

CASH DOLE TO SRI LANKAN REFUGEES IN TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the fact that the Sri Lankan Tamils reached India as refugees after the ethnic problem of 1983, and as per the United Nations High Commission for Refugees conditions, the government of India and the government of Tamil Nadu treated them. The refugees were given housing and a monthly stipend to help them support their families.

Key words: UNHCR, Sinhala, Militants, Buddhism, Special Camps, Legendary

INTRODUCTION

During the early times people moved from one place to other for water facilities, grazing domestic animals, etc. They moved and settled in the new places, even though it was very hard to settle there. The slaves were forced to settle in the new places by the masters. Later, the people fled to other places from their place of residence because of religious or political persecution or war problems.¹ Even though they had lived in one country for many years, migrants were treated as second-class citizens in other countries. They were treated as aliens. Indians also settled in many places in other countries.² After the first and second world wars, many people died in the places where they settled and many displaced to their birth countries for survival as well as refugees. After the political change in the countries, the majority people for the welfare of them discarded the rights of the minority people. The minority also left from the countries and settled as refugees in other countries. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees is the authority for refugees after the Second World War to monitor them.³

Many Indians have already settled in various countries for business or jobs. Due to the turmoil in the settled countries, the Indians have also returned. They are mostly from East Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Many returned to the host countries as refugees, and some returned as repatriates.⁴

North Indians in Sri Lanka

As Sri Lanka is very near India, the tribes from North India, under Vijaya (the legendary founding father of the Sinhalese), settled in Sri Lanka in the early stages and developed languages and religious civilizations on the island.⁵ The north Indians merged with the island's original inhabitants, the Veddahs. Both groups eventually merged into one and became the majority on the island, which was then known as Sinhalese. Buddhism also developed in that country. They adopted Sinhala as their language.⁶

Tamils in Sri Lanka

Many South Indians from Tamil Nadu also settled in Sri Lanka in the early stages. Many Tamils, as tourists, businessmen, and traders, visited Sri Lanka.⁷ during the British period the Tamils migrated as labourers. The British also brought many Tamils to work in their estates and other works also.⁸ According to S. Ponnambalam, the inhabitants were Tamils; the Sinhalese were Tamils who converted to Buddhism and adopted Sinhalese. As it is the Sinhala who are politically dominant in the island, so is the Sinhala history.⁹

Until the arrival of Europeans, the Tamils and Sinhalese ruled various parts of the island. During their conflict with their Sinhala rivals, the Sinhala kings hired Tamil mercenaries. Following their victory over the other kings, the Tamils were given high-ranking positions in the government, such as purohits, artisans, and velaikkars (Tamil guards).¹⁰ Likewise the Tamils settled in various places on the island. In the thirteenth century, an independent Tamil kingdom was established on the Jaffna peninsula.¹¹ Many Tamils settled on the island through matrilineal connections with south Indians.¹² Hinduism spread in the north and east of the island, and the Tamil Hindus worshipped Lord Muruga as their god.

Foreigners in the island

In addition to the North and South Indians, Arabs, Cambodians, Egyptians, Greeks, Dutch, Portuguese, Americans, and Brits entered the island and performed business and trade.¹³

Sri Lanka under British

The English East Company from the Madras Presidency had contacts with the island's kings. Within the period from 1762 to 1815, the whole of the island came under their control. During the British Empire, Christianity held a prominent place. Education and the English language were also introduced.¹⁴ South Indian officials were appointed by the British to government positions and also to collect taxes, and the Tamils faced the resentment of the Sri Lankans.¹⁵ The British engaged many Tamils from South India to work on estates. The Tamil population on the island has grown in size. The Tamils earned the money and sent it to their relatives in India.¹⁶ Frequent conflicts occurred between the Sinhalese, Muslims, and Tamils based on religion, languages, and ethnicity.¹⁷

The British crown appointed the Colebrooke Commission in 1833 to assess various matters, and the commission recommended franchises to a small number of English-educated elites. Since the Tamils were well versed in English, they got the position, and the Sinhalese felt it was an injustice to them.¹⁸ The Sinhalese opposed the formation of associations by the Tamils from the outset. The government under English provided many concessions to the Tamils. The Donoughmore Commission, appointed by the Crown, recommended a new

electoral system, under which many Tamils lost many seats in the elections and the dominance of Sinhalese in the assembly increased.¹⁹ In the 1936 and 1947 elections, the Sinhalese got a majority in the assembly. Sri Lanka became an independent country on February 4, 1948²⁰

Sri Lanka under Sinhalese

The Sinhala government passed the Citizenship Act of 1948. Many ethnic Tamils became stateless as a result of this act.²¹ The language act limited the number of government positions available to Sinhalese and reduced the number of government positions available to Tamils.²² Buddhism became state religion in the island.²³ The education policy of 1971 also affected the Tamils. The Tamils have to get more marks than the Sinhalese to get admission to higher education institutions.²⁴ Terrorist movements formed on the island as a result of the Sinhala government's persecution of Tamils.²⁵ Many Tamils were killed in the fighting between Tamil militants and government forces, and many Tamils began to flee to other countries beginning in July 1983, including India, which is very close to Sri Lanka. .

CASHDOLE TO THE REFUGEES

The affected Tamils in the war-torn areas of the island reached the Rameswaram Sea in Tamil Nadu. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) guidelines, the refugees were treated on Indian soil.²⁶ The refugees were given food, shelter at Mandapam camp.²⁷ After the necessary verification of the records, the refugees were sent to refugee camps wherever accommodation was available. If the refugees had any contact with the terrorists, they were transferred to special camps.²⁸

The refugees were given monthly cash assistance by the government. The cashdole was given only to those who are staying in the refugee camps.²⁹

The government provided the refugee with one month's worth of cash assistance to cover his or her expenses. On admission as a refugee at the transit camp at Mandapam, they were given identity cards.³⁰

Since 1983, the Indian government has provided cash assistance to Sri Lankan refugees to cover their monthly expenses.³¹

From 1983

Head of the family	Rs. 110-00
Additional member above 12 years	Rs. 82-50
Child below 12 years (for the first child)	Rs. 55-00
For each additional child	Rs. 27-50 ³²

From 1990

The Government of India has revised the cash dole from 1990:

Head of the family	Rs. 150-00
Additional member above 12 years	Rs. 120-00
Child below 12 years (for the first child)	Rs. 75-00
For each additional child	Rs. 37-50 ³³

The government of India revised the cash dole from 1996.³⁴

From 1996

Head of the family	Rs. 200-00
Other adults	Rs. 144-00
First Child	Rs. 90-00
Other children	Rs. 45-00 ³⁵

Since January 8, 2006, the government of Tamil Nadu has doubled the cash dole and distributed it in one advance payment rather than bimonthly to help them run their families.

From 1-8-2006

Individual member (above 12 years of age)/Head of the family	Rs. 400-00
For each additional member	Rs. 288-00
For first Child (less than 12 years of age)	Rs. 180-00
For each additional child	Rs. 90-00 ³⁶

During 2008-2009, a sum of Rs. 24.96 crores has been given as cash dole, and in 2009-2010, a sum of Rs. 28.60 crores has been spent as cashdole.³⁷

From 01-08-2011

Head of the family	Rs. 1000/- per month
For each additional member	Rs. 750/- per month
Other children below 12 years of age	Rs. 400/- per month ³⁸

From 2021-2022

Head of the family	Rs. 1500/- per month
For each additional member	Rs. 1000/- per month
Other children below 12 years of age	Rs. 500/- per month ³⁹

Some refugees go out of the camp with the prior permission of the camp in charge. Sometimes they are not able to return to the camp in time to receive the cash dole. Special permission had been granted to such refugees, enabling them to receive their cash dole after returning to the camp. If a particular person is not able to return to the camp within a month's time, he or she can receive the cash dole from the Collectorate concerning the district of his or her stay.⁴⁰

The cash dole was paid to the refugees as cash. To avoid any discrepancies in the payment method, as per the proposal of the Commissioner of Rehabilitation.⁴¹ The payment has been transferred to the bank per government orders.⁴²

If a refugee stayed outside the camp for work, with the permission of the camp officer, the cash dole would be given to the family members. The refugee must provide proof from his or her employer that he or she is employed at the institution.⁴³ Special permission would be granted to refugee students to study outside of Tamil Nadu. The cash dole would not be given to such students.⁴⁴ If a refugee is involved in rape, theft, burglary, murder, forged passports, or kidnapping, the cash dole will be stopped for the refugees after the "Q"

branch police report is received.⁴⁵ As of March 31, 2022, 19,316 families consisting of 58,492 persons were staying in 108 Sri Lankan-Tamil Rehabilitation Camps (including two special camps in Tiruchirappalli and Ramanathapuram districts) located in the state.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

Following World War II, many affected people relocated to other countries in search of a better life. The UNHCR is currently caring for the refugees and assisting them in their safe return to their home countries. The governments of India and Tamil Nadu are also taking care of the refugees staying in that state. The refugees in camps are provided with a monthly cash dole. Also, they are provided with free houses, dresses, household articles, free electricity, free rice, driving licences, permission to work outside the camp, funeral rites assistance, accident death assistance, unnatural death compensation, police protection in the camps, a comprehensive health insurance scheme, various assistance to women, a girl child protection scheme, assistance to students, a hostel for students, and the formation of self-help groups for the betterment of women.

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