

Map 4.1 How Sri Lanka was divided into 5 provinces according to the Colebrooke Reforms

Appointing unofficial members to the legislative council according to their ethnicity is called the nationalist representative system. This nationalist representative system produced harmful results to the country in the future.

The unofficial members who represented the general public could not exercise their power because the majority of the council was official members. The governor could appoint members who were loyal to him because it was he who exercised the power of appointing the unofficial members. As a result, the legislative council was loyal to the governor.

Colebrooke had recommended appointing a group including the secretary of the colony, treasurer, accountant, head surveyor, cashier of the Colombo customs department to the executive council which was appointed in 1833. The purpose of appointing this council was to limit the excessive power exercised by the governor in financial matters. Hence the governor was ordered to discuss all matters regarding income and expenditure with the executive council. Though the governor was not bound to follow the advice of the executive council, he was required to seek the approval of the secretary to the colonies in such a situation.

❖ Struggles of Europeans

It was a group of European businessmen that first launched a struggle to get certain areas of the Colebrooke reforms amended. There were three unofficial members in the legislative council to represent the Europeans who were living in the country. Those Europeans who were engaged in estate cultivation in the country wanted to get roads, railways and other infrastructure that was necessary for estate cultivation developed. Yet, it was difficult to get financial allocations for the above mentioned sections because at the beginning, administrative power was not vested upon the legislative council. At the same time, they were not happy of the fact that the number of unofficial members in the legislative council was the minority. They further opposed to the fact that they were appointed by the governor without using franchise for that. They started a limited struggle demanding the above changes. Their methods of struggle were; asking questions in the legislative council, making proposals, publishing articles in newspapers, establishing organizations for struggle etc. One such organization was Lanka Congress established in 1865 and headed by George Wall. The number of unofficial members in the legislative council was increased to 08 because of these protests. The two new members were selected for the upcountry Sinhalese and Muslims. Though the objective of Europeans' struggle was not to give administration power to Sri Lankans, those Sri Lankans took these struggles as examples.

4.2 The 1910 Reforms and their Background

❖ Demands of the Sri Lankan Middle Class

During the 19th century a significant change occurred in the economy and the society due to the Colebrooke reforms. As a result of this, the old elite class faded out paving the way to a new Sri Lankan middle class to appear by the beginning of the 20th century. In parallel to the changes that took place in the economy and the society during the 70 years after 1833, no change occurred in the political system. As the Sri Lankan middle class was unhappy about this, they began to demand for a constitutional reform during the period between 1908 - 1909.

Mr. James Pieris presented a formal petition for the first time to the secretary of the colonies requesting a constitutional reform in December 1908. After that, several other organizations had followed Mr. James Pieris. Low Country Production Club, Chilaw Club, Jaffna Club are some of them.

Several of the major demands made by the Sri Lankans are given below.

- Increasing the number of unofficial members in the legislative council
- Discontinuation of the nationalist representative system
- Electing members from provinces according to the provincial representative system
- Increasing the power of the legislative committee

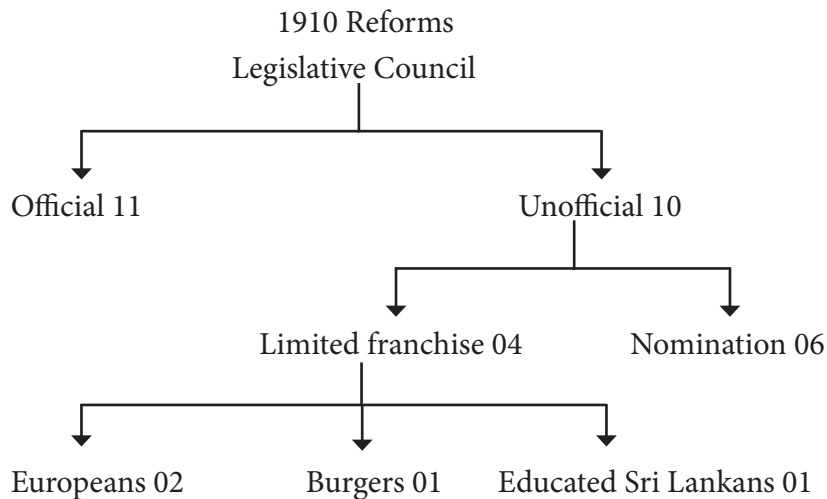


Fig. 4.1 Mr. James Pieris

The governor of Sri Lanka that time, Henry McCallum opposed to these proposals. He argued that those who had presented petitions did not represent the general public. But, the colonial office could not ignore the logical arguments put forward for constitutional reforms. Even the colonial officers agreed to the fact that a constitutional reform is necessary because 75 years had passed after the Colebrooke reforms were implemented. Thus, in November 1910, the secretary of the colonies exclaimed that a constitutional reform would be made. The new constitution designed by the secretary of the colonies, Lord Crew according to the recommendations of then governor; Henry McCallum is called the “Crew – McCallum Constitution”.

❖ Crew – McCallum Constitution 1910

This constitution which came into effect from 1912 had increased the number of legislative council members to 21. Out of them, 11 were official members and 10 were unofficial members. Out of the 10 unofficial members, 06 were nominated according to the nationalist representative system. The other 04 were appointed selecting 02 for Europeans, 01 for Burgers and 01 for educated Sri Lankans on the basis of limited franchise.



Distinguished characteristics of the Crew –McCallum reforms

- Opportunity of appointing members to the legislative council using franchise for the first time
- A member to represent the educated Sri Lankans
- Still the majority of the council was the official members

A distinguished feature of this reform is the ability to exercise franchise in appointing members to the legislative council. Yet, the franchise was limited because there were special requirements to be fulfilled to become a voter. Mr. Ponnambalam Ramanadan was elected as the educated Sri Lankan in 1912.

❖ Temperance Movement 1912 - 1915

Sri Lankans' demands were not fully met in the 1910 reforms. The middle class was not happy about those reforms. A temperance movement was started in protest to

the decision of the government to impose a new excise ordinance in 1912 giving permission to open new toddy bars.

How a temperance movement emerged through the religious renaissance in protest to the increasing alcohol consumption during the British reign was explained in Unit Three. The purpose of this temperance movement was to make people aware of the harmful effects of alcohol consumption and help them give up the bad habit. But, protests were staged against the new excise policy of the government in 1912. The pioneers of this protest were the middle class people who could not win their demands from 1910 reforms. As a result, these protests in 1912 had a political inclination. Some distinguished features of these protests were;

- attempting to create a public opinion against the excise policy of the government
- unison of the middle class English educated and the activists of the religious renaissance
- building up of a network of non-alcoholic associations around the country based on the central non-alcoholic council in Colombo
- criticizing the government activities in the non-alcoholic protests

Because of the protests in 1912, some taverns were closed and it became difficult to find places to open new ones. The government was seeking an opportunity to abate the temperance movement because the activities of the movement were successful with people gathering around the associations and the government activities were condemned in their protests. When the situation was thus, there arose riots between the Sinhalese and the Muslims in Kandy in 1915. It is known as the Sinhalese- Muslim riots. The government ignored the riots till the situation became extremely tensed and then took undue advantage of it and tried to suppress the temperance movement. There, the government arrested a majority of the non-alcoholic leaders and banned some Sinhala newspapers. On the face of this suppression, the activities of the temperance movement were badly affected. Nevertheless, some leaders who entered politics through non-alcoholic activities; like F. R. Senanayake, D. S. Senanayake and Sir D. B. Jayatilaka later became national leaders.

❖ Influence of the Indian Nationalist Movement

The British power had spread into both Sri Lanka and India by the 19th century. There emerged a powerful nationalist movement in India which was a British colony by the beginning of the 20th century. They staged a strong protest in 1885. Because of these protests, in 1885 British rulers had to make strong constitutional changes in India than what they did in Sri Lanka. The leaders like Surendranath

Banerjee, Bal Gangadhar, Thilak, Mahathma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru obtained the participation of the general public in protests against the British and launched strong struggles to win the independence which they called, 'Swarajya.' The leaders like Mahathma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru came to Sri Lanka and addressed the citizens of the country. Mahathma Gandhi came to Sri Lanka in 1927 and spent several days in the country.

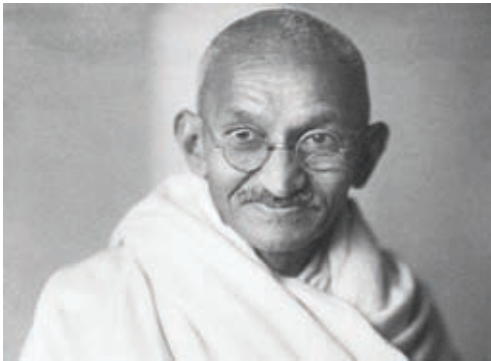


Fig. 4.2 Mahathma Gandhi

The impact of the India's independence struggle was felt in Sri Lanka also. The leaders of this country understood that presenting petitions and conducting discussions with the secretary of the colonies were not going to be sufficient in winning important political reforms. Hence, the leaders of this country started to conduct protests in a more organized manner after 1915.

❖ Ceylon National Congress



Fig. 4.3 D.B. Jayathilaka

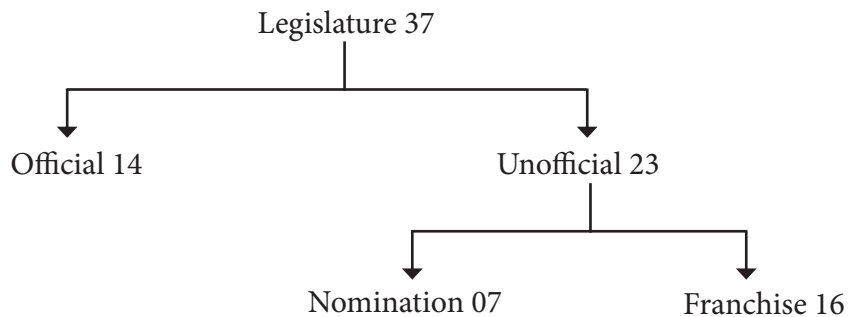
Sri Lankans felt the necessity of getting more power in administrative matters when the government imposed martial law and suppressed the people in 1915 during Sinhala-Muslim riots. Yet, there was no any common organization to organize political protests even by 1919. Though there were several small organizations they did not have a strong voice. Therefore, all these small organizations, came together in December 1919 and Ceylon National Congress was formed. Mr. Ponnabalam Arunachalam who was a distinguished leader in the political protests after 1915 was appointed the first president in the congress. The prime objective

of establishing the Ceylon National Congress by this time was to organize a strong struggle in demand of political power, combining all those small organizations interested in politics. The unison of different ethnic groups such as Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims for a common target under the Ceylon National Congress was an important incident in the history of Sri Lanka.

❖ Manning Constitutional Reforms -1920

Sri Lankans were able to win these reforms in 1920 through their continuous struggles because they were not satisfied with the Crew-McCallum constitution. The number of the members of the Legislative Council was increased to 37 by this reform. Among them 14 were official members and 23 were unofficial members. Seven of the unofficial members were nominated by the governor. The other 16 were selected through limited franchise under the provincial representative system. Though the number of the unofficial members was the majority, in critical situations the 7 members nominated by the governor tend to join the 14 official members. This created a majority to the side which is partial to the governor.

❖ Reforms



Some important characteristics of 1920 constitution:

- Unofficial members became the majority for the first time
- Introduction of the provincial representative system
- Continuation of the ethnic representation

Even in these reforms the power of the governor was not reduced. The demand of the Ceylon National Congress had been neglected. So, the Sri Lankan leaders continued to protest. The Ceylon National Congress had an idea to refuse these reforms at the beginning. As a result, the governor, William Manning promised to introduce another reform within a short time. There was another constitutional reform in 1924 following this. It was named as 'Manning – Devonshire Reforms.'

↓ **ACTIVITY**

Explain the reasons for the formation of the Ceylon Lanka National Congress.

❖ **Constitutional Reforms in 1924**

The number of the legislative council members was increased up to 49 by this reform. There were 12 official members and 37 unofficial members. Out of these 37, 8 were nominated by the governor and 29 were elected. The most important feature of this reform was that the number of elected members was the majority even though the 12 unofficial members and the nominated 8 made 29 in unison. The functioning of the government was still the responsibility of the governor. Nevertheless, the power of decision making was in the hands of the members elected by the people because the governor did not enjoy a majority which was loyal to him. Hence, there were disturbances to the smooth functioning of the government because it became a constitution that divided the power and the responsibility into two. Hue Clifford, the governor who was appointed after William Manning informed this situation to the colonial office and the Donoughmore Commission was appointed to examine the situation and make recommendations.

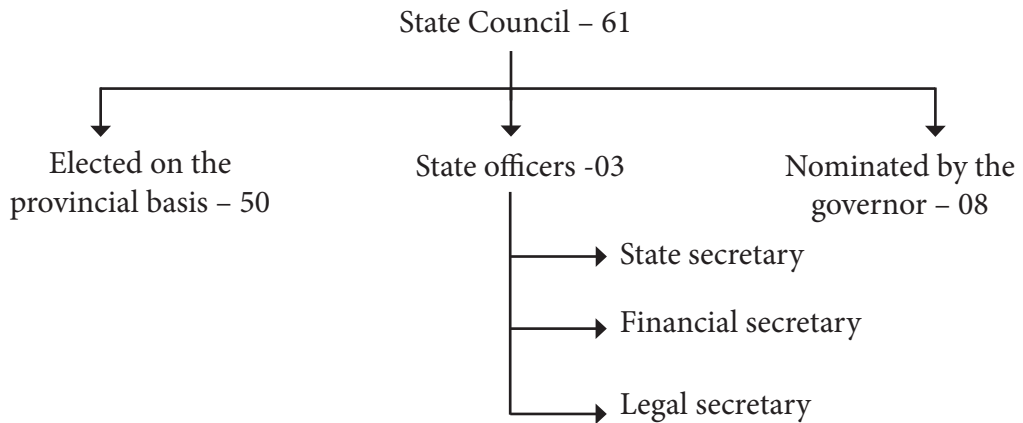
4.3 Donoughmore Constitution – 1931

The Donoughmore Commission which was headed by Lord Donoughmore came to Sri Lanka in 1927 and got the views of the Sri Lankans. The constitution proposed based on this came into effect from 1931. It is known as the Donoughmore Constitution. It is important as Donoughmore reforms entrusted a considerable amount of political responsibility to Sri Lankans among various constitutional reforms that existed so far. It can be considered as an important juncture in the journey towards winning the independence.

Some special characteristics of the Donoughmore Constitution:

A legislative council of 61 members was appointed in this constitution. It was named as 'State Council.' The members were selected as follows to the council.

❖ State Council



A speaker elected by the members of the council was the chair of the council.

❖ Universal Franchise

There was limited franchise to elect the members to the Legislative Council since 1912. At the beginning, if one wanted to be a voter they should possess a considerable wealth. Therefore, the poor general public could not enjoy franchise. As a result, the percentage of franchise holders was just 4% of the population as late as 1924. Females too did not enjoy this franchise. The Donoughmore Commission explained the fact that the politicians did not pay enough attention to the problems of the people with low income because those who enjoyed franchise were only the wealthy class. At the same time, they pointed out the fact that the general public paid no attention to political issues because they did not enjoy franchise. Therefore, the commission recommended that all males and females who were above 21 years were granted franchise irrespective of their wealth and educational qualifications. As a result of this, Sri Lankans got the universal franchise in 1931. That was a great victory the general public got.

❖ Executive Committee System

The relationship between the legislature and the executive was limited before the Donoughmore reforms. The State Council received power on both legislative and executive matters under these reforms. After an election, the State Council was divided into 7 committees. Following are the subjects of those committees.

- Home affairs
- Agriculture
- Local administration
- Health
- Education
- Transport and common work
- Labour industry and commerce

The chairperson of each committee became the minister of each subject. Thus, the Donoughmore reforms gifted Sri Lanka with 7 ministers. The ministers could run the ministry according to the necessities of the people. During the era of the State Council, the cabinet could launch several projects which were beneficial for the lives of people. Some of such projects were; setting up of agricultural villages and the introduction of free education.

❖ Governor and the Government Officials

The governor's power was reduced to a greater extent when compared with the previous constitutions. The governor had to work in unison with the State Council and the cabinet of ministers. A weakness noticed in the Donoughmore constitution is, leaving the portfolios of state security, financial matters and legal affairs still in the hands of the three state officials.

4.4 Protests for Independence

Though the Sri Lankans could enjoy some power in Donoughmore constitution, still the state officials held the power over a major area of administration. As a result, from 1931 protests were started requesting a curtailment of the power of the governor and handing over of the portfolios given to state officials to the Sri Lankan ministers. In these activities, the State Council and the ministers took the lead in making requests.

❖ Sunflower (*Suriyamal*) Movement

In addition to the protests staged by the cabinet of ministers, the State Council and the Ceylon National Congress in order to get the administrative power to the Sri Lankans by changing the Donoughmore constitution, Marxists of the country too launched a struggle for independence. Communist leaders like Dr. N.M. Perera and Dr. Colvin R. De Silva who formed the Lanka Sama Samaja Party used the

'Suriyamal movement' as a mode of providing publicity to the protests they staged requesting independence.



Fig. 4.4

Dr. Colvin R. De Silva

The Suriyamal movement was started against the 'Poppy movement'. Selling poppy flowers was started in order to collect funds in aid of the families of soldiers who were disabled in World War I. November 11th is considered the day of ending wars and poppy flowers are sold on that day every year. In addition to that, parades and festivals were conducted to show the loyalty of Sri Lanka to the British Empire. The money collected by selling poppy flowers was sent to Britain.

A campaign of selling sunflowers was started by the emancipated soldiers' guild on the same day when poppy flowers were sold. Later, the leftist leaders joined the 'Suriyamal movement'. The money collected by selling sunflowers was spent for the betterment of the poor of this country. The Communists announced that buying poppy flowers is being loyal to imperialism because the money collected by selling poppy flowers was sent to Britain and wearing sunflowers is a way of taking part in the struggle for independence. The British policies were criticized by the propagations that said poppy flowers were a symbol of slavery and sunflowers were a symbol of independence. Thus, "Suriyamal movement" became a publicity campaign of the protests for independence.



Fig.4.5 Dr. N.M.Perera

❖ Cabinet of Ministers and the National Congress

The British needed the support of the Sri Lankans when the World War II began in 1939. Though the cabinet of ministers agreed to give support to Britain, it was under the condition that a new constitutional reform is granted at the end of the war. A special defence bureau was appointed during the war to maintain security in Sri Lanka and the then minister of agriculture, Mr. D. S. Senanayake was also appointed to that bureau. The governor and the other high officials were impressed with the support extended to them by the cabinet of ministers and requested Britain to propose a new constitution for Sri Lanka which would meet the demands of the Sri Lankans at the end of the war. As a result of that, the cabinet of ministers was permitted to draft a new constitution suitable for Sri Lanka under certain



Fig. 4.6 D.S. Senanayake

restrictions. In the constitution drafted in 1944 by the cabinet of ministers, they had proposed a parliamentary system in which the complete authority of internal affairs would lie in the hands of the Sri Lankans.

The Ceylon National Congress too started struggles making independence of Sri Lanka their prime objective. They worked in unison with the cabinet of ministers during this period.

❖ Soulbury Constitution

The Soulbury Commission was appointed in 1944 to give proposals for a new constitution considering the draft of the cabinet of ministers and the demands of the Sri Lankans. The report which was published in 1945 had proposed a parliamentary system.

This report was much similar to that of the cabinet of ministers. The approval of the Soulbury constitution by the State Council in November, 1945 with a majority of votes was an important incident. You can learn more about the nature of the Soulbury constitution and the independence of Sri Lanka in Unit Six.

↓ **ACTIVITY**

Write short notes on the following topics.

- State Council
- Executive Councils
- Universal Franchise

Social Changes in Sri Lanka under the British

Introduction

There were a long continued ruling system, social economic system and a culture in Sri Lanka when it was captured by the British. Yet, there were drastic changes in all those areas by the time Sri Lanka won the independence in 1948. These changes show the effect of the British rule in Sri Lanka. The previous lesson explained how the traditional imperial system changed to a parliamentary system during the British reign. This lesson focuses on the changes that occurred in socio – economic and cultural aspects of the country during the British rule.

5.1. Economic Changes

The foundation of Sri Lanka's traditional social, economic and cultural systems runs back to the Anuradapura era. That socio - economic system which was built on the doctrine of Buddhism from the rule of king Devanampiyatissa began to experience change after the arrival of Portuguese in the 16th century. The agricultural activities in Portuguese held areas suffered drawbacks because they paid more attention to trade during their rule. When the Dutch was in power in the coastal areas, they grew cinnamon and pepper, etc. targeting export. Furthermore, a group of labourers started to emerge because the Dutch started some minor industries and a payment system for the work covered daily. These Europeans failed to make a significant change in the traditional socio – economic system because the major part of the island was still under the power of the Kandyan kingdom during the time in which the coastal areas were governed by the Dutch and the Portuguese.

There existed a social system which was based on the traditional socio-economic activities when Sri Lanka was captured by the British. There was an elite group in that society but they were a small minority. The country was mostly governed by the aristocrats. The greater majority of the country were the general public and they lived on agriculture.

The traditional life style of this country was based on the village. It was named as a local self-sufficient economic system because the people of the village produced their food in the village itself. There was mutual support and harmony in the village. There was no working for wages those days. Agriculture was continued, taking help from each other on daily basis which was called 'Aththama'. As a result, the use of money was minimum in that society.

The 'Gamsabha' (Village Council) settled the minor complaints about minor issues between villagers. The Gamsabha played a major role in community work such as building canal bunds, maintenance of lakes, building up of pagodas and roads before the Kandyan kingdom. The Gamsabha could get the necessary labour for the above mentioned duties under the traditional duty service system. By the time of the Kandyan Kingdom 'Gamsabha' had become a minor court in the village.

The labour needed for the government was received through the duty service system by the administration under the ruling system before 1815. There were two ways of providing service as compulsory service system and duty, based on land occupancy.

In the past, those who supplied compulsory service to the king were awarded land for their existence. Those who cultivated these lands which were called as service patrimony lands provided necessary services to the king. Officials who received these lands gave them to the general public for cultivation and they had to repay it by providing services through labour. It was called as duty of occupancy.

All adult males of the country had to serve the king for no salary for a decided number of days every year. This was conducted under the heads of the village and the Gamsabha. Often, the labour necessary for the common activities of the village was taken from this compulsory service system.

❖ Economic Reforms in Colebrooke Commission

The major reason for sending the Colebrooke Commission to Sri Lanka was the expenditure of the government exceeded the income of the government. Colebrooke tried to introduce several economic reforms to Sri Lanka because he wanted to establish an economic system that met the objectives of the English. The government

wanted to invest money on profitable business in order to avoid financial difficulties the government faced. The objective of the Colebrooke Commission was to build a situation in which the private entrepreneurs could invest money because the government could not afford it.

Colebrooke recommended that the government should move into a policy of selling lands because the existing traditional land tenure system was an obstacle for the private entrepreneurship. Thus, both the locals and foreigners had the opportunity to buy land as much as they wanted. The civil servants too got the opportunity of buying government lands because Colebrooke recommended that all civil servants are permitted to engage themselves in estate cultivation.

The investors who bought lands wanted labour to cultivate those lands. According to the traditional compulsory service system, people were forced to work for the government with no wages. Colebrooke noticed that they were not suitable for the private entrepreneurship and it was an obstacle for the freedom of the people. Therefore, he thought of abolishing the compulsory service. As a result, labour became something that could be bought and that was the beginning of a labour class that worked for wages in Sri Lanka.

When Colebrooke came to Sri Lanka, cinnamon and salt trade was a government monopoly. Continuing a government monopoly does not match with the private entrepreneurship. Therefore it was suggested to break the monopoly on cinnamon and salt trade and allow the private sector too join that trade. The taxes that were the government income those days were the levies on fish, land and alcohol and they were charged directly. For an example, a portion of the fish caught had to be submitted as tax. The right to earn taxes was auctioned and the fishermen had to pay the tax in fish to those who had bought the tax right. This direct tax was proposed to transfer into an indirect tax by issuing permits for boats. Tax on land was also a direct tax. The authority of tax collection was auctioned and those who bought it collected taxes from the products of lands. Colebrooke banished it and recommended to collect an equal amount in cash from all lands.

Colebrooke further recommended the establishment of a savings bank in the island. The purpose of establishing a bank was to allow the entrepreneurs who invest money on estate cultivation obtain money to a reasonable interest.

❖ Development of Plantation

There was a broad change in the economy of Sri Lanka after Colebrooke recommendations came into effect in 1833. Foreign investors could buy thousands of acres of land in Sri Lanka because there were no rich people among locals who could invest in mega scales though Colebrooke wanted to encourage private entrepreneurship. This was not a secret to Colebrooke too.

Foreigners invested money on trade based agriculture which was profitable in the foreign market. As a result, there was rapid expansion in plantation sector in the 19th century.

❖ Plantation of Coffee

Though coffee plantation began during the Dutch period in small scale in coastal areas, because a prominent place was given to cinnamon plantation, coffee plantation did not develop. When the English came to Kandy, coffee plantation had been done in several places as a home cultivation. It developed into a plantation during the reign of the British. Several factors were there that affected the development of the coffee plantation in the 19th century.



Factors that helped the development of the coffee plantation:

- More investment on coffee plantation by foreigners after the Colebrooke reforms in 1833.
- Increasing demand for coffee in the European market.

- High profit drawn through coffee plantation.
- Ability to get cheap labour from the Indian labourers in the plantation sector.

Some other reasons for the expansion of coffee cultivation were the reduction of export tax for coffee and releasing of the labourers who worked in coffee plantation from compulsory service system during the time of the governor Edward Barnes (from 1824 – 1831).

Coffee plantation was expanding fast in the upcountry region during the period of 1837 -1847. Even the government officers started growing coffee because it was very profitable. Reports say that there were about 500 acres of coffee plantation in the hill county by 1845. Thus, the coffee plantation was successful in areas such as Dumbara valley, Gampola, Peradeniya, Matale, Badulla and many areas of the Central Province. The amount of coffee export in 1844, was five times bigger than that of 1834. But after 1844 Sri Lanka had to face a huge challenge in the Landon market because of the free trade policy of Britain. Furthermore, the downfall of the global market too affected badly on the coffee plantation of Sri Lanka. Because of these reasons the demand for coffee decreased and the value of the coffee lands went down in 1848. But this situation reached normalcy again after 1850 with the reduction of production cost through efficient estate management and the high demand for coffee in Europe. The major reason for the downfall of coffee plantation in Sri Lanka was the leaf disease that spread since 1869. The fungus which was called “Hemileia Vastatrix” spread fast destroying the coffee plantation.

❖ Cinchona and Cocoa

When the coffee cultivation began to deteriorate, some planters started growing cinchona and cocoa. Yet cinchona became successful in areas with very high altitude only. Cinchona was a plant that was used in the production of the medicine called quinine and it had a limited demand. Therefore, it was not successful as an alternative to the coffee plantation.

When the coffee plantation began to deteriorate, the government encouraged the cocoa plantation. Anyway, the planters had to bear an additional expenditure because cocoa needed shade in order to grow well. Even during the period when cocoa had become a successful plantation. It was not spread more than 1200 acres. It was successful only in Matale district. Cocoa too failed to provide an alternative to coffee.

❖ Tea Plantation

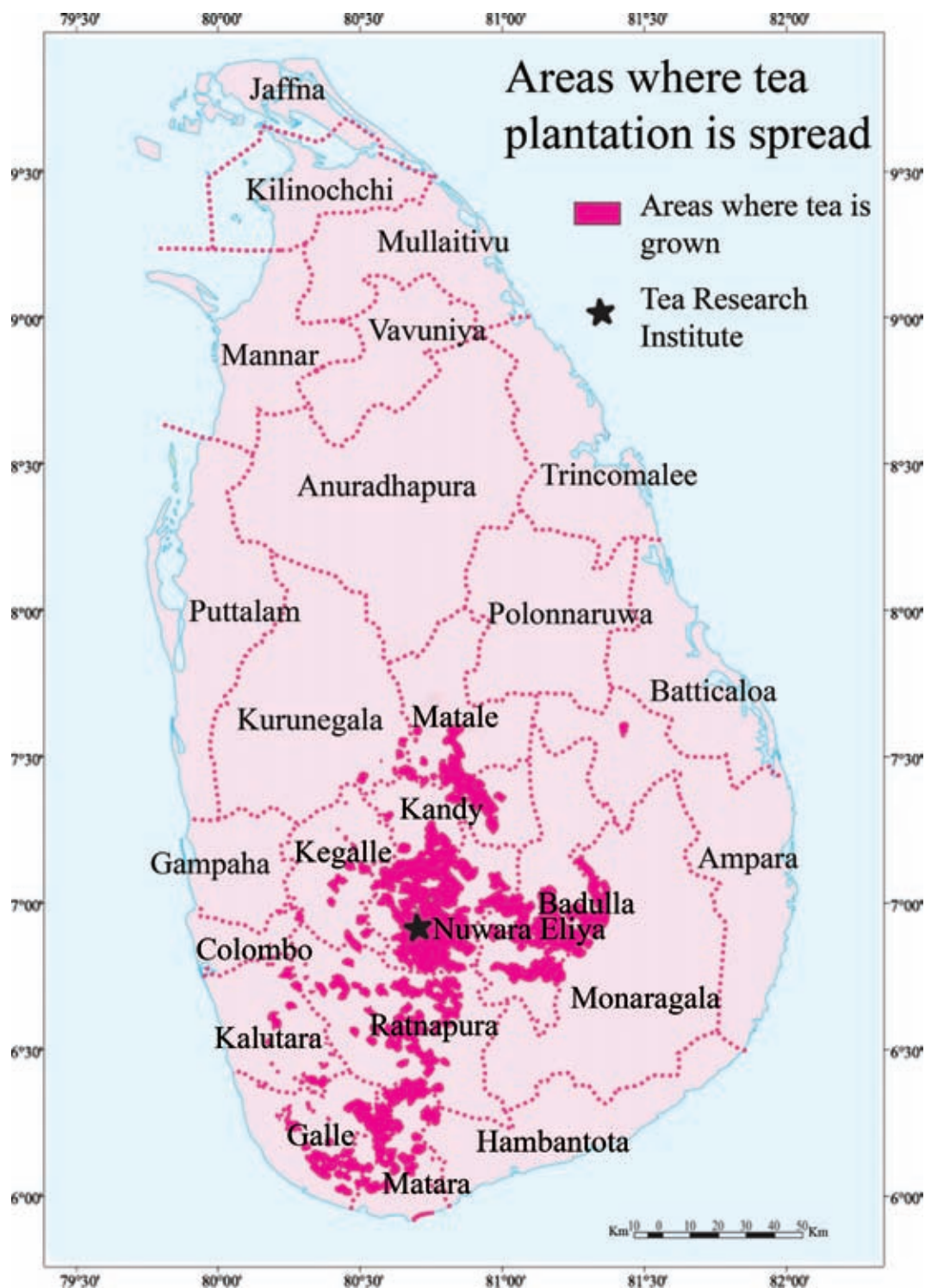


Other crops were tried in the upcountry areas because of the fluctuation of coffee price in the world market. Several such experiments were made on tea plantation also. The Planters' Association sent a group of estate workers to Assam to study further about tea plantation in 1867. At the same time, James Taylor too experimented growing tea in several areas of Lulkandura estate. Tea plantation spread to about 500 acres by 1875 as a result of the above mentioned experiments. Tea plantation began to expand quickly because many planters took to tea plantation due to the destruction of coffee cultivation. By 1894 the amount of tea planted area had reached upto 400,000 acres. Tea plantation spread to the Central, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces because it could be grown in any area with more than 6000 feet of altitude except in the dry zone of the country. Later it was spread to the Southern and Western provinces too. It is reported that there had been 1200 acres of tea in average size and bigger tea estates in the country by 1930.

With this expansion of tea plantation, tea became one of the major export products in our country. Though the income from tea went down in certain situations due to the excessive tea product after the World War I and the world economic demise in 1929, later it reached to normalcy.

Factors that helped the development of the tea plantation:

- High demand in the world market for Sri Lankan tea
- Conducive environment for tea in many parts of the country except in the dry zone
- Ability to produce good quality tea with the help of modern factories and machines
- Development of transport with the development of roads
- Cheap labour received from south Indian labourers



❖ Coconut Plantation

Coconut is a home crop that existed in Sri Lanka from the past. There was an increasing interest on coconut plantation by 1850 due to the fall of coffee prices. A significant characteristic was the enthusiasm shown by the natives than the foreigners in the coconut plantation. By 1880, 65% of coconut estate owners were Sri Lankans.



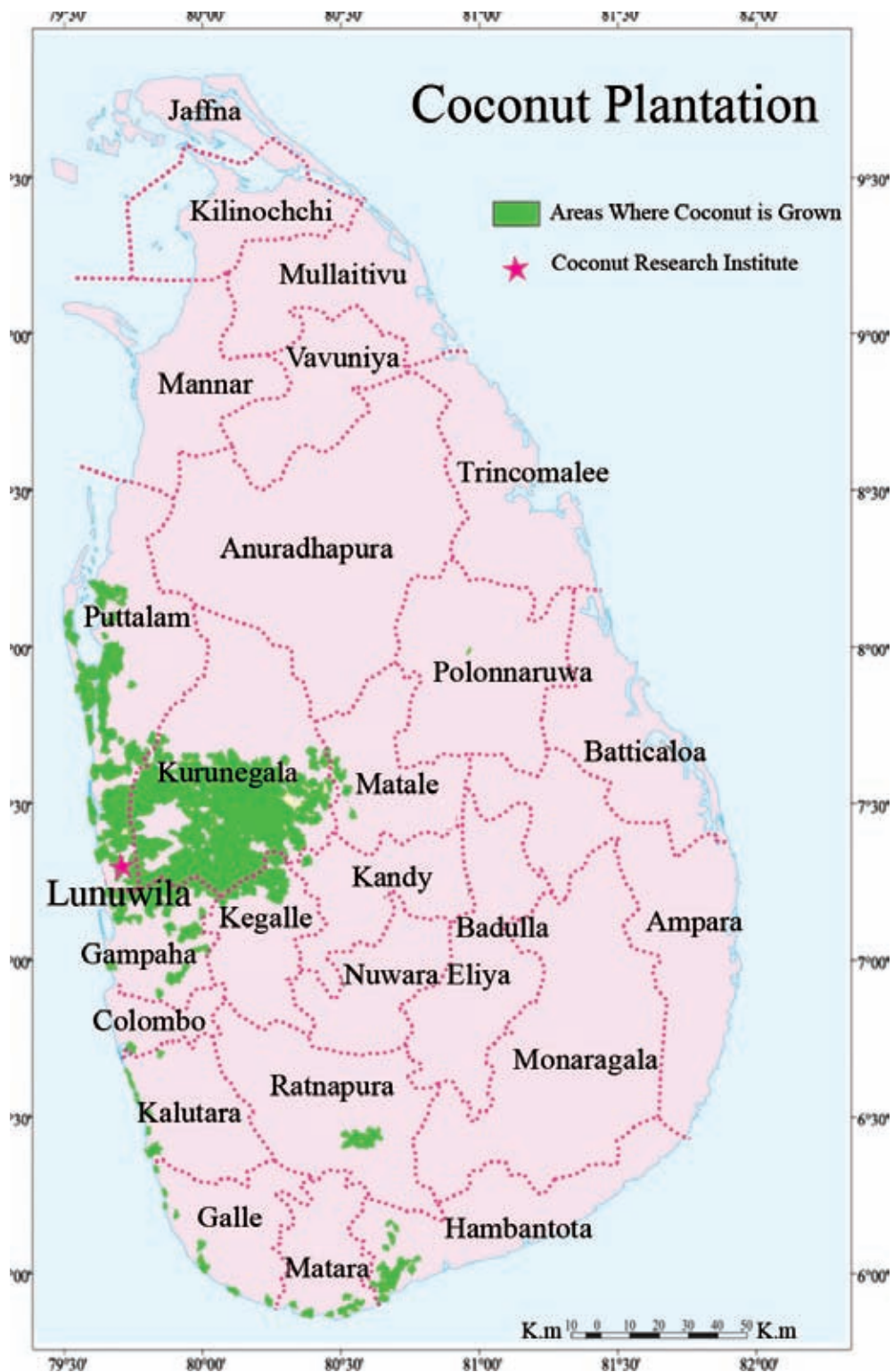
Coconut plantation expanded more in broad flat lands than in the hill country. Areas like Kurunegala, Chilaw and Gampaha were prominent among them. By 1920, 27% of the foreign earnings came from coconut products. A coconut research institution was established in Lunuwila to develop coconut plantation when the coconut plantation started to expand. It is clear that coconut plantation did not aim at export like the other cultivations, owing to the fact that half of the production was utilized for local consumption. Just as roads and railways developed in the hill country due to tea and coffee plantation, roads in the other parts of the country were developed to support the coconut plantation.

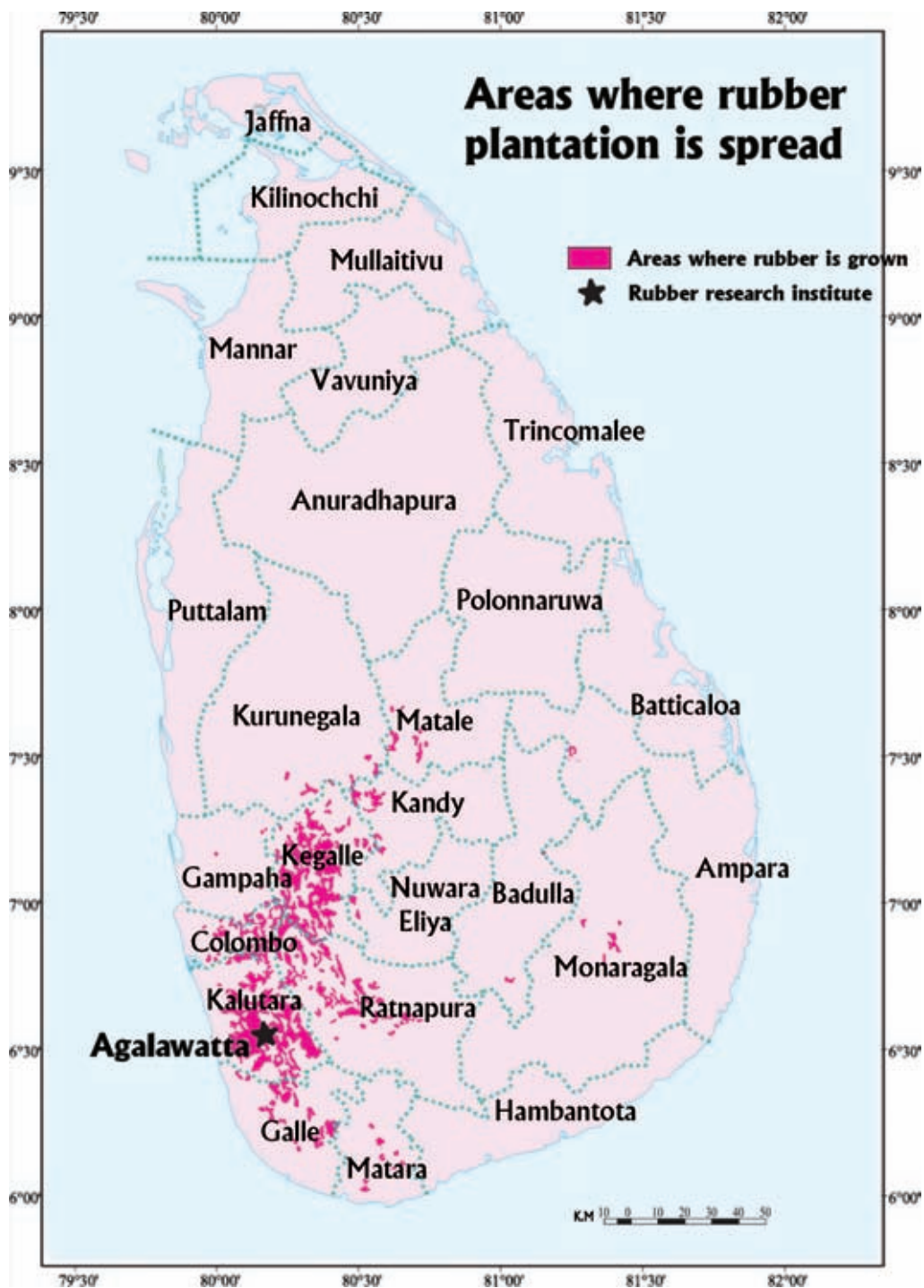
❖ Rubber Plantation



Though rubber was introduced to Sri Lanka around 1877, it did not show quick expansion because many cultivators during this period were more focused on tea plantation. By the beginning of the 20th century, rubber plantation expanded because rubber price increased due to the expansion of the motor vehicle industry, suitable rubber species were found for Sri Lanka together with the development of production techniques and temporary fall of tea prices. Rubber plantation which was limited to Kalutara district at the beginning later expanded to the Western, Sabaragamuwa, Southern provinces and some parts of the Central Province. By 1920, 30% of the export income was received from rubber products.

Later a rubber research institution was started in Agalawatta to develop the rubber plantation.





↓ ACTIVITY 3

Answer the following questions.

- I. Write three economic reforms of the Colebrooke Commission.
- II. Name four commercial crops introduced by the British to this country.
- III. Explain two steps taken to expand plantation in Sri Lanka.
- IV. Mention two advantages and disadvantages each, resulted in the economy of the country due to plantation.

5.2 Social Change

❖ Emergence of a Middle Class

A significant social change that took place in Sri Lanka during the British administration is the deterioration of the aristocrats and the emergence of a new middle class. The old aristocrats had higher economic, social and political status than the rest of the community. They were able to hold positions in the government by being loyal to the existing administration and had good income because they possessed more lands.



A government agent and the Kandyan leaders



They were respected and honoured by the others in the society because of the positions they held. These traditional aristocrats were called as elites.

A group of new middle class people

The Colebrooke reforms paved the way to a capitalist economic system in Sri Lanka opening several new ways of earning money instead of the traditional earning methods. Among those methods, working as contractors who supplied facilities to the plantation sector, production and distribution of arrack, graphite mining, whole sale and retail sale transportation and coconut plantation were the areas in which locals could invest money on. Thus, at the onset of the 20th century, there was a local wealthy class that earned money by investing money on the above mentioned industries. They spent money to give a good education to their sons and daughters locally as well as internationally. New job opportunities such as lawyers, engineers, surveyors, clerks and civil servants had emerged by this time. People could demand a high recognition and better living conditions by getting these jobs through English education. As a result, it became another open door to enter, the middle class.

There emerged a group of entrepreneurs that manipulated the new earning ways which were opened during the British reign as well as an educated group that got posts in the government through English education. They were named as the middle class because they became prominent among the others because they enjoyed a higher economic status. With the emergence of this new middle class at the beginning of the 20th century, the traditional aristocratic group began to fade away.

The educated group in the new middle class became politically active. They pioneered the political struggles in the 20th century. This group which was named as educated middle class was those who earned recognition through western education. As a result they became a group of rich city dwellers who followed the western culture.

❖ Emergence of a Labour Class

Another significant feature of the British reign is the emergence of a labour class because of the economic reforms that were made. In the traditional administration system, labour was taken under the compulsory service system for the common activities of the government, leaving no necessity of working for wages. Yet because during the British reign plantation was started in the hill country, labourers were needed to work in estates. Since India too was a colony of Britain by this time, bringing labourers from Southern India for a meagre salary was more profitable. Therefore, the estate owners brought labourers from India in thousands. As a result a labour community started to grow in the hill country.

New labourers were needed for duties such as loading and unloading goods in cities like Colombo, Galle and Kandy, washing clothes, transporting goods by carts,

constructing roads and railways because of the new trends of the economy. As a result, a local group of labourers emerged in the city areas in addition to the south Indian labourers.

They received a meagre salary at the beginning. The number of hours they worked was not set. There were no labour insurance, compensation or other labour welfare activities. As a result, the city labourers started to gather and establish workers' unions in order to win their rights. They started to strike in order to get their status developed as they could feel a growing unity among them. Some examples for labour strikes that took place at the beginning of the 20th century are the **strike of printers, strike of the Colombo launderers and the carters' strike**.

By the third decade of the 20th century the labourers began to organize themselves in better ways. Mr. E.A. Gunasinghe is a leader who tried to organize the urban labour community in a better way. He became the most renowned leader of labourers from 1922 to 1935. He pioneered to establish the 'Ceylon Workers Congress' marking a landmark in the history of trade unions in Sri Lanka. The leaders of 'Lanka Sama Samaja Party' led labour struggles establishing trade unions. Mr. Natesa Aiiar led the establishment of trade unions among the estate labourers.

❖ Changes in the Culture

The Sri Lankan culture experienced heavy changes during the British reign parallel to the changes in the society. The most significant change was the spreading of western culture in the country. The western education and studying of English language began to spread fast in the country after the Colebrooke reforms. It was the foreigners that prepared the curricula and conducted teaching in missionary schools and state aided schools. These schools too paved the way for the spreading of western culture in the country. Some aspects of the western culture invaded Sri Lanka through the behaviour of those who went to western countries for education.

More Europeans were attracted to Sri Lanka during the 19th century because of the expansion of plantations, development of trade and the improvements of transport and communication that took place in the country. As a result their clubs, holiday resorts started to mushroom in the country accelerating the spreading of western culture. As a result of these western dresses, customs and traditions, greetings, western architecture and their food started to mix into the culture of Sri Lanka.

↓ **ACTIVITY 3**

List out the new things that entered the Sri Lankan culture during the British reign.

5.3 Advantages of the British Reign

When Sri Lanka was a colony of British, its political and economic activities were handled in a way that all benefits went to colonists. Thus, Sri Lanka had been exploited for 133 years by the British. During this time they earned a vast wealth from the island to take to their country and used all resources of the island for their well being. Even under such conditions, there were certain benefits that the island could enjoy. Some examples are;

- Spreading of English language in the island which was an international language
- Development of transport and communication
- Introduction of export plantation
- Good effects of industrial revolution
- Parliamentary system

5.4 Disadvantages

Though there were some advantages of being a colony of British there were many problems by the time Sri Lanka received independence after being exploited for 133 years by a foreign empire. Although some citizens became wealthy during this period the majority of the people were touching the depth of poverty when independence was won. Thus, there was a vast disparity in distribution of income and an immediate need had arisen to increase public service and welfare. Some more disadvantages of staying a colony are;

- spreading of western culture and deterioration of indigenous culture
- spreading of alcohol consumption
- emergence of a landless social group
- downfall of self sufficient economic system and losing of indigenous knowledge
- destruction of useful institutions such as village councils (Gamsabha)

Receiving of Independence to Sri Lanka

Introduction

Receiving of independence to Sri Lanka in 1948 is a historical landmark in our country. At the same time Sri Lanka got the parliamentary system allowing its people to join politics through the representative democracy. New changes occurred in the political system with the introduction of new constitutions in 1972 and 1978. This lesson focuses on the special features of the political system and the trends in the social and economic systems during the few decades after independence.

6.1 Soulbury Reforms and Independence

The members of the Soulbury Commission that was appointed to investigate into Sri Lanka's constitutional reforms and give proposals came to Sri Lanka in December 1944. They published their report in September, 1945 and a constitution that would give all powers of internal affairs to the Sri Lankans had been suggested in it. Britain issued the royal order of the Soulbury Constitution in May, 1946 after the State Council passed the white paper which included the proposals of the Soulbury Commission report. Though the first election to be held under the Soulbury constitution was scheduled in mid 1947, Britain was reluctant to issue any statement about Sri Lanka's independence. Because of that the Sri Lankan leaders like D.S. Senanayake logically presented their views on the right of Sri Lankans for independence, to the British. As a result, the secretary of colonies made an announcement two months before the election, declaring independence for Sri Lanka within the Commonwealth Nations. By this time, the United National Party had been established by Mr. D.S. Senanayake. The results of the 1947 parliamentary election are given below.

Results of the 1947 Parliamentary Election

Political party	No. of seats secured
United National party	42
Lanka Sama Samaja Party	10
Tamil Congress	07
Lanka Indian Congress	06
Bolshevik Lenin Party	05
Lanka Communist Party	03
Labour Party	01
Independent Candidates	21
Total	95

Mr. D.S. Senanayake who was able to win the support of many independent members was able to establish the government because the United National Party won the majority of the seats. Though the British government was willing to hand over the responsibility of internal affairs to the Sri Lankans, they tried to keep foreign affairs in the hands of the British continuously. The reason for that was because they did not like to break the connection with the island as its geographical location was very important in military and security purposes. The new Prime Minister, D.S. Senanayake understood this intention and signed two agreements on security and external affairs with the British government in November, 1947.

Under the defence convention, it was agreed that the British could use Sri Lankan territory for naval, air and other military purposes when necessary. Under the external affairs convention, the British agreed to provide Sri Lanka with necessary assistance in building relationships with other countries as an independent country. After that the Independence Act of Sri Lanka was passed in the British parliament including the statements to grant independence to Sri Lanka. The royal order on the independence of Sri Lanka including statements to put the act into operation was issued on the 19th of December 1947. Sri Lanka received independence again on the 4th of February, 1948 with those formalities coming into function. With that the power the British enjoyed to impose laws and to govern the country ended and those powers were handed over to the Sri Lankan government. The new parliament

was ceremonially opened by the Prime Minister, Mr. D.S. Senanayake and then he hoisted the Sri Lankan flag after lowering the English flag on the 10th of February 1948. Thus, 4th of February became the independence day of Sri Lanka.

❖ **Soulbury Constitution**

The Soulbury constitution came into action after the Donoughmore constitution that functioned from 1931-1947. It lasted till the Republican constitution of 1972 came into action. The Soulbury constitution introduced four institutions for the functioning of the government as, the governor general and the cabinet of ministers headed by the prime minister, the parliament and the judiciary.

❖ **The Governor General**

The post of governor which existed up to 1947 was discontinued and a governor general was appointed to represent the British throne even under the new constitution, the queen of Britain was accepted as the ruler of Sri Lanka and the governor general acted as the local representative of the queen. The post of the governor general was completely a nominal executive post and had to take advice of the prime minister in all situations.

❖ **The Parliament**

Under the Soulbury constitution, there was a legislature which consisted of a senate and a court of members of parliament. The court of members or the representative members consisted of 101 members. Out of them 95 were elected from the electorate system and the other 6 were appointed by the governor with the advice of the prime minister to represent the minorities who are not represented in the parliament. The duration of the parliament was 5 years.

There were 30 members to the second court of members which was called the senate. The representative court appointed 15 of them and the other 15 were appointed by the governor general according to the advice of the prime minister.

❖ **The Prime Minister and the Cabinet**

The prime minister was the head of the cabinet. The governor general appointed

the member who could win the support of the majority of the members in the representative court of the parliament as the prime minister. The cabinet of ministers held the executive powers in this constitution. Defence and foreign affairs were under the prime minister. The cabinet of ministers was appointed by the governor general according to the advice of the prime minister.

The minister of justice and one more portfolio should be given to the senate. According to the Westminster System, the cabinet of ministers was collectively responsible to the parliament.

❖ The Judiciary

According to the Soulbury Constitution, the judiciary was functioned by courts including the Supreme Court. The governor general appointed the Chief Justice and other Supreme Court judges. The administration of court judges were done by the Judiciary Service Commission headed by the Chief Justice.

❖ Political Party System in Sri Lanka

Political party system can be seen in all countries where the parliamentary democracy exists. There were only two major parties in countries like England and America at the beginning. This is called as dual-party system. In European countries such as France, Germany as well as the Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka several political parties can be seen. This system is called as the multi-party system.

Because of the political party system, it has become easy to organize people under the principles of each party and to pass their opinion among people. The party system is necessary to build the relationship between politicians and voters because the parliamentary system is an administration in which a country is governed by the representatives of people.

The political party system in Sri Lanka began during the British reign. Though the universal franchise was given to Sri Lanka in 1937, until 1947, the political party system was not considered in elections. The political party system came into action in Sri Lanka in the election of 1947. By that election, political parties such as Lanka Sama Samaja Party, United National Party, Lanka Communist Party and Tamil Congress were functioning.

❖ **Lanka Sama Samaja Party**

The Lanka Sama Samaja Party is considered as one of the oldest parties in Sri Lanka. The leaders like Dr. N.M. Perera, Dr. Kolvin R. de Silva, Mr. Philip Gunawardana who went abroad for education learnt about leftist politics in those countries and established the Lanka Sama Samaja Party in Sri Lanka in 1935 to implement such politics in a way suitable to Sri Lanka. The prime objective of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party was to create a communist society in Sri Lanka according to the doctrine of leftist political points of view. Later a fraction of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party headed by Dr. S. A. Wickramasinghe established the Lanka Communist Party in 1943.

❖ **United National Party**

Though by 1946, there were several leftist parties and minority parties, there was no party for the politicians who had neutral ideas. The United National Party was started in 1946 under the leadership of Mr. D.S. Senanayake because the first parliamentary election was scheduled in 1947. The majority of the members of the Lanka National Congress and the Sinhala Maha Sabha headed by Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake joined the United National Party. As a result, it became a powerful political party from the beginning. They were able to win 42 seats by presenting 95 contesters. They were able to establish a government in 1952 by winning 54 seats in the second parliamentary election.

❖ **Sri Lanka Freedom Party**

Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake broke away from the United National Party and established Sri Lanka Freedom Party in 1951. This party paid more attention on the necessities of general public than the UNP and was able to win the support of the vernacular scholars, monks and those who valued nationalism. The party that won only 9 seats in the 1951 parliamentary election contested as the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna by aligning with several other parties and was able to establish the government in 1956 election by securing 51 seats. Mr. Bandaranayake was the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka from 1956 to 1959. After the assassination of Mr. Bandaranayake, his wife Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranayake became the leader of the party.

❖ Other Political Parties

Other than the above parties that presented candidates around the country in elections, there were several parties which were in function. The Labour Party pioneered by Mr. A. E. Gunasinghe and the Tamil Congress started by Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam are some examples for such parties. Among them the Tamil Congress held a significant place until the 1956 election. They who paid special attention on the rights of the Tamil people in this country were able to secure 07 seats in the 1947 election. It seems that the Tamil Congress lost its public support when Mr. J. V. Chelvanayagam started the Federal Party in 1949.

According to the political party system that exists in Sri Lanka there are a number of minor parties other than the two major parties like United National Party and Sri Lanka Freedom Party. Because of that, there can be situations in which no party can claim a majority in an election. As a result several parties have to come together and make political aligns to establish a coalitional government.

❖ 1956 Election and the Social Change

The United National Party which was in power continuously after the independence was defeated in 1956 and a new government was established under the leadership of S.W. R.D. Bandaranayake. It is believed that a social revolution was made by that government because several new forces were rallied round Mr. Bandaranayake to follow a policy of valuing the native language, religion and culture and to attempt to solve some unresolved social and economic problems.

Because Mr. D.S. Senanayake who became the Prime Minister in the 1947 election died in March, 1952, his son Dudley Senanayake became the Prime Minister. He became the Prime Minister again in 1952 because the United National Party won that election too. But he resigned from his portfolio in 1953 because of the remonstrations that were staged by the leftist parties in protest of rising price of rice and other food items. Then, another senior member of United National Party, Mr. John Kothalawala became the Prime Minister. Though the next parliamentary election was scheduled in May 1957, the Governor General dissolved the parliament in February 1956 as instructed by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Kothalawala. As a result there was another election in the country.

In the 1956 election, the United National Party contested as a single party where

as Sri Lanka Freedom party contested as Mahajana Eksath Peramuna aligning in with several other parties. The Sri Lanka Freedom party, Revolutionary Socialist Party headed by Mr. Philip Gunawardane, Mr. Vijayananda Dahanayake's Language Congress and several independent candidates including Mr. I. M. R. A. Eeriyagolla came together in forming the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna. The Mahajana Eksath Peramuna had entered into a no contest agreement with the Lanka Sama Samaja Party and it became advantageous for both the parties.

The major issue discussed in the 1956 election stage was the policy of making Sinhala the official language. Even after obtaining independence, English language held a special position and it became problematic for the vernacular scholars. Because of that, those who rallied round the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna had already accepted Sinhala naming as the state language as a policy. The United National Party too agreed with this policy when the election came at hand.

The Mahajana Eksath Peramuna won the election easily because of the support of the *Pancha Maha Balavega*; monks, doctors, teachers, farmers and labourers were with them. At the same time, fighting as an align signing a no contest agreement with the leftist parties further helped them to win. They secured 51 seats and the Lanka Sama Samaja Party got 14 seats. The United National Party won 8 parliamentary seats only. The Federal Party won 10 seats.

With the victory of Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranayake became the Prime Minister. His time marked significant changes in the country. Some of his policies and introduced reforms are;

- Making Sinhala the state language
- Discontinuation of the defence and external affairs conventions signed in 1947 with the British
- A non-alliance foreign affairs policy
- Peoplizing the harbour and transport (buses)
- Development of local industries and agriculture
- Upgrading the Vidyodaya and Vidyalkankara pirivenas to universities with a view of developing the higher education



Fig 6.1 The Cabinet of Ministers of Mr. Bandaranayake

Mr. Bandaranayake's campaign paved the way for many leaders who emerged from the general public of the country to enter the parliament. During his administration, the policy that valued the nationality and the attempt to solve the unsolved problems of the general public were significant landmarks.

❖ Sri Lanka becoming a Republic in 1972

The Soulbury constitution continued from 1948–1972 in the country. The independence Sri Lanka received under this constitution was not complete because still the queen of Britain was considered the leader of the country and there were certain restrictions for the parliament to follow in imposing laws. As a result, the necessity of a new constitution was felt during the time of the Soulbury Commission. A successful attempt was made for that with the 1970 election.

A united align had been established to face the 1970 election by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, the Lanka Sama Samaja party and the Communist Party. They signed a treaty of understanding to contest in the election. They had requested a people's verdict for the winners to work as a constitutional council to design a new constitution. The Samagi Peramuna (United Alliance) that won the majority of seats in the election established a new government. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister. They introduced a new constitution on 22nd May 1972 working according to the people's verdict. It's named as the 1972 Constitution.

Basic characteristics of the 1972 constitution

- The name 'Ceylon' was changed to ' Sri Lanka
- Discontinuation of the constitutional bond that existed with Britain with territorial integrity
- Acceptance of Sri Lanka as a unitary republic
- Protection of basic human rights

❖ Fundamental Rights

The statement 18 of the 1972 constitution mentions the following as some basic human rights and the comprehensive freedom.

- Functioning of law , the protection of law and other legal affairs should be completely impartial.
- A person's life, freedom or protection should not be harmed if otherwise the law.
- Every person has the right to enjoy free thinking, conscience and religion.
- Citizens have freedom for peaceful gathering and expressing their opinions.

Acceptance of basic human rights in the constitution was a special characteristic.

❖ The President

Instead of the post of governor general of the Soulbury Commission, the new constitution introduced the post of nominal executive president. The prime minister enjoyed the power of appointing the president. The president had the same power enjoyed by the governor general. The then Governor General, Mr. William Gopallawa became the first nominal executive president of Sri Lanka.



Fig 6.2 Mr. William Gopallawa, the first nominal executive president of Sri Lanka

❖ National State Council

The legislature named as the parliament before 1972 was named as the National State Council in the new constitution. It consisted of members elected through the universal franchise. This council functioned the people's legislative power. The

entire power of imposing law was vested upon the National State Council which had a duration of power of 6 years.

❖ The Prime Minister and the Cabinet of Ministers

The functioning of the executive power was vested upon the cabinet of ministers in the new constitution. The chief of the cabinet was the prime minister. The president appointed the prime minister and under his guidance the president appointed the rest of the cabinet.

❖ Judiciary

A new judiciary system was proposed for the purpose of determining justice under the 1972 constitution.

Supreme Court
High Court
District Court
Magistrate's Court
Constitutional Court

The two major institutions in the judiciary were the Supreme Court and the High Court. The district courts were responsible in solving the cases in the particular district. The magistrate's court took the criminal cases. A judiciary service consultancy board and a judiciary service disciplinary board were established to protect the sovereignty of the judiciary. The labour courts functioned under these boards.

The Constitutional court had been established to settle the problems about constitution and to observe whether the bills presented to parliament agree with the constitution.

❖ New Constitution in 1978

The United National Party was able to win 140 out of 168 seats of the National State Council in the election held in 1977. The Tamil Liberation Front secured 18 seats in this election where as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party could win only 8 seats. In

addition, the Ceylon Workers' Congress and an independent party won a seat. As the United National Party could obtain more than a two third majority, its leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene was able to design a new constitution with an executive presidency as he expected for a long time. This constitution came into effect since 1978.



Fig 6.3 Mr. J. R. Jayewardene

Sri Lanka was named as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the new constitution and it was declared a unitary state. The constitution mentions about the people's supremacy at its very beginning. The people's constitutional power is put into function by the elected members and by the people themselves in referendums.

The executive power of the people is put into function by the president elected by the people.

The judicial power of the people is put into application by the judiciary system established according to the constitution.

Some distinguished features of this constitution are;

❖ Executive Presidency

According to the 30th statement of the 1978 constitution, the president of the Republic of Sri Lanka is the head of the government, head of the executive, head of the parliament and the chief commander of the military forces. Thus, the president became the highest executive in the government enjoying comprehensive executive powers. According to this constitution, the president is elected by the people in an election. The duration of the president is six years.

❖ Powers of the President

The president enjoys the power of summoning a parliamentary session, declaration of the end of a session, chairing the first meeting of a parliament after an election, presenting the policies of the government, and dissolving the parliament. Thus, even though the president is not a member of the parliament, he or she could enjoy some powers with regard to the legislature.

The president works as the head of the cabinet by appointing the prime minister and ministers and by deciding the portfolios of the ministers. Thus, the president is the head of the executive.

The president enjoys some powers related to the judiciary such as ; appointing the judges of the supreme court and appeal court including the chief justice, pardoning a convict sentenced by a court and reducing punishments.

The president enjoys some more powers as the head of the state. Declaration of war and peace, chairing state functions, representing the republic in international events, being the custodian of the state frank are some examples of such powers.

A very special privilege held by the president is that he / she cannot be taken to any court for any deed rendered as the president, according to the constitution.

❖ The Prime Minister and the Cabinet

- The president enjoys the power of appointing the cabinet of ministers from the members of the parliament.
- The power enjoyed by the prime minister in the 1972 constitution was transformed to the president, who is the head of the cabinet according to the new constitution.
- The cabinet has a collective responsibility for the parliament.
- The cabinet has its own specific duties.

e.g:

- (i) Functioning of imposed laws by the parliament.
- (ii) Preparation of budget estimates and interim bills of the ministries.
- (iii) Being in charge of the allocated subjects.

❖ The Parliament

This constitution established the parliament instead of the legislature which was called as the National State Council in the 1972 constitution. The parliament consists of 225 members. 196 members are elected following the proportionate representative system and based on the proportions of votes received by each party 29 members are selected from the national list. Some of the powers of the parliament are;

- Imposing laws
- Financial administration
- Preparation of budget
- Preparation of development plans

❖ Judiciary

An independent judiciary was introduced in the 1978 constitution. Given below is how it is structured.

- Supreme Court
- Appeal Court
- High Court
- District Court
- Family Court
- Magistrate's Court
- Primary Court

According to the judiciary the highest court in the country is the Supreme Court. The chief of the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice and other judges of both Supreme Court and Appeal Court are appointed by the president. Taking the fundamental right cases, considering the impeachment motions that are presented to the parliament, trialing the cases of violation of parliamentary privileges, conducting court procedures about election petitions are some of the Supreme Court responsibilities. The appeal court has the power to consider the appeals that are made against the decisions of the lower courts.



Fig 6.4 Supreme Court

The Judiciary Service Commission was appointed to protect the freedom of the judiciary and to protect the impartiality of judges. The Chief Justice is the head of the commission including two more judges of the Supreme Court as members. The Judiciary Service Commission is responsible about the transfers of high court judges, training of judiciary officers, promotions and discipline of them.

❖ Fundamental Rights

The third chapter of the 1978 constitution explains the fundamental rights. This constitution broadly and in detail explains the fundamental rights than the 1972 constitution did.

Among the fundamental rights mentioned in the constitution, equal rights for judiciary procedures, freedom of speech and opinion, right of being free of harassment, freedom of religion and freedom of profession are included.

The 1978 constitution goes beyond the 1972 constitution to mention in its statement 129 that a person can forward a petition to the Supreme Court within three months of such violation of fundamental rights or comprehensive freedom. If such violations are true, the supreme court gives judgments about it.

The constitution includes provisions for a person to make a complaint to the parliamentary commissioner or the ombudsman when the rights of a person who works in the government or cooperation are limited or obstructed.

Types of elections mentioned in the 1978 constitution;

❖ Presidential Election

Sri Lanka becomes one whole electorate in the presidential election. The candidate who can obtain a 50% majority or a definite majority is declared the winner.

Mr. J. R. Jayewardene who was the Prime Minister in 1978 was nominated the first executive president in Sri Lanka. Then a presidential election was held in 1982. Mr. J. R. Jayewardene was elected the president again in this election. The second amendment to the 1978 constitution declared that the president could go for an election requesting power for a second session once four years out of six have already passed. After Mr. J. R. Jayewardene; Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, Mr.

D. B. Vijethunga (not from an election), Mrs. Chandrika Kumaranathunge , Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksha and Mr. Maithreepala Sirisena held the executive presidency consecutively.

❖ Proportionate Representative System

Another novel feature of the 1978 constitution is the proportionate representative system. This method is used in all elections including parliamentary, provincial council and the other local government elections.

Candidates face this type of elections in groups. The number of members elected for each electorate is announced before the election and the voters have to first vote for the party and mark the preferences for the candidates. The number of seats for each party is determined according to the proportion of votes they take and candidates are selected following the number of preference votes they get.

❖ Referendum

Referendum is a way of getting the people's opinion directly on matters with national importance. The concept of referendum was first introduced in 1978 constitution.

Here, the people's discretion is marked by answering a "yes or no" question. The only referendum of the history of Sri Lanka was held in 1982. It was held to get the period of existing parliament extended.

There should be more than 50% of the cast votes to declare that the people have given their consent to the matter on discussion.

6.2 Development after Independence

After the independence in 1948 politicians of this country had the responsibility of handling the economy of the country that had been used for the benefit of the British colonists for the betterment of the people. During the four decades after the independence , the two major parties of Sri Lanka , the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party were in power and they tried to develop the economy of Sri Lanka. They had tried several ways to develop the agriculture , industries and the education of the country.

❖ Development of Agriculture

The food needed for the people was produced within the country because Sri Lanka had been an agricultural country from the past. Yet, the British administration that lasted for 133 years paid attention to state plantation and did not pay enough attention to the local agriculture. The English imported the necessary food items to Sri Lanka during their reign. As a result, by the time Sri Lanka got the independence, a need had arisen to develop the production of food items within the country. Hence, every government had to take steps to develop paddy cultivation.

❖ Development of Paddy Cultivation

Towards the latter part of the British reign in Sri Lanka, they had to pay attention to developing the agriculture in Sri Lanka because of the difficulty of exporting food due to the World War 1 and increasing food prices due to the economic demise in 1929. Yet the most productive attempt was made during the period of the State Council (1931–1947). The reasons for the development of the paddy cultivation during that era were appointing a Sri Lankan minister for the ministry of agriculture under the Donoughmore constitution and Mr. D. S. Senanayake who had an interest to develop the agriculture becoming the Minister of Agriculture.

The flat and rich soil that was more suitable for paddy cultivation exists in the dry zone of the country and therefore, that area should be used for paddy cultivation again. Therefore Mr. D. S. Senanayake started establishing farming settlements in the dry zone.

❖ Establishment of Farming Settlements

Objectives of establishing farming settlements:

- Reducing the increasing population and unemployment in the wet zone.
- Improving the food production of the country.
- Using the land of the dry zone for economic development by repairing the old lakes and irrigations of the dry zone.
- Providing a solution to the competition for the land in wet zone and creating a satisfied landed farming community.

Sri Lanka became self – sufficient with paddy because a vast area of the dry zone was used for paddy cultivation. As a solution to the major problem that arose in the area, lack of water, our ancestors built a network of lakes and irrigations. But , after the invasion of Kalinga Magha people had immigrated to the wet zone from the dry zone. Using thus given up dry zone again for paddy cultivation after 700 years was a landmark of the development of paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka.

Challenges the government faced in establishing new farming settlements:

- Selecting people from the wet zone and making them settle in houses in the dry zone.
- Supporting people to turn the lands that had been forests for a long time into farm land and supplying irrigation facilities.
- Providing the settlers with financial assistance till they get their first harvest.
- Arranging health and education facilities for people.
- Establishment of sales promotion programmes for the sale of products.

Several farming settlements could be started even before independence because there were effective plans to lay out necessary rules to overcome the difficulties. Some examples for such settlements were Kagama, Minneriya, Nachchaduwa, Beragama, Minipe, Parakrama Samudraya, Ridi Bedi Ella, Sangili Kanadarawa and Onichchei. After independence till about 1953, 15 more farming settlements were established. Bathmadika, Deva Huwa, Girithale, Paniyankadawala, Iranamadu, Gal Oya, Kantale, Soraborawewa were such settlements.

With these new farming settlements there was great enthusiasm in the country to reconstruct lakes and building of irrigation. Galoya project is an example for that. It is the first multi-purpose development project started in Sri Lanka.

❖ Mahaweli Project

The Mahaweli project takes an important place among the projects launched targeting the economic development of the country after the independence. The Mahaweli river that is fed by several tributaries begins in the western part of the central hills , flows across the Dumbara valley and joins sea at Trincomalee. The Mahaweli development project was launched with a view of using this web of rivers for the economic development of the country.