 rupees each month to her family. She has a boyfriend who is from the same estate who is working as a teacher in a school close to the estate. Megala has also purchase a plot of land on a private estate with the hopes of building a house but at present she has not done anything with the land.

Megala obtained her position in the hospital with the aid of an MP in the area. Her story is inspiring since she grew up in a single parent household in which her mother worked as a tea plucker to support Megala and her sister. Not many youth seek the help of local MPs to find employment. According to Megala’s mother, youth from the estate do not think of approaching MPs. Few girls venture outside the estate since many are scared of their safety. A male who completed his A/L education holds the position of the Samurdhi Development Officer in the Pussellawa areas (in the District of Kandy) for several estates. Working as a community development worker in the plantation sector implies travelling to different estates and schools to promote programmes. Despite the work being arduous these youth tried their best in their field to achieve these positions. Not all youth on the estate are self-motivated and ambitious like these two youth.

The help of management is needed to find employment for the educated, unemployed female youth population on the estate. However, since most private sector management companies are concerned with the future shortage of labour in tea plantations, it is unlikely that they would inform educated youth especially females about employment opportunities that suit their qualifications. Since privatisation, tea plucking has become the single most important area of work in the plantations and, therefore, the
younger generation of females are needed to fill the positions that will be left vacant by their mothers. If young educated females are to fill these positions then better working conditions and better wages should be paid to them.

8.4 Conclusion

Young women with their Grade nine or ten educational level have different aspirations than following in the same footsteps as their mothers as tea pluckers. Some want to become seamstresses while others like to work in the government sector. These high aspiration are due to the rising educational qualifications among both girls and boys in the plantation sector. The minimum age of employment legislature and the compulsory education act for children until they are 14 years of age have resulted in many children, both girls and boys being sent to school. Although the level of education of estate youth has been increasing rapidly over the years, their access to suitable employment has not increased at the same pace.

There is a strong antagonism towards estate work by most educated women (and men). The rising unemployment rate among youth also poses a problem for the management since they are restless and are disillusioned with the opportunities open to them on the estate. Thus, finding employment for the educated, unemployed population is the key to avert youth unrest in this sector.

The alternative employment opportunities, which exist for women, do not necessarily correspond with the level of education of girls. The plantations today, have become the recruitment ground for three sectors of employment: domestic labour, Middle East migration and factory work. Due to legislative enactments on compulsory education
legislation and increased minimum for child labour. More girls have gained access to education. The migration of female plantation residents to the Middle East has increased over the last several years. Most women engage in work related to domestic tasks and earn a substantially higher income. Although the primary motivation for mothers to migrate is to improve family circumstances, it was revealed that a mother’s migration results in the withdrawal of female children from school in order to take care of household tasks.

Young women from the plantation sector find factory work an alternative to estate work. They earn a higher income by working as Juki machine operators in garment factories than they would if they were employed as tea pluckers. There is no required level of education to work in garment factories but generally most girls have an educational level of grade eight. Regardless of the income and location of factories, women are seen as a passive and docile labour force. Despite the increase in wages for women through Middle East migration and factory work, the common denominator in each of these occupations is the low valued placed on women’s work.

There are some girls who have obtained employment that reflects their high level of education as discussed in the story of Megala. Thus, more effort on part of the plantation management, the NGO community and government agencies is needed to increase alternative employment among unemployed, uneducated female youth in the plantation sector.
Notes

43 Previously, the minimum age of employment was 14 years.

44 The JVP uprising in the late 1980s was partially related to the lack of unemployment among educated Sinhalese youth in the southern region of Sri Lanka.

45 Government employment positions are distributed according ethnic composition of each district in Sri Lanka. Since Kandy has a high concentration Indian Tamils more government positions are allocated to them. However, at the national level, there are fewer government employment opportunities for Indian Tamils.
9.1 Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational situation of girls and women in the tea plantation sector in Sri Lanka. Although there are many studies that focus on education in general in Sri Lanka, very few concentrate on education in the plantation sector. Even fewer studies focus on the education of girls and women. The paucity of studies on the educational experiences of girls' and women in the tea plantations in Sri Lanka is a lacuna that needs to be filled. There is also a growing body of literature that explores the relationship between gender, development and education. The tea plantation women in Sri Lanka provides a test case for exploring the gender dynamics of educational access and retention.

British colonialists preferred South Indian women to work on the plantations because they were viewed as a passive and cheap labour. Women's status in the plantations were influenced by two factors: the demand for wage labour and their employment by the British as cheap labour for the production of tea for sale in international markets; and cultural ideologies that placed women at the bottom of the household hierarchy. Although Boserup (1970) argues that women's employment outside the household increases their autonomy, my study on the plantations revealed that women's employment outside the household has not led to increased autonomy for women in terms of control over income and decision making authority. Cultural
ideologies and gender role expectations have intersected with women's role as a class of wage workers to influence women's position in the plantation labour regime and in the household hierarchy.

The education of workers was not considered a necessity for working on the plantations in the 19th century as was the case for most work in the rest of Sri Lanka. However, a two-tiered system of education was introduced by the kanganie, which catered to the education of children of staff members who were of a higher caste and class and those of workers who were from the lower castes and classes. The children of estate labourers, primarily sons, only received a rudimentary level of education that provided them with basic literacy and numeracy skills. This two-tiered system started by the kanganie was replicated by the Christian missionaries who established separate schools for children of different castes and classes. The children of staff members who belonged to higher castes and classes were able to gain access to schools located outside the plantations. Daughters of the worker grades were largely kept out of education due to their contribution in the fields and also because of cultural ideologies and gender role activities in the home. In addition, the plantation community has been a largely marginalized minority who were kept out of mainstream society in Sri Lanka by the British colonialists. This trend continued even after Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948.

Over the past 30 years, four changes to the education system have led to the increased participation of girls in schools located in the plantation sector. The first was the integration of estate schools into the national education system that began in 1977. This process was completed by 1994. Secondly, donor assistance, specifically from
SIDA has improved the school facilities, established new schools, buildings, community centres and playgrounds for children in this sector. Thirdly, the implementation of the Compulsory Education Act in 1998 made education compulsory for children between the ages of five and fourteen years. Finally, a series of legislative enactments, which include the child labour laws, have further increased children’s participation, specifically of girls’ in education.

Access to primary school education is no longer a problem for the present generation of girls in the plantation sector compared to women in their parents’ generation who were either illiterate or provided a rudimentary level of education. The number of girls entering schools in the estate sector has increased from 45% in the late 1980s to 48%-49% in 1997 (Jayaweera 2000a:68). For example, all girls who attended primary schools in Silver Hills proceeded to secondary schools either at Golden Tips Tamil *Vidyalayam* (in the adjacent estate) or outside the estate. The national trend for more girls than boys enrolling in secondary grades have been replicated in the plantation sector (Jayaweera 2000a:68).

While Sri Lanka has one of the highest literacy rates among countries in Asia, in terms of retention, the country is placed sixth (Ibid). In terms of overall literacy rates, the plantation sector (76.9%) still lags behind the national literacy rate of 91.8% (Jayaweera 2000a:75). Despite access to educational facilities, girls’ (67.3%) literacy still lags behind that of boys (87.2%) in the plantation sector (Ibid). The high transition rates to secondary schools are higher for girls (over 80%) than boys (67%-83%) in this sector but the retention of girls in secondary schools is limited (Ibid). The retention of girls at the secondary school level is also a problem for girls in the rural sector of Sri Lanka.
Education is an integral component of development programmes in developing countries. The Women in Development (WID) approach tried to incorporate women as 'active agents' and not as 'beneficiaries' in the implementation of development programmes. However, this approach was not successful because it failed to reflect on the inequalities that exist at the level of households between the two genders. Therefore, while the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Year of the Girl Child (1990) and the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000) stimulated interest in girls' education in Sri Lanka, it had little impact on the education of girls in the plantation sector due to cultural ideologies and the ethnic marginalization of the community. The Gender and Development (GAD) approach to development, has, therefore, moved away from primarily focusing on women to concentrating on both men and women and their unequal social/gender relations within the household and society. New approaches that look at household dynamics, resources distribution and access point to cultural values and perceptions as influencing women and girls’ entitlements. My study has shown that unequal resource distribution among female and male members of the household through male control of income and male role of 'provider' or 'breadwinner' affects the status of women within the household. In terms of education, the mere provision of schools does not effectively address the issue of girls’ participation and retention in schools unless factors such as cultural ideologies, gender perceptions, ethnic marginalization, employment opportunities and transportation are taken into consideration.

In the plantations (Silver Hills), cultural barriers in the form of gender role expectations, modesty issues, concerns with sexual vulnerability and people's perception of girls. Since women workers in the plantations are faced with a double burden of work
at home and on the estate, the oldest daughter generally takes on household responsibilities in order to relieve her mother of some work. The transfer of household duties from mother to daughter is viewed as 'natural' due to the perceptions of gender (Kurian 1982). Girls are socialised to feel 'compulsory emotions' about self-sacrifice, which influences their perceptions of self worth and value vis-à-vis boys (Papanek 1990). From a young age girls are taught that their position in the family is secondary to that of boys. Cultural ideologies regarding girls' movement in the public arena and their sexual modesty create further barriers to girls' retention in schools.

Cultural factors combine with supply factors, mainly transportation, which seems to be the biggest problem for girls' retention in schools. At marriage, a girl's modesty and sexual purity are considered very important. Girls travelling to school along estate roads are very often exposed to teasing and harassment by boys. Therefore, many parents who are concerned about their daughters' security and safety withdraw them from school to prevent possible rumours about their sexual modesty that may affect girls at the time of their marriage.

The supply factors, such as the provision of schools is not adequate to address the issue of girls' retention in schools. Girls' participation and retention in schools needs to be addressed in terms of both direct and opportunity costs, household dynamics, community perceptions and cultural ideologies (King and Hill 1993). Poverty is the key reason for many families failing to enrol their children, especially girls, in schools in developing countries (Khan 1993). Most parents facing poverty very often choose to educate one child, generally the male child, because the perceived contribution of boys to the family is viewed as being greater than that of girls. At Silver Hills, many parents
supported the higher education of sons because of their contribution to the family in the future. Since girls take up patrilocal residence after marriage, their husband’s family reaps the economic benefits. Therefore, many parents are reluctant to educate their daughters when they do not see a contribution to the family in the future. Similarly, in the plantations (Silver Hills), girls leave their parents’ house after marriage to live with her husband’s family who resides on another estate. Thus, community perceptions and cultural ideologies of gender roles have to be addressed when discussing the issue of girls’ education in developing countries. The WID perspective of focusing on women’s needs (in the case of education) is not adequate without corresponding attention being given to gender ideologies, relationships and cultural barriers as impediments to women becoming agents of development through education.

In recent years Middle East employment and garment factory work have become popular alternative employment opportunities for women in the plantation sector. More girls from the plantation sector are entering factory work because of the relatively low educational qualifications and access to higher income. A similar trend has also been noted among female youth in the rural sector in Sri Lanka (Herath 1997). The income earned in these two sectors is also considerably higher than the income earned by female tea pluckers. Women who migrate to the Middle East work as domestics, an occupation in which they have much knowledge and experience. Therefore, while married women increasingly take up Middle East employment, it is young, unmarried girls who enter garment factory employment. Since the educational qualifications for both these employment opportunities is significantly low, many girls are withdrawing from schools to find jobs in these two sectors. Although both Middle East migration and factory
employment provide women with alternative employment opportunities, the conditions in the factories and in domestic work are exploitative. Women's labour continues to be viewed as cheap and easily dispensable. The low educational qualifications required for both types of employment encourage women to take up these jobs, which reinforces their status as cheap, low skilled labour.

Where parents invest in the education of their daughters, high unemployment rates of girls between the ages of 20 –24 will have a significant impact on parents' perception of future investment in the education of their daughters. The increase in educational facilities has not been paralleled by the creation of suitable employment opportunities for educated female youth in the plantation sector. Therefore, many girls with a high level of education at Silver Hills are unable to translate their formal and non-formal education into suitable employment opportunities. The present dilemma of girls in the estate today is that they are better educated than their parents but, because of the poor job opportunities outside the estate, labour market segregation, safety and modesty issues, they are without jobs and without incomes. While estate work is hard and exploitative, their mothers and grandmothers were productively employed as tea pluckers. However, educated girls today view estate work to be of low status with no chance for mobility. Therefore, the option to work as tea pluckers is no longer open to the younger generation of women in the plantations today unless improvements are made for better working conditions and wages.

If suitable employment is not provided for educated female youth in the plantation sector, the situation of girls and women can deteriorate further in the future. I see three trends that could lead to potential problems for girls’ and womens’ position in the family
and society in the future. Firstly, due to the increase in the educational level of girls, many are putting off marriage to pursue a career and become financially secure. However, if educated girls are not able to find suitable employment, then parents will choose to get their daughters married at a young age since it relieves parents of the burden of providing for their educated, unemployed daughters. Secondly, the lack of employment could also lead to the further subordination of women in the household. Women in the plantation sector have a secondary status to men. Whereas previously, women earned an income and contributed to household finances, the present generation of educated girls do not have an income due to the lack of suitable employment opportunities for them. This could lead to increased tensions between husband and wives in the family and also increased harassment, violence and control of women in the future. Thirdly, if there are no potential employment opportunities for girls, parents may think twice before investing in the education of girls. While boys can find employment even in manual labour, girls are restricted in their access to suitable employment due to community perceptions, cultural ideologies, personal safety and security. Parents at Silver Hills are already beginning to complain about the lack of employment opportunities for their educated children, especially daughters. Therefore, if there are no outside employment opportunities for educated girls, investing in their education would be considered to have few returns in terms of income. Thus, if girls are denied education in the future, the cycle of exploitation will continue with girls entering the estate workforce to become employed as tea pluckers; or their value of education for girls will be undervalued.
The location of estates, exposure to the outside community, media influences, provision of welfare services, cultural ideologies, community perceptions and employment opportunities outside the plantations are all factors that influence girls’ participation and retention in education in the plantations. Although the results of my study are primarily from two estates, a general pattern can be drawn with regards to girls’ access and retention in schools in this sector. Further studies have to be conducted in order to assess the impact of the above mentioned factors on girls’ and womens’ education in the different areas of tea plantations in Sri Lanka.

Girls’ education is not just a basic need – it is moral necessity. The ripple effects of girls’ and womens’ formal and non-formal education is seen in health, future welfare of their families and in the economy. From a gender perspective, education leads to women’s empowerment and it also helps break the cycle of gender inequalities that exist at the household level.

**9.2 Implications and Recommendations**

The recommendations for improvement in girls’ education through changes in government policies and donor assistance that I have outlined below needs to be implemented in the tea plantation sector with the factors mentioned above in mind.

Firstly, government policy and donor assistance with regards to employment opportunities for educated, unemployed youth in the plantation sector needs to be revised. In creating employment opportunities for girls, the community perceptions on suitable employment for girls have to be taken into consideration. For example, the mere provision of vocational training opportunities for estate youth, especially girls, is not
adequate if these skills can not be translated into employment opportunities after the completion of training. Given the present ethnic conflict with the Sri Lankan Tamil separatists in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country and the educated, unemployed Sinhalese youth (from the south) uprising in the late 1980s, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has to focus more attention on preventing a similar situation from happening in the plantation sector.

Secondly, more integration of the estate resident community with the rest of the Sri Lankan population is essential in the future. Currently, a major concern for most females is their lack of Sinhala language skills that is necessary when seeking employment outside the estate. Bilingual education (Sinhala and Tamil) in combination with English language classes from grades one to thirteen must be included in the school curriculum to give girls from the estate sector, the same level of access to employment as the rest of the girls in the country.

Thirdly, the Sri Lankan school curriculum should be geared towards the needs of students in the plantation sector. Since the estate schools follow the national education system, the curriculum has to also reflect on the contributions of the community to the tea industry.

A gender component has to be also included in the school curriculum to teach children lessons on gender equality. The curriculum must reflect the diverse and changing roles of women. Gender sensitising programmes for teachers, children, boys and girls is also a necessity to change community perceptions on gender roles.

Since the harassment of girls in schools is a concern for parents, providing gender-segregated schools in the estate sector can convince parents to allow their
daughters to complete their secondary school education. There are many government schools in Colombo, Kandy and other parts of Sri Lanka where girls and boys attend separate schools. Since the contact with male students is minimal, it could also have positive impacts on girls’ participation in class and success rates in exams. In addition, providing transportation for girls to attend schools that are located outside the estate can also lead to increased retention of girls in secondary schools.
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2000b  

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World University Service of Canada
APPENDIX I

Centre for Development Alternatives

Socio-Economic and Civil Status Survey on Plantation Community- Kandy Districts

Questionnaire No: ........................................ Date : .................................................................

Investigator: ........................................ Date :

1. Area: ........................................ 2. Estate: .................................................................
3. Division: ........................................ 4. Name of Respondent: ........................................
5. Position in the Family: ............................

General Information of Family Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No</th>
<th>Name of members</th>
<th>Relation to head of family</th>
<th>Sex Male -1 Female -2</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Age at Marriage</th>
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B. Information on Civil Status Citizenship (CS) - (persons above 18 years)

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<tr>
<th>Serial No</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>CS status</th>
<th>Category of CS</th>
<th>Date of CS obtained</th>
<th>If do not have CS, did any body apply? Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>If yes, What reply received from authority?</th>
<th>Problem faced without CS</th>
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## 2. Voting Right (VR) - (persons above 18 years)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Did you register your name in the vote of register?</th>
<th>If yes, Do you voted in following election (23)</th>
<th>if not why (24)</th>
<th>Did you / your parents applied for Indian Citizenship? (25)</th>
<th>If yes, applied by whom (26)</th>
<th>Do you like to go to India (27)</th>
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## Birth Certificate (BC)

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<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Do you have BC? (28)</th>
<th>If yes, type of BC that you have? (29)</th>
<th>If you have not original BC? (30)</th>
<th>Whether your birth was registered? (31)</th>
<th>Did you applied to obtain your original BC (32)</th>
<th>If yes, what response that you received from registrar? (33)</th>
<th>Do you faced any problem due Without original BC (34)</th>
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193
National Identity Card (NIC) - (persons above 16 years)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Do you have an NIC? Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>If yes, State the category</th>
<th>If do not have an NIC, Did you applied? Yes -1 No -2</th>
<th>If you applied, What is the response your received</th>
<th>If you never applied for NIC, why?</th>
<th>Problem faced without NIC</th>
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</table>

4. Marriage and Marriage Certificates (MC)(for who are married only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Did you married Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>If yes, whether marriage was by proposal - (1) or by self arranged - (2)?</th>
<th>Did you registered the marriage? Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>If you register? Did you obtain the MC? Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>If you not registered the marriage why?</th>
<th>If you not registered your marriage, why?</th>
<th>Problem faced without MC</th>
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194
6. Death Certificate (DC) - (include parents' of first person and his spouse or husband's/wives' or children's death)

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<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Relationship to first person</th>
<th>When the person died</th>
<th>Reason for death</th>
<th>Place of Death</th>
<th>weather the death was registered</th>
<th>If you not registered the death, why?</th>
<th>If the death was registered, did you receive the DC</th>
<th>If you not received DC, why?</th>
<th>Problem faced with without DC</th>
<th>If your birth is not registered do you like to do so?</th>
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Employment and Income (for persons engaged in employment activities)

1. Main-occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Sector of Work</th>
<th>Type of employment</th>
<th>Place of work</th>
<th>Form of Payment: Daily wage (monthly) paid -1 Monthly Income -2 Contract payment -3</th>
<th>Amount earning per month</th>
<th>Do you like to continue present employment Yes -1, No -2</th>
<th>Reasons for desire continuing present job (68)</th>
<th>Reasons for lack of desire on continuing present job (69)</th>
<th>professional/Technical Skill</th>
<th>Preferred job</th>
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<td>(i)</td>
<td>(ii)</td>
<td>(iii)</td>
<td>(70)</td>
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</tbody>
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195
2. Sub-occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Sector of Work</th>
<th>Type of employment</th>
<th>Place of work</th>
<th>Form of Payment: Daily wage</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
<th>Amount earing per month</th>
<th>How many hours per day engaged in sub-occupation</th>
<th>Reason for engaging yourself in sub-occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Daily wage - 1</td>
<td>Monthly Income - 2</td>
<td>Amount earing per month</td>
<td>How many hours per day engaged in sub-occupation</td>
<td>Reason for engaging yourself in sub-occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Unemployment and Job Aspirations (for persons over 15 years and not engaged in formal schooling and not disable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Educational qualification</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>How long you are unemployed</th>
<th>Type of work expected</th>
<th>Reason for expected particular job</th>
<th>Did you have skill training</th>
<th>Yes - 1, No - 2</th>
<th>If yes, field of training received</th>
<th>Professional - 1, Technical - 2</th>
<th>Period of professional training</th>
<th>What type of training received in technical field</th>
<th>Period of training received</th>
<th>If you do not have any skill training, would you like to do so? Yes - 1, No - 2</th>
<th>If yes, what kind of training is expected</th>
<th>In what language you like follow training?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

196
D. Family income and Income Generating projects

Family Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Sources of family income</th>
<th>monthly amount provided</th>
<th>Relationship to first person</th>
<th>Sector of employment of money provider</th>
<th>Income spent on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Additional Income Generating Projects (IGP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of IGP like to start</th>
<th>Amount of capital needed to start IGP</th>
<th>What are the resources you have to start the IGP?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>Land (i) Skill (ii) inputs (iii) money (iv) Marketing (v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

197
## Family expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alcohol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Smoking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Beetle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cloth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Traveling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Entertainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Saving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Loan &amp; interest payment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Lighting or electricity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Code

#### Code 6: Relationship to head of family
- **Husband**: 1
- **Wife**: 2
- **Son**: 3
- **Daughter**: 4
- **Son in law**: 5
- **Daughter in law**: 6
- **Father**: 7
- **Mother**: 8
- **Father in law**: 9
- **Mother in law**: 10
- **Brother-in-law**: 11
- **Sister-in-law**: 12
- **Friends**: 13
- **Grandson**: 14
- **Granddaughter**: 15
- **Grandfather**: 16
- **Grandmother**: 17
- **Brother**: 18
- **Sister**: 19

#### Code 9: Martial status
- **Unmarried/never married**: 1
- **Married**: 2
- **Widowed**: 3
- **Separated**: 4
- **Divorced**: 5

#### Code 10: Educational attainment
- **Age less than 3**: 1
- **Pre-schooling**: 2
- **No pre-schooling**: 3
- **Passed year 1**: 4
- **Passed year 2**: 5
- **Passed year 3**: 6
- **Passed year 4**: 7
- **Passed year 5**: 8
- **Passed year 6**: 9
- **Passed year 7**: 10
- **Passed year 8**: 11
- **Passed year 9**: 12
- **Passed year 10**: 13
- **Passed year G.C.E (O/L)**: 14
- **Failed G.C.E.(O/L)**: 15
- **Passed G.C.E. (A/L)**: 16
- **Failed G.C.E. (A/L)**: 17
- **Undergraduate**: 18
- **Graduate**: 19
- **Uneducated**: 20

#### Code 11: Occupation
- **Pre-age to schooling**: 1
- **School going students**: 2
- **No schooling (4 - 15 years)**: 3
- **Engaged in house work**: 4
- **Engaged in wage work**: 5
- **Unemployed (14 - 55 years)**: 6
- **Employed (14 - 55 years)**: 7
- **Employed (person >55 years)**: 8
- **Retired (below 55 years)**: 9
- **Retired (above 55 years)**: 10

#### Code 12: Religion
- **Hindu**: 1
- **Christianity**: 2
- **Buddhist**: 3
- **Islamic**: 4

#### Code 13: Ethnicity
- **Tamil of Indian origin**: 1
- **Sri Lankan Tamil**: 2
- **Sinhalese**: 3
- **Muslim**: 4
- **Stateless**: 5
- **Indian Citizenship**: 6

#### Code 14: Disability
- **Normal**: 1
- **Mentally retarded**: 2
- **Blind**: 3
- **Deaf & Dumb**: 4
- **Physically Deformed**: 5
- **Others (specify)**: 6

#### Code 17: Type of citizenship
- **By decent**: 1
- **By registration (before 1988)**: 2
- **By providing affidavit (1988)**: 3
- **Others (specify)**: 4

#### Code 20: Reply send by authority
- **Not entitled**: 1
- **Need more evidence (specify)**: 2
- **Application in process**: 3
- **Rejected**: 4
- **Others (Specify)**: 5

#### Code 21: Problems faced Without CS
- **Can't obtain NIC**: 1
- **Not registered in voting list**: 2
- **Denied government job**: 3
- **Rejected the property right**: 4
- **Rejected bank loan**: 5
- **Denied Educational opportunity**: 6
- **Others (specify)**: 7

#### Code 24: Reason for not used votes
- **No interest**: 1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 26: Person applied for Indian citizenship</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great grandfather/Grand father</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother/Sister</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/Daughter</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own decision</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 29: Type of Birth Certificate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided by estate management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by Kacchari registrar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No any BC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (specify)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 30: Place of birth</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At estate home</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At outside relatives home</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At estate hospital</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At rural hospital</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At base/town district hospital</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At private hospital</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the way of traveling</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Specify)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 33: Reply received from Birth register</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth was not registered</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough evidence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application is in process</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still no reply</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost at Kachcheri</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 34: Problems faced without BC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can not obtain NIC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't get a job</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can not get a passport</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not admitted to school</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't apply for citizenship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 36: Category of Identity Card</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provided by Government (NIC)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by Post-office</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by estate management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by police</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by Gramma sevaka</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 38: Response received for NIC application</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needed original BC</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed parents NIC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed parents’ original BC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed applicant’s Citizenship</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed parents citizenship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needed voting list</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not entitled for NIC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application is in process</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejected</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application filled with mistakes</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 39: Reason for never applied to NIC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not given important</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have necessary documents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial difficulties</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know how to apply</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accepted the application</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 40: Problems faced without NIC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrested by police</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name not registered in voting list</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get a job</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to obtain passport</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not allowed to write exam</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to apply for citizenship</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable to travel outside of estate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t received my EPF/ETF</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t receive parents’ EPF/ETF</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t receive spouse’s EPF/ETF</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to open, operate or withdraw from</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a Bank account</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn’t register properties</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 45: Reason for do not having MC</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not given importance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sufficient evidence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need lot of money to give officers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know how to obtain</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code 46: Reason for didn’t register the</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration is not necessary</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband do not like legal procedure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife do not like legal procedure</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband’s first marriage is registered</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife first marriage was registered</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married during minor age</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not have marriage registrar</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know how to register</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

200
### Code 47: Problems faced without MC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to apply for citizenship</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't receive parents ETF/EPF</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't receive spouse's ETF/EPF</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't claim parents insurance</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't claim spouse's insurance</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't transferred spouse's property</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't transferred property to children</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't claim divorced compensation</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not face any problem</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to receive/obtain scholarship</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 50: See code 6

### Code 52: Cause of death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old aged</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accident</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murdered</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 53: Place of death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At home (estate home)</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives home</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At estate hospital</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At rural hospital</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Town hospital</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private hospital</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While travelling</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working place</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 55: Reason not registered death

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not given importance</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not like</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer did not like</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member did not like</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know how do register</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 57: Reason for not obtained DC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not given importance</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have to spent more money</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know how to obtain</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried, but couldn't get</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 58: Problems faced without DC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couldn't get parents' EPF/ETF</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 61: Employment status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual/Temporary</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family worker</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 62: Sector of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privatized estate</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government owned estate</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/public sector</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private business companies - urban</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private business shop</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/village</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic work</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Code 63: Type of work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estate labourer</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate KG/ watcher/ peon</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate staff</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk (Outside of estate)</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community worker</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker @ hotel</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garment factory worker</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic servant</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### If self-employed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer (vegetable cultivation)</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer (cattle rearing)</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor mechanic</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tailor - 20  
Business - 21  
Electronic repairman - 22  
Shoe repairman - 23  
Basketman - 24  
Handicraftman - 25  
Helper - 26  
Cameraman - 27  
Priest - 28  

**Code 64: Place of work**
- Estate - 1  
- Rural - 2  
- Urban - 3  
- Foreign - 4  

**Code 65: Form of payment**
- Daily wage weekly paid - 1  
- Daily wage monthly paid - 2  
- Monthly income - 3  
- Contract payment - 4  

**Code 68: Reasons for desire on continuing present work**
- Job security - 1  
- No other opportunity - 2  
- Getting benefit other than wage - 3  
- Easy work - 4  
- Status of job - 5  
- Better income - 6  
- Other (specify) - 7  

**Code 69: Reason for lack of desire at present job**
- No job security - 1  
- No other facilities/benefits other than Income - 3  
- Hard work - 4  
- Low status of job - 5  
- Poor Income - 6  

**Code 70: Skills**
- a. Professional skills
  - Accounting - 1  
  - Business - 2  
  - Pharmacist - 3  
  - Typing - 4  
  - Computer Type setting - 5  
  - Computer programming - 6  
  - Gardening - 7  
  - Farming/cattle rearing - 8  
  - Tailoring - 9  
  - Small scale business - 10  
  - Painting - 11  
  - Teaching - 12  

- b. Technical skills
  - Welding - 13  
  - Electrical - 14  
  - Driving - 15  
  - T.V, radio, refrigerator Repairing - 16  
  - Masons - 17  
  - Carpentry - 18  
  - Mechanic - 19  
  - Computer engineering - 20  
  - Musician - 21  

**Code 77: Use code 65**
- Code 70: Use code 63  
- Code 73: Use code 61  
- Code 74: Use code 62  
- Code 75: Use code 63  
- Code 76: Use code 64  

**Code 78: Sector of Employment - Use code 62**
**Code 99: Income spent on**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothe</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saving</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural activities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine/health</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code 101: Type of IGP like to start**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat rearing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle farming</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable cultivation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small enterprises</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self employment</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related with technology</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Family Name:

1. Historical Data
   - Data of arrival in Sri Lanka (an approximate year will be sufficient)
   - Factors that influenced migration: Why did the family want to migrate to Sri Lanka?
     Do you have Sri Lankan citizenship?
   - Significance of the 1964 Sirima-Shastri agreement on the repatriation of Indian Tamil workers to South India (discuss under the following themes)
     - Did any of your family members want to repatriate to India under this agreement?
   - Importance of citizenship in access to education at the following levels
     - primary education, high school (middle school, O/L and A/L), university education
     - Is citizenship important in gaining entrance into the following streams of education?
     - Have you faced problems in gaining access to school without citizenship?

2. Social Organization
   - Importance of maintaining boundaries with the community
   - Importance of caste/class relations in the family and community
     - Is caste an important factor in distinguishing relationships in this community?
     - Class is determined through economic benefits especially with more people migrating to the cities and/or Middle East.
   - Significance of these three:
     - Education
     - employment opportunities
     - Marriage alliances

3. Structure of Employment
   Factors that influence family members to migrate out of the tea plantations
   (Places of migration: large urban centers, Middle East)
   - Determinants of migration from tea plantations (by gender)
• The employment opportunities open to Middle East migrants
• Perceptions of Indian Tamils regarding migrants to the Middle East and cities

• The importance of women’s income in increasing family status in society
  - Is a woman’s income necessary for the sustenance of a family?

• Access to education by girls/boys in families where the mother has migrated to the Middle East

• Factors that influence migrants to urban areas to return to the estates

• Access to skilled employment in the tea estates

• Access and opportunities available to engage in self-employment within/outside the estate

• Access to self-help credit systems (loans from financial institutions)

4. Household Data
• Division of labour

• Decision-making power/authority

• Control of earnings

5. Educational Attainment
Levels of education
• Grandparents (grandmother/grandfather of both the mother and father)
• Parents (mother and father)
• Children (all irregardless of whether they are married or not. Both girls and boys)
• Grandchildren (boys and girls)

• Actors that determine the level of access to education (by gender)

• Family views on educational opportunities (by gender)

• The level of importance of education in the family

• Effects of parental income on education

• Access to skills training by the men and women
• Types of employment available to men and women with similar educational backgrounds
• Changes in the type of employment due to a higher education

6. **Health**
• Knowledge about health care and nutrition among women with limited education
• Health care and nutritional practices among women plantation workers with a higher level of education
• Access to information training on health care by women
• Knowledge and access to programmes that operate in the estate which deal with maternal health care, children’s health and family nutrition

7. **Ideologies**
• Factors which lead to differences between the genders
• Perceptions on the role of women/men
  • Within the family
  • In the society
  • In the workforce
• Division of labour by gender (link with household data)
• Changes in the role of men and women over the years
• Changes in women’s access to education
APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE ESTATE MEDICAL ASSISTANT

a. What are the services being provided to the plantation resident community regarding family healthcare practices?

b. What are the common illnesses found among women who seek medical assistance?

c. What are the frequent illnesses found among children brought to the EMA?

d. What are the common illnesses found among men who seek medical attention?

e. Is the community made aware of family planning?
   Yes
   No

f. What kinds of family planning methods are being used by the families?

g. How does the level of education/ lack of education of a plantation community resident impact on his/her family health care practices?
APPENDIX IV

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF SCHOOLS LOCATED IN SILVER HILLS ESTATE

1.a. When was this school started? (Give the year)

b. Who started this school?

c. How many buildings and classrooms did the school have at the beginning?

d. Has the school received funding from any governmental organisation and NGO to improve school buildings and to expand the existing classrooms?
   Yes          No

e. If yes, by whom? What kind(s) of funding has or is the school continuing to receive?

2. Up to which grade does this school provide education?
   Grade 5   Grade 10(O/L)   Grade 12 (A/L)   Other

3.a. How many teachers in the are in this school?

b. Does the school have teachers in the following categories?
   Yes          No

c. If yes, give a number to the following categories.
   Teachers who have attended training college
   Teachers who have completed their O/L but not attended teacher training
   Teachers who have completed their A/L but not attended training college
   Teachers who are/have obtaining(ed) their BA
   Other
4.a. What is the medium of learning in the school?
   Tamil    Sinhala    English

b. Can all the teachers in the school speak, read and write in the language used for teaching?
   Yes       No

5.a. Is English taught as a second language in this school?
   Yes       No

b. What are the educational qualifications of the English teacher(s) in this school?

   c. Can the English teacher converse with the students in their mother tongue?
      Yes       No

6. What are the educational qualifications of the Maths teacher(s) in this school?

7.a. At present how many buildings does the school have to conduct classes?

b. Is there sufficient space to conduct all the classes in buildings?
   Yes       No

   c. Are any classes taught outside in the school ground?
      Yes       No

8. Does this school have programmes for the following activities? (list the names)
   Sports

   Educational societies
Aesthetics (music, singing, etc.)

______________________________

______________________________

Other (specify)

______________________________

9. How many students of school going age live on the estate?

10. a. What is the % of children from the plantations attending this school?
   25%  50%  75%  Other ______________

   b. What is the % of females attending this school from the plantation community?
   25%  50%  75%  Other ______________

   c. What is the % of males attending this school from the plantations?
   25%  50%  75%  Other ______________

11. What is the breakdown of girls and boys for the following grades in your school
    (only fill for the grades, which are applicable to your school)?


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. What is the student to teacher ratio?

13. Who determines the school curriculum?
14. Are the following facilities provided for students who attend school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>free uniforms</th>
<th>Free text books</th>
<th>Meals</th>
<th>Other (specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15.a. Is education for the children in the plantation made more of a priority by their parents today?

Yes

No

b. Please explain the reason(s) for your answer mentioned above.

16.a. How is education for female children viewed by the plantation community?

b. Are girls given the same opportunities for education as boys?

Yes

No

Other

c. If answer to (b) is NO then, What are the reasons for girls not receiving the same level of education as boys?

17.a. List three (3) ways in which education can be promoted among families in the tea estates?

b. List three (3) factors through which access to education can be improved among female children?
APPENDIX V

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AMONG CHILDREN IN DIVISION I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under Age</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Year 1-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Year 5-6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Year 7-10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed O/L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed O/L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VI

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AMONG CHILDREN IN DIVISION II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under Age</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Year 1-4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;              Year 5-6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Year 7-10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed O/L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed O/L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed A/L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degree</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VII

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AMONG CHILDREN IN DIVISION III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling (Illiterate)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Age</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Year 1-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Year 5-6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Year 7-10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed O/L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX VIII

### EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AMONG CHILDREN OF SILVER HILLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling (Illiterate)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Age</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Year 1-4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Year 5-6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Year 7-10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed O/L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed O/L</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passed A/L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed A/L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>77</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX IX

**EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AMONG PARENTS OF SILVER HILLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling (Illiterate)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary: Year 1-4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; Year 5-6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary: Year 7-10</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passed O/L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed O/L</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passed A/L</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed A/L</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX X

ESTATE WAGES BOARD RECOMMENDED MINIMUM WAGES IN 1927

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male (cts)</th>
<th>Female (cts)</th>
<th>Child (cts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up-Country</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Country</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-Country</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>