THE MINIPE COLONISATION SCHEME- AN APPRAISAL

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FOREWORD

When the State stepped in to promote the frontier-type colonization schemes in the second quarter of this century, the main objectives behind were the solution of the land and employment problems in the already settled areas, particularly , the Wet Zone which was highly overcrowded.

Since independence the question of increasing agricultural production to meet the demands of the rising population also became an important objective. There was, of course, the objective of achievement of national integration in the minds of the policy makers who decided on the promotion of new colonization schemes.

Several Studies have been done on individual colonization schemes. These studies have been able to provoke the policy makers to review, realign and remodel some of the later colonization schemes in the light of earlier findings. However, most of these studies are confined to cross-sectional analyses of the economy of such schemes and failed to relate the development in the schemes to the objectives behind their formation.

This study undertaken by the Agrarian Research and Training Institute attempts to develop a longitudinal analysis of one of the major colonization Schemes, the Minipe, through a review of existing literature related to the scheme in particular and colonization in general. The emphasis of the study is on some of the major problems faced by the individual colonist and his community. The growth trends identified in the colony society are related to the initial objectives behind the setting up of the Minipe Scheme.

Mr.R.D.Wanigaratne, Research & Training Officer of the Institute, was responsible for this study. Our thanks are due to him and to the others who contributed to this study.

T.B.Subasinghe
Director

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Professor Norman Uphoff of the Cornell University, USA, who is presently with us, Messrs. C.Narayanasamy , the former Director of the ARTI and M.Samad, research colleague of the Land Unit/ARTI for their useful comments on the draft. The author is, however, entirely responsible for any interpretative and other structural slips that may have crept into the study.

A special note of appreciation to Messrs. H.A.Siriwardena and K.Thillainathan , Information and Publication Officers of the ARTI for editing the monograph, to Mr.Shantha Weerasinghe, Visual Aids Technician of the ARTI for reproducing the plan of Stage 1 area, Minipe Scheme, and to Ms. Anne Fernando and Jacintha Ferdinandez for their typing.

R.D.W.

C O N T E N T S

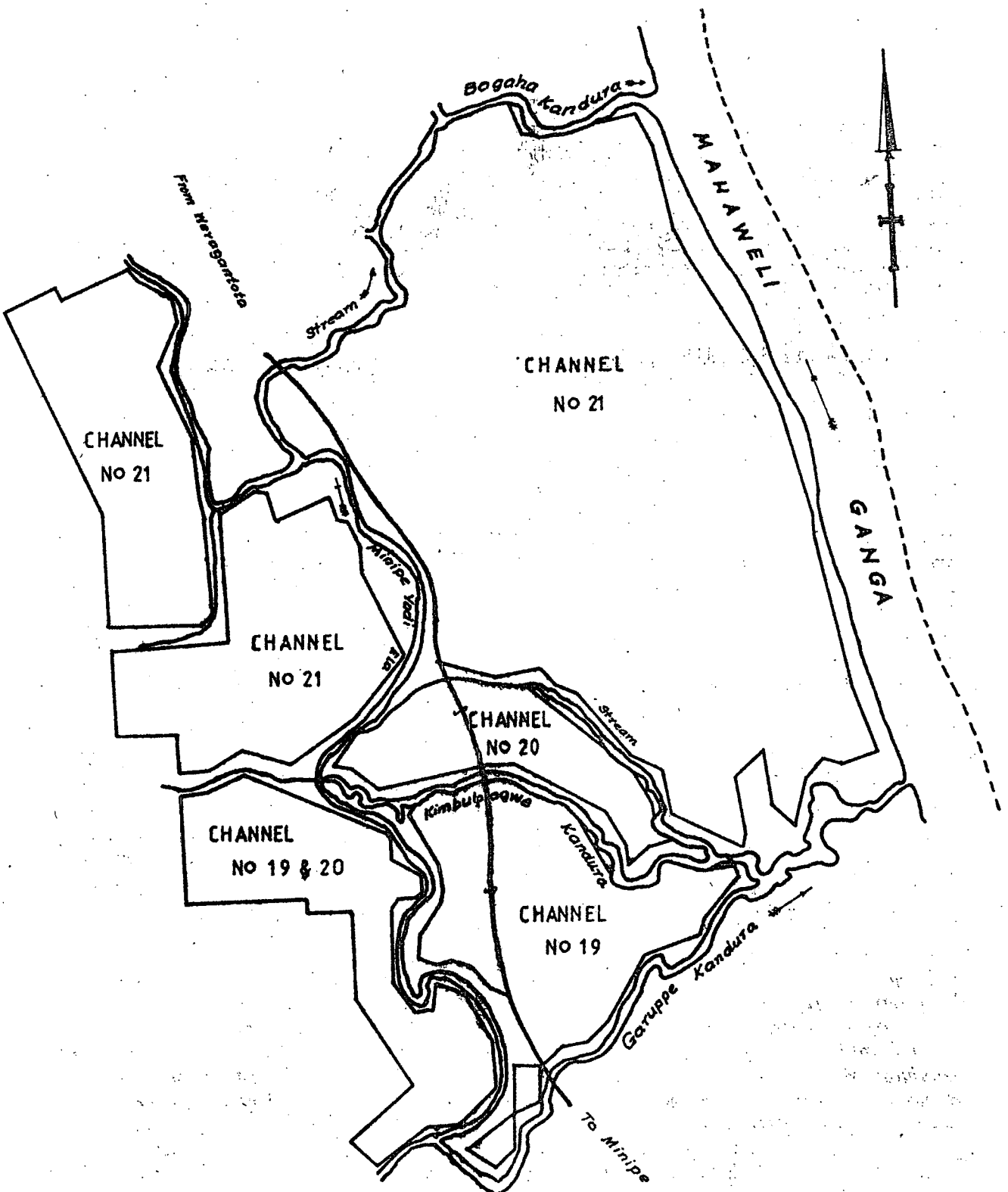
R E S U M E

The study location, the Minipe Scheme, comes within the Mahaweli Project area. It is one of the major colonisation schemes in Sri Lanka and one of the oldest. Large allotments ranging in size from 5 - 8 acres (Highland and lowland) characterise the Minipe Scheme. The settlers were drawn from a single cultural region (Dumbara region). This greatly reduced the initial social adaptation problems which emerged prominently in other colonisation schemes. It is also one of the few major schemes which benefitted both from the Protected and Guided Colonisation Policy of 1938 and the Special Projects Scheme of 1968.

In terms of the benefits it received the Minipe Scheme thus appears to be one of the most favoured examples of frontier settlement policies of Sri Lanka. In this context, the developments in the Minipe Scheme detailed in the present study may prove to be useful in the planning of other settlement scheme, particularly under the Mahaweli Development Programme. The study is based on a review of literature on the Minipe Scheme.

The population in the Minipe Scheme has undergone nearly a threefold increase between 1953 - 1973. A great deal of disguised fragmentation of holdings and encroachments have developed in the scheme to accomodate the growing population whose land demands are contained by legal restrictions placed on sub-division. A particularly adverse effect of the demand for land is seen in the threat it holds over the effective maintenance of the irrigation network of the scheme.

Though a strong trend towards commercialisation is seen in the scheme with attendant increases in farmer incomes, this is underlain by a weak land base which is in the process of being eroded by disguised land fragmentation, illegal land transactions, and encroachments. Though the State has provided an increased volume of incentives to enhance production, many of the colonists, especially the colony poor, seem to have attached their subsistence oriented life patterns around the incentives provided. Illegal land transactions within the scheme have created a group of colony affluents comprising of richer colonists and mudalalis. The state of disparity in livelihood between the minority of colony affluents who are becoming increasingly richer and the colony poor who are increasingly dependent on them for survival seems to be deepening. The society which has emerged in the Minipe Scheme has fallen short of expectations. For a majority of the colonists, especially the second and third generation types, it is a retrogression into the traditional kandyan village type subsistence economy with many elements of poverty generation such as fragmentation, landlessness and unemployment, inequitable distribution of land and dependence relationships. The state response to post-settlement problems especially in terms of land and employment has been slow in anticipating problems and somewhat lackadaisical in introducing ameliorative measures - especially in view of the wealth of experience in frontier settlement that goes back to the early years of the twentieth century.



EXTRACT OF DIVERSION CHANNELS 19 20 & 21 (Handaganawa Section)

BASE MAP OF STAGE 1 MINIPE COLONISATION SCHEME

RECOMMENDATIONS

The range of problems facing the Minipe Stage I area examined are not unique to the Minipe Scheme itself. What is unique to Minipe is the socio-cultural and socio-political environment in which the problems are manifested. Studies of Farmer (1957); Amunugama (1966); Jogaratnam and Schickele (1969); Tenma et-al (ARTI - 1976), Wanigaratne (ARTI-1976); Gunaratne et-al (ARTI-1977) clearly indicate that land and water management problems, input distribution problems, leadership and farmer mobilisation problems etc., identified in the Minipe Scheme are quite widespread in other frontier settlement schemes of the island.[1] Many of these problems are also common to frontier settlement schemes in other parts of the world.

With the above considerations in view a set of recommendations are made in this study. They are essentially based on the findings as regard the Stage I area of the Minipe scheme and are therefore geared to the problems and needs of the scheme itself. However, on the basis of the common-place nature of such problems and needs, the recommendations may be of general applicability.

LANDLESSNESS:

1. The landless colonists in the Stage I area (second and third generation colonists) must be given first preference in the selection of settlers for newly opened up lands in the Stage III and IV of the scheme, irrespective of the fact that they (stages I and II as against III and IV) belong to two distinct electoral districts. Unless such a measure is adopted there is bound to be an overspill of landless from the older parts of the scheme to the new areas as encroachers.

2. An almost equal preference need to be accorded to those encroachers who reside on the fringes of the scheme. They are more enterprising, more familiar with the conditions prevailing in the scheme , and would face far less relocation problems than the landless in villages that lie outside the scheme.

3. The landless from villages outside the scheme area, should be considered for settlement within the scheme after the land needs of the two groups indicated above are met.

SETTLER SELECTION:

4. On the basis of pre-conditioning factors behind the problems which confront the stage I of the scheme examined in this study an additional number of considerations are indicated below which should be accorded weightage for future settlement in the Minipe scheme.

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1 Farmer, B.H., Pioneer Peasant colonisation in Ceylon (London: Oxford University Press, 1957);
Amunugama , S., "Chandrikawewa: A Recent Attempt at Colonisation on a Peasant Framework," Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, VIII (1/2) 1965, 130-162;
Jogaratnam ,J., Schiekele,R., Summary Report of the Socio-Economic Survey of the Nine Colonisation Schemes in Ceylon: (Peradeniya: Agricultural Economic Research Unit, University of Ceylon, 1969);
Tenma, T. et-al , Planning at Grass-Root Level for Village Development, (ARTI:1976) mimeo;
Wanigaratne, R.D., Case Study 2: Uhana Colony Unit - 14: Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme, (ARTI: 1976);
Gunaratne,W.et-al, Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in Sri Lanka.(ARTI: 1978) Unpublished.

a. *Both agricultural and non-agricultural skills (especially, particular skills such as craftsmanship, entrepreneurial skills, etc.,) and aptitudes of both husband and wife of a potential settler family must be considered and aggregated. Hitherto only the farming skills and aptitudes of the husband had been considered in selecting settler families. Yet the management of a farm household is basically an aggregate effort of the entire family.*

b. *Ability to adapt and the ability for group work must be considered among the vital criteria in selecting families for resettlement in the scheme. Young married couples with a child or two may better adapt to conditions in the scheme as they are not straddled with a large household in the early years of settlement. Possession of a sufficient level of education may gear them more towards a proper reception of agricultural innovations and intensified services, etc., associated with commercialised agriculture. Experience of active participation in organisations and activities may show up in aptitudes for group work.*

c. *In terms of the ability to manage allotments efficiently owner-operators of micro holdings (especially paddy) and tenants may be preferred over the completely landless and the destitute in the villages. In the case of the latter groups besides the lack of a land base (however small) and land management experience they may also show up deep rooted apathetic outlooks towards self betterment. Such aspects cannot be overcome by a mere process of making them permit holders of valuable colony land. For such groups it is beneficial to provide land for housing through village expansion schemes, and employment avenues in the vicinity of their homesteads.*

6. *A list of objective criteria in line with the goals of the scheme drawn up for purposes of settler selection can have a point system attached to them. On the basis of declarations made by applicants for land in a prescribed form duly certified by a Grama Sevaka a selection of the most suitable could be achieved with the aid of a computer. The use of a computer may eliminate personal biases and partialities in selection of allottees.*[1] *The selecteee list may then be publicly exhibited in the communities from where the selectees were drawn. This is to invite comments and criticisms from the public about the suitability of the selectees. After inquiry into the authenticity of the initial declarations concerning their social-economic status and aptitudes a final list of selectees could be drawn.*[2]

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[1] *Such a system has been successfully adopted in FELDA Schemes of Malaysia. (See: Bahrin, T.S. and Perera, P.D.A., FELDA: 21 years of Land Development (publication of the Ministry of Land and Regional Development, Malaysia) pp. 55 - 95)*

[2] *Part of this process is already adhered to in land kachcheris held under the Land Commissioner for the selection of alienees in settlement programmes. Though public comment on selectees may be of help in choosing the most suitable, it also may bring out to the open deep seated conflicts which villagers normally choose to forget. In such a situation inviting public comment may well result in a disruptive effect on the village society. This may possibly be averted by inviting public comment which will be treated in strict confidence.*

SETTLER TRAINING AND SUPERVISION:

7. *A prior need exists for the creation of a training strategy to avoid a recurrence of many of the settler adaptation problems in the newly opened up (to be opened up) sections of the Minipe scheme. Towards this objective the study provides two groups of recommendations arranged on the basis of settlement phases. They are:*

PRE-SETTLEMENT PHASE

(a) *After the final list of selectees are drawn they should be provided with a 5-6 month training in all aspects of commercialised agriculture under colonisation schemes prior to final settlement in the Minipe scheme.*

(b) *The training programme could take place in a test settlement area, either within the scheme or nearby to the scheme, which approximates the conditions (housing, infrastructural facilities, irrigation facilities, etc.,) found in locations within the Minipe scheme where the final settlement would occur. The selectees could be initially settled in the test settlement area where they develop the land and reap the benefits of one harvest under the supervision and guidance of a cadre of instructors.*

(c) *The core of the training programme could be on technical aspects related to commercialised agriculture under both irrigated and rainfed conditions. It could contain training on proper use of resources including water management, use of agricultural credit, etc., The final objective of the technical component of the training programme would be towards increasing productivity, incomes and to inculcate productive investment and saving habits among selectees.*

(d) *The Selectees under proper guidance and supervision could also develop neighbourhood and community spirits, interpersonal relationships, leadership qualities and other such desirable social traits vital to them in later years. This would compliment the technical training they receive during the pre-settlement phase.*

(e) *The introduction of a technical-cum-social training programme could result in a number of possible benefits:*

i. *It could facilitate a quicker and a more effective adaptation of selectees to frontier settlement conditions when they have finally settled down in the scheme.*

ii. *It could help identify the level of adequacy and ill-effects of inadequacy , or even over-adequacy of infra-structural facilities in the test area, so that adjustment could be made in the final settlement areas.*

iii. *It could also provide a better opportunity to gauge possible adaptation difficulties and other deficiencies among certain of the selectees so that more intensive training and supervision could be directed to bring them at par with the rest.*

iv. *A new test area per new batch of selectees could pave the way for a more organised system of settlement. For example, a test area for one batch of new selectees would serve as an area of final settlement (with developed lands, housing and other infra-structural facilities) for a succeding batch . This process could be continued until the total*

target area under the Minipe scheme comes to be settled and developed. It could also phase out costs of opening up new lands and providing them with infra-structural facilities. For this 'Chain-reaction effect' to set in, the test areas need however to be located within the target area of the Minipe scheme itself.

POST-SETTLEMENT PHASE:

(a) After the initial training phase the selectees could be settled in the newly opened up areas of the Minipe scheme. Selectees who had formed neighbourhood groups in the test settlement area should be settled down in contiguous allotments to preserve their identity.

(b) The capital they have accumulated through their stay in the test area (through the produce of the first harvest) could be channelled towards productive ends in the final settlement area. It is quite imperative that the selectees be provided with advice and guidance towards this objective both at the test settlement and at the final settlement areas. It may have an advantage in reducing the strain of providing the usual cash and other subsidies by the state to the new settlers.

(c) After final settlement, training, supervision and monitoring aspects should be continued as before for a given period (e.g. 2 years). After this phase, training could take on a different pattern whereby batches of settlers could be taken in for short duration specialised training on desired areas of agriculture, agro-industry and community development. Monitoring and supervision must be a continuous process.

(d) A colonisation scheme the size of Minipe calls for a full fledged farmer training centre located within or near to the scheme (it could also serve other schemes in the adjacent areas) Such a centre could take on batches of settlers for short duration specialised training and orientation.

(e) The training periods could be so phased out that farmers could be trained during the slack periods in cultivation activity. The training could be tied up to a monetory incentive scheme so that farmers will not be deprived of an income during the time they spend at the training centre.

In the long run the additional expenditure incurred in a more careful selection of settlers and in attending to their training needs through a process along the lines indicated above, should yield better dividends than has been achieved upto date in the Minipe scheme.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

8. An agro-industrial base needs to be created in the scheme concurrently with the settlement aspects. Rice milling and flour manufacture, industries making use of straw and other waste produces of agriculture, tractor repair workshops, agro-implement manufacturing concerns and so on would not only draw excess labour into remmerative occupations, but also would pave the way towards diversifying the economy of the scheme. Cottage industries which could draw in the skills of womenfolk would also benefit the colonist families.

9. *A programme of specialised vocational training for the colonist families (men, women, and children above a certain age) to gear them towards different agro.industrial avenues of employment in the scheme is necessary . This programme could be dovetailed into the training programmes initiated by a farmer training centre in the scheme.*

OTHER MANAGEMENT ASPECTS:

10. *The entire irrigation system of the Minipe scheme if it is to be resusitated to achieve the goals expected of it, should be placed entirely under a single authority - the Department of Irrigation*[1]. *Much of the water management problems outlined before has come about through the division of authority related to the supervision of irrigation works in the scheme. A strict supervision of water allocation and management, and stronger measures against encroachments on lands reserved for the maintenance of irrigation channels can only come about through bringing in of the entire irrigation system under a single authority.*

11. *The Minipe Scheme master plan has not provided for grazing land. The conspicuous absence of this aspect may have been motivated with an objective to encourage mechanized agriculture. However, as a food source and as a low-cost source of traction, cattle and buffaloe rearing is vital and should be encouraged. In this context as an initial step grazing land should be allowed for in the entire scheme,*

12. *If it is to be assumed that much gain in agricultural productivity could be achieved through a coordination of services and activities it then follows that a form of farmer grouping for better management of land is equally desirable.*

While traditional forms of group action through attam, kaiya and shramadana should be actively fostered, a more effective form of farmer organisation which both enlists a wider participation of different groups in the colony society and promotes group action is an urgent necessity.

In a directed settlement scheme such as Minipe rapid gains in agricultural productivity, social cohesion, and living standards may be achieved better through a cordination of activities at all levels, than by leaving such activities exposed to vagaries of individual initiative.

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[1] *Other development aspects such as extension, input supply, etc., are already coordinated by the special projects office attached to the scheme. This office should be given a greater authority over the management of the scheme.*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. General Background and Objectives

Colonisation schemes are a result of attempts made by the Governments of Sri Lanka to solve the problems of population pressure on land in densely populated villages, to provide land and a source of living and to increase the domestic food production.[1] Towards realising these aims landless peasants, usually those with large families, drawn from overcrowded villages were re-settled in colonisation schemes, Up to 1967-68 a total of 68,338 such families were re-settled on 98 colonisation schemes and a total land extent of 306,393 acres (198,115 acres of lowland and 108,278 acres of highland) was allocated to them.[2]

A generous scale of assistance was extended by the Central Government to the colonists. The tasks of clearing the land, ridging of paddy lands, construction of irrigation channels, roads, houses, latrines and communal wells were undertaken by the Government. Communal facilities like assembly halls, hospitals and schools were built. Free seed paddy for the first cultivation season and planting material for highlands were issued. In addition a guaranteed price for their produce assured the colonists of fairly stable incomes.

It was the belief of the prime movers of colonisation schemes in Sri Lanka that "....though our people may display no great avidity for pioneering enterprise, they are not quite destitude of the qualities necessary for the achievement of success when once they have embarked upon it."[3] It was thought that landless peasants taken away from their traditional villages and provided with amenities and incentives in their new environment would form a sound agricultural base. Furthermore, it was thought that this would help these peasants to better their living conditions.

Restraints placed on colony land transactions by the Government were geared to prevent the colonists from disposing their lands during 'hard' times. Institutional credit was provided for a wide range of activities to safeguard the colonist from the private money lender. The Central Government envisaged an eventual transformation of the peasant colonist to a commercial farmer.

This study attempts to assess how far these broad objectives and aims have in fact been realised in a major colonisation scheme. The study locale is the Minipe scheme, one of the major colonisation schemes in Sri Lanka and one of the oldest.

The Minipe scheme has been the focus of a number of important large and small-scale surveys since early 1950s.

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1 See *Appendix 1* for policy changes related to colonisation.

2 Government of Sri Lanka, *Administration Report of the Land Commissioner for 1968-69* (Colombo : Government Publication Department March 1975.pp.48-77.

3 op.cit. Senanayake , D.S. *Agriculture and Patriotism* (Colombo : The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., 1935). p. 19.

1950 - 1960

Farmer, B,H, Pioneer Peasant Colonisation in Ceylon (London : Oxford University Press, 1957) : - A Study on Experiments in peasant colonisation in Sri Lanka,with an emphasis on problems encountered in setting up of colonisation schemes in the dry zone. The Minipe Scheme in particular is discussed in terms of selection of peasant colonists, natural difficulties enconntered in the initial stages, problems of land use, social problems, cost-benefit factors, etc.,

1960 - 1970

Bulankulama, S., "Cooperation in a Settlement : The Cooperative of Hanadawa Village in Ceylon , " In Inayatullah, (Ed.) Cooperatives and Planned Change in Asian Rural Communities : Case Studies and Diaries (UNRISD, 1970, pp. 223 - 270) : A Case Study on the Community and Cooperative of Hanadawa (i.e. Handaganawa in the Minipe Scheme) The Study discusses the intrinsic qualities of the Hanadawa community, its inequalities in terms of wealth , status and power, caste distinctions, cohesion aspects, and the overall social psychological environment, which in turn provides the background for the core-study on the performance of the Hanadawa Cooperative .

Jagaratnam, T., Schickele, R., Summary Report of the Socio Economic Survey of Nine Colonisation Schemes in Ceylon : (Peradeniya : Agricultural Economic Research Unit, University of Ceylon , 1969) - a benchmark survey of 9 major colonisation schemes in Sri Lanka including the Minipe scheme. This study assesses the productive potential achievable under existing irrigation structure, reveals obstacles which retard the adoption of modern production techniques and outlines various courses of action, policy measures, organisational requirements and institutional improvements to accelerate farmer adoption of modern production techniques and management practices.

1970 - 1978

Amarasinghe, N., Economic and Social -Implications on the Introduction of High Yielding varieties of rice on settlement schemes in Ceylon : A Case Study of the Minipe colonisation Scheme., UNDP - Global 2 : Research Project - Ceylon 1971 - 1972 (Peradeniya, Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, University of Ceylon, July 1972) : This study examines the impact of high yielding varieties of rice on the economic development of the Minipe scheme. The study pictures the Minipe special project as a highly successful colonisation scheme in terms of levels of production and livelihood achieved. Changes in livelihood are examined through income and other such economic criteria,

Wanigaratne, R.D., The Role of Rural Organisations in Rural Development: Case Study of Handaganawa (Minipe Colonisation Scheme) A Joint Project of the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (Colombo) and the Asian Centre for Development Administration (Kuala Lumpur) (1976 - 1977 : mimeo): The focus of this study is on the character and performance of Cooperative Societies, Agricultural Productivity Committee - Cultivation Committee system, Rural Development Committee and Village Councils, in the Stage I of the Minipe scheme. The study examines the impact of these organisations on agricultural production, the participation of different groups in rural organisations, and general problems encountered in the development of the scheme.

The above studies provide a range of insights about the Minipe scheme. The Farmer study, Jogaratnam - Schickele, and Amarasinghe studies examine the development of the scheme essentially on the basis of agricultural productivity, farmer incomes and other economic criteria. The Wijenkalame and Wanigaratne studies examine the development of the scheme essentially in terms of social criteria. The present study attempts to synthesise the findings of the above studies with the belief that such a synthesis will provide a deeper insight of the colony in terms of the objectives behind its existence.

On the basis of the availability of data for this study the analysis is confined mainly to a specific section of the Minipe scheme - the Handaganawa section, located in the Stage I area, the oldest part of the scheme. Where data are available specific developments are followed up beyond the confines of the Handaganawa section.

2. Origin and the Purpose of the Minipe Scheme.

The Minipe scheme lies on the left bank of the Mahaweli river at a distance of about 50 miles North-East of Kandy, and is estimated to provide irrigation facilities for nearly 15,000 acres of land. With the rainfed highland allotments the total land area covered by the scheme would be over 20,000 acres. The scheme consists of four stages:

	Approx. land area (acres)	Approx. extent to be provided with irrigation facilities (acres)
Stage I	5143	3214
Stage II	4887	3258
Stage III	5176	3697
Stage IV	5300	4500
Total	20506	14669

Sources : Amarasinghe (1972) ; ARTI - ACDA (1977) Survey Records

The Stage I and II falls under the *Uda Dumbara* Administrative Division of the District of Kandy (and also within the Minipe Electoral District) add stages III and IV comes under the *Laggala and Pallegama* Administrative Divisions of the District of Matale (and also within the Laggala Electoral District). The scheme is situated on an elongated rolling plain about 300 ft. ASL. It is bordered by the Mahaweli river on the East and by the Laggala ridges (ranging in elevation from 2200-3000 ft. ASL.), which rise abruptly from the plain on the West. The Minipe scheme has a climate which is typical of the dry zone regions of the island. The average annual rainfall is below 100 inches. Highest rainfall is experienced in the months of November to January associated with the North-East monsoon. A strong dry wind (föhn type) affects the scheme area for nearly five months of the year, between May - September.

At the site of the present Minipe anicut and the Minipe main channel (*Yoda Ela*) existed an ancient anicut built during the reign of King *Agbo I* in the 6th century. This ancient anicut is located at a point adjacent to the present service centre of Minipe. The anicut dammed up a reservoir of water which was conveyed northwards through the *Yoda-Ela*. *"The course of the ancient Yoda-Ela can be traced to a point near Wasgamuwa Oya (over seventy miles from the Minipe anicut), a stream -which flows into the Mahaweli*

Ganga about 15 miles above its junction with Ambanganga"[1]

Destruction at the hands of invaders from India in the 10-13th centuries, the abandonment of the dry zone as a centre of civilization in the 13-14th centuries, destruction by invading armies in the 16th century, and general neglect thereafter ruined what was once a highly efficient irrigation system. After two other abortive revivals in 1917 and 1919, the proposal to revive the Minipe scheme was brought up again in 1931.[2]

The principal objective of the 1931 proposal to set up the Minipe scheme was to absorb the surplus landless peasantry from the villages of the *Dumbara* region (consisting of *Uda Dumbara* and *Patha Dumbara* Divisional Revenue Officers' Divisions), Kandy district. The magnitude of the problem of landless peasantry was such that of the total number of landless families who were not profitably employed in the entire Kandy district, around 1955, 31.8% were from the Dumbara Region,[3] The Minipe scheme was initiated for the settlement of these families.

The first batch of colonists for settlement in the scheme was selected from a pool of labourers from the Dumbara region who were employed for land preparation work prior to settlement. Each colonist family was provided around 5 acres of paddy and 3 acres of highland, a *"type plan house"* worth about Rs.3000, planting material and a pair of buffaloes as outright grants and an allowance of Rs.30 per month. No water rate for the use of irrigation facilities was charged during the first three years of occupation. Yet the harsh climatic conditions coupled with malaria, wild animals and labour shortages compelled many to return to their villages after a *Kanna*(cultivation season) or two.[4]

In later years with mounting problems faced in villages and some improvement of living conditions in the Minipe scheme more peasant families chosen on the *"landlessness" and "Family size"* criteria were taken in as settlers.

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1 Government of Ceylon, "Report and Estimate for the Restoration of the Minipe-Ela, Central Province", *Sessional paper XIX* (Colombo : Ceylon Government Press, 1907), p. 443.

2 Government of Ceylon, "Report on the Minipe Yoda-Ela Scheme", *Sessional Paper XI* (Colombo : Ceylon Government Press, 1940), p. 5.

3 Government of Ceylon ; Ministry of Home Affairs, *A Plan for the Rehabilitation of the Kandyan Peasantry in the Central and Uva Provinces* 1955-56 to 1958-60 (Colombo : Ceylon Government Press, March 1956), p. 12

4 This feature was to contribute to the land problems of the Minipe scheme in later years. Some of the 'drop outs' were permit-holders to their land in the scheme. They usually allowed their friends and relatives to work these lands in return for a share of the harvest. With better living conditions in the scheme in later years, many of these land owners (permit holders) attempted to reoccupy the land. Their claims of ownership to the land invariably clashed with that of the de facto, cultivators .

The pioneers of the Minipe scheme in their drive to solve the problems of landlessness and unemployment in the villages of Dumbara through resettlement of its landless peasantry, overlooked an important aspect of colonisation - the need to provide the selected allottees with training in managerial skills.

Many of the allottees were not quite familiar with the improved cultural practices in irrigated paddy farming, having worked as tenants or labourers in paddy plots belonging to their fellow villagers. Spending and saving habits carried over from their villages, in the absence of prior training in managerial skills, were not geared to the rises in income they witnessed with the initial bountiful harvests in their colony paddy holdings. Incomes received were squandered away and many soon fell into debt.

As colonists fell into debt their lands, particularly the paddy plots, were leased, mortgaged or sold either to more enterprising colonists or to the traders who had moved in in the wake of the settlers.

In view of the criticisms levelled against the progress of colonisation schemes in Sri Lanka, an I.B.R.D. Mission to Sri Lanka (1966) drew attention to the urgent need to increase agricultural productivity in major colonisation schemes in commensurate with the heavy capital investments made.[1] On the apparent success of the new drive to intensify agro-production in a pilot scheme (the Elahera Colonisation scheme), 10 major colonisation schemes were accorded "*special project*" status. This meant an intensification of agricultural extension facilities and activities and the provision of necessary agro-inputs in sufficient quantities and in time.[2]

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[1] Amarasinghe , op.cit, p.3

[2] Ibid p.4

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF LAND - MAN RELATIONSHIPS

This chapter examines the realities of population growth in the Minipe Scheme and the subsistence orientation among colonists, in the way they react with state ideals concerning the welfare of colonists and the lands the colonists have received.

1. Stage of Settlement

Prior to the setting up of the Minipe scheme the Handaganawa environs were hardly suitable for habitation, being a jungle ridden *hyper endemic* environment for malaria. In 1881 the entire population of the Handaganawa village [1] consisted of 34 persons (23 males and 11 females), which by 1891 had declined to 20 persons (12 males and 8 females).[2] During this period the village was found to be inhabited by tom-tom beaters *(berawa caste)* and a few descendants of slaves *(Vahallu)*. There had been very little paddy cultivation.[3] Sir Henry Ward (an early British Governor in Ceylon) who visited the villages in 1859 observed that " *The whole space*

1 The physical location of this ancient village appears to have been in the present Diversion Channels 20-25 area of the Minipe Stage I. After the setting up of the Minipe scheme, the entire section of the colony covering Diversion Channels 17-26 came to be identified as Handaganawa.

2 The sex ratio of the Handaganawa population in 1891 and 1881 showed a strong male bias which tended to decline over years. In 1881 the sex ratio was 200 males to 100 females; in 1891 it was 144 males to 100 females. The male bias may be a result of the transient nature of early settlements- able-bodied males of families in Dumbara villages coming to the Handaganawa environs to open up chena lands or to cultivate highland for a kanna or two. However, over time the transient nature may have given way to a more stable form of settlemant involving bringing in the women folk from home villages. This may explain the declining trend in the sex ratio between 1881 and 1891 years. The setting up of the Minipe scheme in the late 1930s opened up the Handaganawa environs for a settled way of life. Health and living conditions improved. One visible effect of the change in the Handaganawa environs is seen in the continuation of the declining trend in the proportion of males by 1976.

Sources : 1. Lawrie, A.C, Gazetter of the Central Provinces of Ceylon (Colombo : Government Printer : 1896), p.318 - for 1881 and 1891 years.
2. Department of Census and Statistics - for 1963 year
3. ARTI-ACDA Survey : Questionnaire Data for 1976 year

3 Lawrie, A.C., Gazetter of the Central Provinces of Ceylon (Colombo: Government Printer, 1896) p. 318

bears marks of comparatively recent cultivation especially in the neighbourhood of Handaganawa....,where houses are still standing though abandoned by their inhabitants for want of straw to thatch them".[1]

With the setting up of the Minipe scheme in the late 1930s , and the settling of colonists the population in the Handaganawa environs increased tremendously. The increase of the resident population on the basis of the resettlement of new colonists occured in a series of spurts, coinciding with phases in the opening up of the scheme. Extracts from land records of the scheme showing dates of settlement of colonist families show some of these phases (see table 1 below).

Table 1. : Date settlement of colonist families in Diversion Channels 19, 20, and 21 areas (Handaganawa Section)

First generation land permit holders : Dates of Settlement	Colonist families N = 179 No:	%
1939 - 1943	68	37,99
1944 - 1949	13	7,26
1950 - 1962	25 *	13,97
1962 - 1976	11	6,14
Total first generation permit holders (1939 - 1976)	117	
Total second and third generation permit holders (1940 - 1976)	19	10,61
Non permit holders : second and third generation families	25	13,97
Encroachers	18	10,06

* 15 of the new settlers came into the area between 1958 - 1962

Source : Land Records, Minipe AGA's Office.

A majority of the colonist families in Handaganawa were settled in the 1939 - 43 period following the opening up of Diversion Channels 1-24 and preparation of land for cultivation. Then again in the 1950-62 period alongside the opening up of the Stage II of the Minipe scheme andthe drive for resettlement , there was a large intake as is evident in the above table.

First generation settlers of the pre - 1962 period received most of the lowland, usually in 5 acre blocks, and highland in 3 acre blocks. The settlers of the post - 1962 period received lowland, considerably lesser

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1 Lawrie , Diaries and Notes , p. 257

in extent, ranging from 1 acre to less than 4 acres, The reason for this was that almost all of the lowland area of Handaganawa was already occupied by colonists, Strips of marginal lands on the slopes of the Laggala ridges bordering the scheme on the East still remained, These could only be brought under highland crops at great expense.

Land permits given to second generation settler families show that many of them inherited blocks of 2½ acres of lowland and 1 - 1½ acres of highland.[1] The second and third generation families who have not received land permits but who reside in the lands of their parents and grand-parents were found to account for 25% of the total number of settlers in the Handaganawa area (Table 1,) Squatters who have come into the Minipe area in the post - 1962 period occupy the slopes of the Laggala ridges.[2] These accounted for 10% of the total settler families in the Diversion Channels 19 - 21 area (Table 1),

By 1976 the small extent of lowland which still remained with the Government as *'reservation lands'* (lands reserved for footpaths, field channel bunds , wind and flood breaks) was almost entirely encroached upon by colonists seeking to extend their paddy fields .

The man-land ratios for Handaganawa since 1953 are given below:

TABLE 2

Man - land ratio

Year	Persons per acre	Persons per square mile
1953	1.0	694
1963	2.0	1276
1971	2.5	1592
1976	2.7	1750

Sources : Department of Census and Statistics ;
Minipe AGA's Office : Land Records

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1 Under the provisions of the Land Development Ordinance (1935) an allottee was only entitled to nominate a single successor to his holding.

2 These squatters were attracted to the Minipe scheme, perhaps more through the hope that they would have access to the benefits enjoyed by the regular colonists, than through any pioneering spirit. Conditions of landlessness and poverty in their home villages also pressurised them to move out. There however is no evidence that these squatters are in any way more resourceful and better cultivators than the regular colonists, themselves. They usually occupy marginal lands already opened by way of Chena by regular colonists. Their usual locations are stream reservations on the slopes of the Laggala ridges. Here they carry on cultivation on a primitive scale. Most are agricultural labourers who survive on casual employment opportunities generated within the scheme.

The man-land ratios for Handaganawa are high in terms of the national figures,[1] For example, the 1953 man-land ratio of Handaganawa was twice that of the national figure for the same year, In 1963 and 1970/71 it was over three times the the comparable national figure, In Handaganawa the man-land ratio has more than doubled itself in 23 years between 1953 and 1976,

2. Population Growth

In the Handaganawa section the population showed a two and half fold increase in the 23 years between 1953 and 1976 (See Table 3 below)

Table 3,

Handaganawa : Population Growth

	Population	Numerical increase	Percentage increase %	Equivalent annual rate of growth %
1953	2130	-	-	-
1963	3516	1786	83,85	6,00
1971	4859	943	24,08	2,10
1976	5372	513	13,10	2,00

Source : Department of Census and Statistics
Food Control Lists : Minipe AGA's Office,

The increase was particularly rapid during the 10 year period between 1953 and 1963 with an equivalent rate of growth of 6,00 per cent per year, However, since 1963 the annual growth rate has been on the decline,

A sample study of 98 households (population : 685 persons) of the Handaganawa section[2] records evidence of a decline in vital rates since 1962, This evidence is contained in the age composition of the Handaganawa population,

The number of persons identified within a given age-interval at a given point in time (e,g, a particular year) represents the survivors of a population cohort born during a specific past time-interval, This had faced the mortality conditions associated with each succeeding time-interval , Radical differences in the number of survivors among age-intervals also provide a clue to differences in fertility conditions which affected the size of the population cohorts of different time periods as well,

On this basis the age compositions of the Handaganawa population may be examined for evidence of changes in vital rates which affected the population in the recent past (See Table 4 below)

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1 Time specific man-land ratio for Sri Lanka are given below:

Year	Man-land ratios Persons per acre	Persons per sq, mile
1953	0.5	320
1963	0.6	418
1970	0,8	501

Source : Department of Census and Statistics

2 ARTI - ACDA Survey (1976 - 77),

Table 4 ; Handaganawa Age-Specific Population

Change in Survivors Born During Specific Past Time Periods

Specific age intervals (years)	Survivors of specific age intervals born in (years)	Survivors as at 31/12/76 (Nos)
20 - 24	1952 - 1956	95
15 - 19	1957 - 1961	113
10 - 14	1962 - 1966	103
5 - 9	1967 - 1971	75
0 - 4	1972 - 1976	46

Source : ARTI - ACDA Survey ; Questionnaire Data

The Table 1 (p.9) showed that since 1960-62 years the number of new settlers coming into Handaganawa had almost ceased. It is also very likely that mortality conditions in Handaganawa had followed the national trends in charting a rapid decline since 1946 , The Crude Death Rate computed for Handaganawa for 1976 showed a low value of 9 deaths per 1000 heads of population .[1]

In the absence of high mortality and migration conditions, the steepening of the decline in survivors with increasingly lower age groups, in fact seems to demonstrate that the population of Handaganawa has witnessed a decline in births rate since 1962. The crude Birth Rate for Handaganawa in 1976 was 21.36 births per 1000 heads of population, a low figure when

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[1] In the early 1940s the Minipe Colonisation scheme environs was recognised by the health authorities to be a *hyper endemic* environement in Malaria. At present, the scheme environs are very much lower down the scale *(hypo endemic)*. (Senior Medical Surgeon Records: Anti - Malaria Campaign ,Meda Maha Nuwara : Medical Officer of Health Area)
The Handaganawa area has close access to health facilities. It is three miles from the Morayaya rural hospital, five miles from the Mahiyangana rural hospital and seven miles from the Hasalaka rural hospital. An Anti-Malaria officer has his quarters in the Handaganawa junction. Handaganawa is regularly serviced by a Government Health Nurse and a Public Health Inspector. Regular health check-ups are done in the Handaganawa central school. The area also has an Ayurvedic physician and two snake-bite specialists. Improvements of health conditions as a result of high access to health facilities and a realtively modern outlook towards health matters (most colonist families boil and strain their drinking water; almost all have closed-pit lavatories and most favour western preventive and curative medical treatment) may have a bearing on the low mortality conditions of the Handaganawa population *(ARTI-ACDA Survey Data)*

compared with the birth rate of the island (27,8 per 1000 in 1973),[1] of the female population in 98 Handaganawa households studied through the ARTI-ACDA survey , 51% were in child bearing ages of 15 - 44 years. However, the general fertility rate for Handaganawa was only 95,7 births per 1000 females in child bearing ages in 1976,[2] This is very much lower than the comparative national figure (139 births per 1000 females in child bearing ages around 1971)[3]

Though the present birth rate is very low and the age composition of the population shows results of a declining fertility trend since 1962, the number of children already born to the Handaganawa families in previous years and who had survived age specific mortality conditions was large,

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1 Department of Census and Statistics, Statistical Pocket Book of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) : 1974, p, 19

2 It is difficult to hazard exact casual factors for the decline in birth rates inferred from the above data. Studies done for the island show that the availability of eligible males and females at marriageable ages and increases in the average age at marriage for both sexes are contributory factors towards the fertility decline in Sri Lanka since 1960s.* The availability of males and females at marriageable ages, in Handaganawa for 1976 are given below:

Males per 100 females in the age group 5 years younger**	
Males age groups	Males per 100 females
20 - 24	69,8
25 - 29	45,0
30 - 34	54,1
35 - 39	180,0
40 - 44	144,5
20 - 44	72,3

Sources : ACDA - ARTI Survey : Questionnaire Data

The sex imbalance is strong in all of the above ages , probably resulting in a *'marriage squeeze'* situation. Factors like lack of adequate employment among eligible males to maintain a family may effect the availability of suitable male partners for marriage. This in turn may have an indirect bearing on marital fertility conditions.

* Department of Census and Statistics, The Population of Sri Lanka (Colombo, October - 1974), p, 11

** This is based on the assumption that males generally marry females who are younger than them,

3 Records of the Department of Census and Statistics

Over the years, the increase in second and third generation colonists have had a cumulative effect in increasing the size of households. For example, the ARTI-ACDA survey showed that eighty-two(82%) of the Handaganawa households had three or more children. Of them, 67% had five children or more. The average number of children per household (irrespective of their present ages) was five. The average number of children, below 20 years of age, per household was three.

The average size of a household was 7.0 persons. Besides, the cumulative effect of births over time, a principal reason for largeness of the household size in the Handaganawa section (for that matter the entire Stage I of the colonisation scheme) is the tendency for many of the second and third generation colonists families to reside in the same house with their parents and grand-parents in the form of a community living.

In 1976 Handaganawa (ARTI-ACDA sample) showed a dependency ratio in 1976 of 62 dependants per 100 employed persons above the age of 12 years.[1] A household had on the average 2 full-time employed persons and 5 dependants (inclusive of housewives and children between 6-14 years who are part-time or at least seasonally employed in agricultural activities). If part-time and seasonal employment is taken into consideration the ratio is 5 employed persons per household as against 2 dependants.

Agriculture as the main activity of Handaganawa generated sufficient employment to absorb an entire family only during peak cultivation times. On direct reckoning it may be hypothesised that at least 70% of the Handaganawa community was on a dependent footing for most of the year. The pressure of dependants was appreciably greater in larger families. In this context the practice of community living carried on by many colonist households may be interpreted as a rational move towards mutual help for survival.

3. Land Fragmentation and Encroachments

The expanding population and the limited land resources available, fragmentation, and encroachments on reservation lands have created a host of socio-economic, political and legal problems associated with land in the Handaganawa section.

Around 1971/72 the sub-division of land among heirs as a percentage of the original allotments among a sample population of 50 households was 31.5%. Thirty eight (38) original allotments were found to have increased to 50 by 1971/72 through a process of sub-division among heirs.[2] By 1976 the sub-division of original allotments among heirs was found to have increased to 39.3%. Sixty five (65) original allotments had increased to 89 allotments by 1976.[3] The competition among heirs over the question of obtaining land permits for fragmented allotments is the reason for many intra-and inter-family disputes in the Handaganawa community. Such disputes, some of which trace back to the early years of colonisatinn , still stand unsettled despite the intervention of regional administration.[4]

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[1] The survey showed that 39% of the population in school going ages of 6-14 years were employed either full-time or part-time in agriculture or in household chores. On the basis of concentration of children who are so employed the dependency ratio computed for Handaganawa adopted the age of 12 as the effective minimum age of employment for the colony.

[2] Amarasinghe (1972) . p.31

[3] ARTI-ACDA Survey (1976) Land Records, Minipe AGA's Office

[4] See Appendix II for an extreme case of colony disputes over land

The primary resource of a colonist is land which he strives to pass on to his children as a means of subsistence. Since individual colonist family holdings are not permitted to be fragmented beyond a certain viable size many of the second and third generation colonists live as non permit holders on lands belonging to the first generation colonists. The conflict of objectives between the colony administration and those of the colonists concerning land inheritance, i.e., the desire of colonists to obtain land permits to holdings of below the 'viable size' and the de jure stipulations governing 'viable size' for granting of land permits, have resulted in restricting a primary drive in colonists - the use of existing land resources for the future maintenance of their families. This has contributed to feeling of deprivation among colonists (both first generation colonists and descendants) especially when they evaluate their position relative to people of *Purana* (traditional) villages in the dry zone, who, they feel, have greater access to fresh land for cultivation and settlement purposes.

Among the Handaganawa sample (ARTI-ACDA Survey) of 98 households, 6 were squatters who were found to have encroached on a total extent of 19.25 acres. Demand for cultivable land and housing is so strong in the entire Minipe scheme that many of the reservation lands and structures were found to have been encroached upon by colonists. For example, a 7 acre paddy demonstration plot, a reservation land area managed by the Colonisation Officer[1] which is located at Morayaya (a junction settlement in the Minipe scheme located 3 miles away from Handaganawa), was completely encroached upon by landless peasantry of the scheme. Many temporarily abandoned government buildings in the scheme are now illegally occupied by the colony homeless. Temporary huts dot all available highland areas, even narrow strips a few feet in width between the paddy yayas (tracts) and the trunk roads (the Kandy-Minipe road, Matale-Minipe road, and Kandy-Mahiyangana road) which cut across the Minipe scheme. The search for land has spilled over the colonisation scheme area to crown forest reserves of Mahiyangana (across the Mahaweli river which borders the scheme). Jungle choked small village tanks in the Mahiyangana area abandoned hundreds of years ago are being resuscitated by groups of landless settlers from the scheme to permit cultivation of paddy and other crops.

In the colonisation scheme many of the paddy fields owned by the colonists are located at distances ranging from ½ to 1½ miles from the nearest Cooperative Stores, to which they are obliged to sell their paddy. In earlier times (e.g. in the pre-1970 period) paddy from these fields was

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1 An officer of the Land Commissioner's Department attached to colonisation schemes. He supervises the activities of the colonisation scheme ranging from the organisation of Kanna meetings under the Irrigation Ordinance and organisation of farmer training classes to social work campaigns, provision of medical facilities and the settlement of land disputes among colonists.

transported in bullock carts and tractors along field tracks. These tracks which were about 20 feet broad ran along the borders of paddy allotments of colonist families. The colonists on the sly have enlarged their fields at the expense of the tracks. At present farmers whose fields are located at a distance from the Cooperative store cannot transport their paddy in bullock carts and tractors. The value of land in the scheme has been enhanced by its very scarcity so much so that even colony organisations vie with each other for its possession.

4. Water Management Problems

The basic structure of the irrigation network which serves the Minipe scheme is as follows:-

From the anicut situated at Minipe a portion of the water of the Mahaweli river is diverted along the *main channel* which spans the entire length of the Minipe scheme. At regular intervals along the main channels are *diversion* channels, and along the diversion channels are innumerable *field channels* which ultimately transfer water to the paddy fields. It eventually finds its way to a *drain channel* which lies at a lower contour. This channel transports water back to the Mahaweli river.

The main channel was so constructed that water and silt flowing down rivulets (*Kanduru*) to the main channel were either carried over the main channel (*overcrossings*) or under the main channel (*undercrossings*) through a system of conduits. These conduits while preventing siltation of the main channel also transported the silt directly to the paddy fields.

With the extension of the main channel to serve StageII, III and IV of the Minipe Scheme after 1956, the channel was broadened to about 50 feet. In the process of broadening the conduits both overcrossings and undercrossings were destroyed and were not subsequently rebuilt. The silt which flows along rivulets now collects in the main channel bed.

As the population of the Minipe Scheme grew up over the years encroachments on marginal lands in the lower slopes of the Laggala ridges became widespread. The indiscriminate slash-and-burn methods adopted by encroachers have so removed the vegetation cover that with each shower the top soil of the hill slopes is washed down to the main channel.

Where the main channel transported about 8 feet of water in earlier years now only about 3 to 5 feet of water is transported. Silt deposits on the channel bed have increased thickness, raising the water levels of the main channel. The deposit of silt has increased the erosional capacity of the water especially where the channel curves in line with the configuration of the land. The main channel now faces the danger of being breached in many spots along its length.

Increasing landlessness in the scheme has also resulted in encroachments on the strips of reservation land between the paddy fields and the channel bunds. These reserves are left intact by the Irrigation authorities to strengthen the channel bunds, and to serve as a ready source of earth for restoration of bunds. These reservation lands now hardly exist in the scheme.

The irrigation authorities used to have a *"closed period"* of cultivation activities, a period of about a month between March and April. During this slack period of farming operations, the main sluice gate of the anicut in the scheme

was closed. This closed period was utilised by the Irrigation authorities to take channel cross-sections to determine the degree of siltation and channel bank erosion, to strengthen the bunds, for desiltation work, and to generally service the entire irrigation network. This *"closed period"* has not been operative since early 1970s.

The extensions of the main channel to Stages, II , III and IV have created varying peak demand for water in different parts of the Minipe Scheme. Cultivation times differ not only in different parts of the scheme, but also in contiguous paddy holdings. Water regulation work is affected by political interference on behalf of individual cultivators, who voice different water demand times to suit themselves. The absence of a strict cultivation calendar is also causing difficulties to servicing organisations. More so, it obstructs the coordination of efforts towards pest and weed control. The emergence of the Brown Hopper paddy pest in the Maha 1977/78 in the scheme is considered by the agricultural extension staff to be a direct result of the failure of farmers to adhere to cultivation time table.

The master design of the Minipe Scheme was not strictly observed in opening up new diversion channels and in extending the old ones. For instance, in the stage II of the Minipe Scheme, the Master Design Data allowed only for a length of 3 miles for the diversion channel 4. This channel now extends up to 5 miles, causing additional water demands.

The estimated paddy area in the entire scheme to be serviced by the enlarged main channel was around 15,000 acres , which according to irrigation authorities has now increased to some 16,000 acres because of encroachments. The capacity of the main channel is not sufficient to meet the water demands of all the paddy lands in the scheme, including extended acreage through encroachments. Strict adherence to a time table which alone could maintain such a " *closed period*" is thus well nigh impossible in the scheme.

The peak water flow in the main channel coincides with that of the Mahaweli river. During the Maha season water allocation problems do not exist as there is plenty to go around. This situation differs in Yala. During this season the water level in the Mahaweli is low[1] and not enough water flows down to the main channel. This further aggravates the irregular water demand and location aspects in the scheme.

While the irrigation network in the Minipe Scheme is showing signs of neglect, the Irrigation authorities who are responsible for its maintenance were unable to exercise their duties as a result of political interference and through a conflict of interests with organisations like APC and CC which were also vested with authority over certain aspects of irrigation (as for example, field channel maintenance).

5. Paddy Production and Development of Services

Paddy yields in the scheme had more than doubled in the 35 year period between 1941 and 1976. At the initial stages of the scheme the paddy yields were reported to be between 20-25 bu/acre.[2]

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[1] Walker, R.L., The Hydrometeorology of Ceylon, Part I: Rainfall and Runoff: (A Canada - Ceylon Colombo Plan Project (Ceylon: Government Press: 1962) p. 382.

[2] Abbreviation for bushels per acre

The usage of traditional paddy varieties and the lack of sufficient expertise in irrigated paddy technology fertilizer and agro-chemical use may be attributed as the main causes for the low yields during this period. The paddy yields in the Minipe scheme showed a steady increase from the late 1960s. In the 1966/67 cultivation year it was 39 bu/acre , in 1968/69 it was 51 bu/acre and in 1970/71 it was 63 bu/acre[1] - an increase of 61% over the 1966/1967 yield figure. In 1975/76 it was 52 bu/acre.[2] This relatively lower yield figure was esentially due to a prolonged drought which affected both the 1975 Yala and 1975/76 Maha crops. Yet this comparatively lower yield was 15% higher than the comparable national figure of 45 bushels per acre for 1976)[3] The increase is the result of a renewed state emphasis on agriculture since 1965.

In 1967 the Government embarked on a national food production drive. A concerted move was made to increase the use of high yielding varieties of paddy among farmers. Before 1968 the only high yielding paddy varieties used were H4 and H8 varieties. The H4 variety in the Minipe Scheme took 4 years before reaching a state of peak adoption. With the granting of special project status to the scheme in 1968, the introduction of new high yielding varieties increased. By 1975 besides the older H4 and H8 varieties a host of new HYVs such as IR8, IR262, BG11 - 11,LD66, MI273, BG34-8, BG34-11 and so on were being cultivated by farmers. The experience gained by farmers in achieving high production through the use of HYVs, fertilizer and agro-chemicals was shown by the fact that with the new varieties peak adoption level was reached within a year of their introduction.[4]

After the Minipe Scheme was declared a special project in 1968, an attempt was made to promote better coordination of extension and other service activities. The extension and administration staff was increased after 1968. In the pre-1968 period five Colonisation Officers (middle-level officers belonging to the Land Commissioner's Department) and 10 Overseers/ Land Development Ordinance (O.L.D.O.s) were responsible for settlement affairs , collecting land tax, summoning cultivation meetings(*Kanna* meetings) organising farmer training classes and other social work. Though the number of Colonisation Officers remained the same in the post-1968 period, the number of O.L.D.O's were increased to eleven. Prior to 1968 the responsibility of the agricultural extension activities devolved on one Agricultural Instructor who was assisted by three KVSs. After 1968 these cadres were increased to five and eleven respectively. Similarly, middle level officers of the Department of Irrigation (Technical Assistants) serving the Minipe Scheme increased from two to three after 1968 with corresponding increases in the lower level employee cadres consisting of Irrigation Overseers and Irrigation Labourers.[4]

Rural Organisations serving the agricultural sector in the Minipe Scheme were found to have equally expanded their facilities in the post 1960 period. Before 1965 the scheme was served by Cultivation Committees. Between 1965 and 1970 the number of Cultivation Committees increased to 24. With the implementation of the Agricultural Productivity Law -(1974) and the Agricultural Lands Law (1973), the activities of the Cultivation Committees came to be coordinated under a new central organisation, the

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1 Amarasinghe (1972) p. 75

2 Records of the Special Projects Office for the Minipe Scheme (Special) Projects Office, Morayaya .

3 Central Bank of Ceylon, Annual Report: 1976 (Colombo : 30 th April 1977) p.9 Table 5.

4 Amarasinghe (1972) pp. 22 - 23

Agricultural Productivity Committee (APC). The Morayaya Agricultural Productivity Committee served the Stage I area, and the Hasalaka Agricultural Productivity Committee served the stage II area. Each had under them 12 Cultivation Committees.

Before 1965, Stages I and II of the Minipe Scheme was serviced by six Multi-Purpose Cooperative Stores (M.P.C.S.) which increased to eleven in numbers in the post - 1970 period, the Cooperatives were re-organised under a primary M.P.C.S. Union. By 1976 the Stage I area was served by a Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society union which had eight branch Multi-Purpose Cooperative Societies and the stage II area was serviced by another M.P.C.S. Union,with nine Branch Cooperative Societies. Both the APC and the MPCS served the farming community on the scheme, by providing agricultural inputs, agro-loans and facilities for marketing of agricultural produce.

Besides the development of service organisation in the post - 1968 period, the Scheme also witnessed a change in the amount of fixed capital associated with paddy cultivation. Before 1960 the fixed capital items in agriculture were confined to draught animals, mammoties, wooden ploughs, carts and a few irrigation wells. After 1960 with the introduction of improved technology into the scheme components of agricultural fixed capital changed to include metal ploughs, disc harrows, crop sprayers, tractors, weeders and seeders, gunny bags, winnowing fans and rice mills.[1]

6. Employment Characteristics

The colony society is essentially a mono-crop culture associated with paddy cultivation. The ARTI - ACDA survey showed that paddy accounts for over 90% - of the total lowland acreage and 89% of the gross income (from all sources)of an average farm family in Handaganawa. Agri-expenditure accounts for 35% of the total household expenditure of an average farm family.

Of a total population of 689 persons in 98 households (ARTI - ACDA Sample). 215 (31%) were farmers. Of the 181 females who were classed as housewives, 119 were part-time family helpers in agricultural activities. The same applied to children between 6 - 14 years of age, both school-going and non-school going who were not physically debilitated. Seventy children of the ages 6 - 14 years were employed either on a full-time or on part-time capacity in agriculture and/ or household activities. Thus, a more appropriate estimate of the total population in the study households[2] who were involved in agriculture is around 400 individuals (58% of the total population). In comparison only 21 individuals (3%) were employed in non-agricultural occupations in Governmental and non-governmental

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1. Amarasinghe (1972) p. 36

2. The comparative figures for 98 heads of study households are as follows: Seventy three (73%) of the heads of households were farmers. Eleven (11) heads of households were women. Though they were recorded as housewives in actuality their main activity was with paddy cultivation work, since they own paddy land. It thus, bring up the total of those heads of households engaged in paddy cultivation as the major occupation to eighty-one (81%) . Eleven (11) heads of households were disabled due to senility, disease and congenital defects, and only 4 were employed in non-agricultural occupation.

organisations.[1] Within the colonisation scheme the scope for non-agricultural employment was limited.

198 individuals (28%) were found to be unemployed. In the age group above 14 years, 15 able-bodied individuals were unemployed and 25 were incapacitated due to senility, disease and congenital defects. In the age group 14 years and below, 50 were children below 6 years of age and 108 were school-going children between 6 - 14 years of age.

Within the colony context a colonist's economic goal appears to be the use of his resources - land and its natural products, labour, his technical know-how - to directly maintain his family. As a result of his orientation certain socio-economic consequences have emerged.

On the drive to maintain their families at a maximum subsistence level, colonists use all available family labour to its fullest extent for cultivation and household activities. Besides long hours of work (usually 10-12 hours per day, which increases during peak cultivation periods), this drive is mainly responsible for the withdrawal of children from schools and in the use of child labour for household and agricultural activities in the scheme.

To illustrate: One hundred and seventy eight (178) individuals or 26% of the Handaganawa sample population (ARTI-ACDA Survey) were between 6 - 14 years of age. Members of this group can broadly be considered as representative of the school-going population. Of this group, 72 members (41%) did not attend school for a number of reasons (Table below:) the rest were full-time students.

Table 5: Non-school going population 6 - 14 years of age
Reasons for non-attendance of school[1]

Reasons for non-attendance of school	No: of members		
	Male	Female	Total
Full-time family helper	-	11	11
Full-time helper in agriculture	7	-	7
Part-time helper in agriculture + part-time family helper	26	26	52
Incapacitated	35	37	72

Source : Questionnaire Data

[1] On the contrary, the Amarasinghe Survey (1972, p. 26) for 1971/72 period indicates a non-agricultural employment proportion of nearly 16% for the Minipe Scheme. This estimate appears to be biased as a result of the physical locations of the sample of families studied. They were located too close to the developed market junctions of Morayaya and Weragantota (in the Minipe Scheme) which have concentrations of Government offices, a rural hospital, head office of the Multi-purpose Cooperative Society, the Government Tractor Unit, and a host of small business concerns not found in such concentrations elsewhere in the colonisation scheme.

[2] A full-time cultivator is someone who is engaged in chores related to cultivation of crops and who does no other work. A full-time household worker is someone engaged in unpaid house duties, who does no other work. A part-time cultivator + part-time household worker is someone who works at least one hour per day in chores and duties attached to each activity.

Besides the inability of many colony parents to bear the costs of keeping a child at school, the marginal benefits of schooling for children (both males and females) is considered to be low in the colony society.

For example, on the average a full-time school going child was occupied (in school education activities) for about 5-6 hours per day. A child who is not attending school and who is classed as a fulltime cultivator or full-time household worker was occupied full-time for about 8-10 hours per day. The cultivation activities in the colonisation scheme is done according to a strict calendar. During times of peak activity (e.g. land preparation stages, and harvesting threshing stages) children often worked as much as 10-12 hours per day. An element of 'over - employment' of children at the expense of their education existed in the Minipe scheme.

Of the non-school going population of 72 children, 25 members (25%) (See Table 5) were those of ages between 9-14 years. This group who should have received a minimum threshold education of 3 years of schooling to achieve a state of *'functional literacy'*[1] were found to have missed the opportunity. This group alongside children between the ages of 6-8 who, in the light of a minimum age of school entry of 6 years enforced in Sri Lanka, had not reached the minimum threshold of education were classed as illiterates. They could not read in the vernacular.

Table 6: Non-School Going Population of 6-14 years of Age.

Age Group (years)	No of illiterates Males	Females
6 - 8	11	11
9 - 11	7	4
12 - 14	8	6
Total	26	21

Proportion of illiterates in 6 - 14 year age group 65%

Source : Questionnaire Data

7. Income - Expenditure Patterns

The Farmer study [2] attributed a net income of Rs.333 per month for a Minipe colonist household around 1951. In 1969 it was Rs.271[3] per month and in 1972, Rs. 450[4]. By 1976 in Handaganawa it was found to have increased to Rs. 714 per month.[5] The income levels of a colonist household had doubled

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[1] Functional Literacy was defined as the ability to read that will not degenerate to illiteracy after leaving school. (Hamiltion, G., "*"Increased Child Labour ; - An External Diseconomy of Rural Employment Creation for Adults". Asian Economies December, 1975, p. 38)*

[2] Farmer, B,H, (1957) p. 261 : — Income From Paddy
[3] Jogaratnam T: Schickele, R., (1969) Table 5 a: Income from paddy
[4] Amarasinghe (1972) p. 86 : Income from paddy
[5] ARTI-ACDA Survey : 1976 - 77 : Questionnaire Data : Income from Paddy.

in the twenty five-year period between 1951 and 1976. The budget of a Handaganawa household for 1975/76 which illustrates the income and expenditure characteristics is given below.

Table 7.:- Income and Expenditure of a Handaganawa household for 1975/1976 (average per household)

Cash income from:	Rs. Month	% of total income
Paddy	921.66	88.81
Other crops	34.01	3.28
Livestock[1] & Products	6.16	0.59
Renting out farm equipment	10.54	1.02
Income from Off-farm sources	65.43	6.30
Gross Income	1,037.80	100.00
Cash Expenditure	**Rs. Month**	**% of total expd:**
[2] Agro-expenditure	307.74	35.33
[3] Household expenditure	557.76	64.02
Taxes	5.63	0.65
Gross expenditure	871.13	100.00
Net income	714.42	

[1] Of the 98 households interviewed by the ARTI-ACDA Survey, 67 households did not own cattle, and 62 households did not own buffaloes. The lack of grazing land, which was not allowed in the scheme design coupled with excessive encroachment on all available reservation lands have seriously impeded the development of the livestock industry in the scheme.

[2] Agro-Expenditure	Rs. Month	% of total
Fertilizer	100.94	32.80
Agro-chemicals	10.10	3.28
Buffalo-power	41.34	13.43
Tractor-power	54.06	17.57
Labour wages	40.93	13.30
Victuals	38.70	12.58
Others	21.67	7.04
Total Agro-Expenditure	207.74	100.00

[3] Household Expenditure	Rs. Month	% of total
Food	394.74	70.95
Clothing	78.33	14.04
Education	38.04	6.82
Transport	26.31	4.72
Medical	19.34	3.47
Total household expenditure	557.76	100.00

Source: ARTI-AEDA Survey : (1976/77) Questionnaire Data.

The ARTI-ACDA Survey showed that approximately 55% of the sample households received incomes between Rs.420- Rs.830 per month. A little over 6% of the households received less than Rs.210 per month, whereas nearly 19% of the households received over Rs.1040 per month. The following table indicates a classification of the Handaganawa households on the basis of the net incomes received.

Table 8: ARTI-ACDA Survey : Handaganawa Sample Net Income Groups

Attributes	Net income groups (Rs.Month)	Households No:	%
Low	Below 210	6	
	210 - 420	11	17.34
Medium	421 - 625	27	
	626 - 830	26	54.08
High	831 - 1040	10	
	1041 - 1250	11	28.56
Very high	over 1250	7	

Source: ARTI-ACDA Survey (1976/77) Questionnaire Data.

The distribution of households under different income strata shown by two studies indicate a steady shift of colony households towards higher income levels over the years (see table below)

Table 9 :-

Amarasinghe Survey (1972 : 128) % of households		ARTI-ACDA Survey (1976) % of Households	
Income groups (Rs.Month)	1966/67 N = 40	1970/71 N = 51	Income groups (Rs. Month)	1976/77 N = 98
Below 417	72	46	Below 420	17
417 and above	28	54	420 and above	83

An average Handaganawa household appeared to be relatively very much better off than an average village household. With a *'type plan house'* built by the Government and relatively larger extents of land owned, with access to numerous facilities (irrigation, ready access to agro-services, good transport network, higher accessibility to health and other services), and boasting of a gross income of Rs.1038 per month per household (which was nearly four times the gross income of an average village household) colonists seemed to have achieved the prosperity level expected of the colonisation scheme by its originators.

The veneer of affluence shown by higher incomes and higher paddy yields however hides strong internal disparities in living conditions among colonists in the Minipe scheme.

In terms of income distribution there were inequalities. For example, the ARTI-ACDA Survey showed that 17% of the sample -households receiving monthly incomes of below Rs.421- accounted for only 7% of the total income received by all households ; whereas, 18% of the sample households which received incomes of over Rs.1040 per month accounted for about 33%

of the total income received by all of the households, The share of the upper income group of the total income received by all households was nearly 5 times larger than that of the lower income group.

Table - 10 :- Income Distribution
Rs. Month

Income categories Rs. Month	Proportion of households %	Share in the total income received by all households %
Below 210	6.12	1.15
210 - 420	11.22	5.74
421 - 625	27.55	19.92
626 - 830	26.53	25.91
831 - 1040	10.20	13.85
1040 - 1250	11.22	17.62
Over 1250	7.14	15.81

Source: ARTI-ACDA Survey ; Questionnaire Data,

With the average size of a household as 7 persons, expenditures on basic needs accounted for 64% of the total monthly expenditure of Handaganawa households in 1976. Expenses incurred on food alone were approximately 71% of the total household expenditure.[1] This trend brings into sharper focus the subsistence mentality of most of the settlers. Spending and saving habits of most of the settlers are not geared to commercialised

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[1] This was very much more than the comparable figure (of 55%) for an average rural household in Sri Lanka.[1] Though population growth and resultant increase in expenditure on the maintenance of large families may be considered to be among the foremost causal factors affecting expenditure patterns in a colony household, why expenditure on food as a percentage of the total household expenditure varies as much as 15% in a colony household from that of a typical rural household for Sri Lanka is not quite clear. The higher expenditure on food in a colonist household may partly be the result of the higher size of a household (7 persons) in the colony as against the situation of rural household (5.8persons) in Sri Lanka.[2] Perhaps the harsh environment and the frontier type of life (with a ceaseless struggle to survive with little avenues for relation and for a settled way of life as found in traditional villages) generate higher energy demands (requiring more food intake for mere physical survival).

Sources for 1 and 2 : Department of Census and Statistics, Socio-Economic Survey of Sri Lanka: 1969-70 (Colombo: 1973) , p. 112 Table No: 20.s.; Department of Census and Statistics, The Population of Sri Lanka (Colombo: 1974) p.54

farming - which the founding fathers of the scheme visualised to be the end state of the families they chose to be settlers of the Minipe scheme. It is a very much obvious feature in the scheme that immediately following a harvest, having acquired a sufficient income through the sale of paddy, settlers tend to buy more clothing of fanciful textures and styles, buy jewellery, spend more on eatables, go on pilgrimages and much frequent visits to the nearby town on shopping sprees.

During the harvesting time, gambling dens and illict liquor selling points come up in almost every kiosk, grocery store, eating place, in certain colony homes and even on secluded spots on the channel bunds. Market places of Morayaya, Hasalaka and Mahiyangana towns exhibit varieties of textiles, clothing, radios, other household goods and agro-implements , which are quickly bought up by the colonists. Film theatres have packed audiences. Instances were recorded during the ARTI-ACDA Survey of settlers of Handaganawa who had travelled all the way to the Hasalaka town (7 miles away) for a haircut and a shave, though at the Handaganawa junction itself, there is a barber saloon.

The excess expenditure[1] as a result of boosted needs during this period has a strong bearing on the average monthly household expenditure among colonists. Within the second month or so after the harvest incomes earned from paddy sales (after paying back agro-loans and private debts) are nearly gone. Farmers begin to apply for agro-loans from rural banks, which according to employees of loan giving organisations in the scheme, are used both to defray cultivation expenses and as a supplementary source of income for subsistence until the next harvest. This income-expenditure cycle repeats in every kanna.

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[1] Reasons for over-spending on personal and household needs immediately after harvesting time appear to go beyond the fact of the mere possession of money. The money aspect may only be an ancilliary factor buttressing more deep seated attitude determinants . For example, colonists tend to view certain innovations (new dress styles, clothing texture, jewellery, household items like radios and sewing machines) and certain behavioural patterns (like indulging in shopping sprees in towns and going on pilgrimages to places of worship scattered over the island) as symbols of relative prosperity and modernity. It may be hypothesised that such innovations and behavioural patterns form symbols of reference through which they evaluate their own social standards: for the period they '*harvest - money*' lasts they are affluent and modern, and at par with a particular group (e.g. urbanites) whom they hold as a reference group for a higher social standing.

However, it must also be stressed that many colonists are in fact conscious that such a phase is of short duration and that during inter-harvesting periods they have to eke out a precarious existence. Thus, some of the innovations they buy up during the harvest period like radios and sewing machines also form items of insurance against hard times. These they sell or mortgage to traders and pawn shops. The over-spending on personal and household needs thus partly acquires a rational base.

8. Agricultural loans and taxes

a. Agricultural loans:

Both the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and the Agricultural Productivity Committee (two major organisations in the scheme) provide loan facilities through Bank networks. The banks provide agricultural loans and other loan formulae aimed at safeguarding the colonists from private money-lenders and lending a helping hand to improve agricultural production.

The position of agricultural loans taken by Handaganawa sample households (ARTI-ACDA Survey) for Maha 1975/76 is given below.

Table 11. Cultivation Loans Position for Maha 1975.76
Handaganawa M.P.C.S. Branch

Study population	:	98 heads of households
Total number of member applicants for cultivation loans	:	72 heads of households
Number of member applicants eligible for cultivation loans	:	68 heads of households
Maximum amount payable to the applicants	:	Rs.208,000.00
Total amount taken by applicants	:	Rs. 88,980.00
Total not recovered*	:	Rs. 4,540.00

* (4% of the total amount taken)

Of the sample population 73(73%) households applied for cultivation loans from the Rural Bank for Maha 1975/76, and 70% were considered eligible for a loan. Though the maximum total amount payable to the eligible 69 applicants was fixed at Rs.208,000.00, the loan amounts applied for, added up to only 45% of the maximum amount specified. There also appears to be a general under-utilisation of loans facilities of the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society. Only 45% of the maximum amount specified were utilised by the member applicants.

The repayment of cultivation loans taken from institutionalised sources has increased tremendously over the years. Jogaratnam and Schickele Survey (1968/69) showed that 75% of the total loans sum from cooperatives were paid back. In the ARTI-ACDA Survey (1975/76) it was found to have increased to 96% (Table 11.) The high repayment figures neither indicate an effective utilisation of the loans taken, an upsurge in conscientiousness on the part of the loan takers, nor a mark of their relative progress towards the ideal of an *'independent commercialised farmer'*. Rather, the high repayment figures hides a contradictory situation of poverty and helplessness among a group of cultivators caught up on a vicious subsistence cycle. A glimpse of this contradiction recorded during the ARTI-ACDA Survey reveals the following:

Even though all of the first generation colonist permit holders received five acre paddy allotments in the Stage I area, not very many cultivate the entire extent by themselves. They usually cultivate about an acre or two, giving the rest, to their relatives or friends to cultivate <u>in-lieu</u> for a share of the produce under an informal agreement, or to

entrepreneurs who come into the scheme during cultivation times[1], to richer colonists and more usually to mudalalis (traders) who reside in the scheme under mortgage or lease conditions.

In case of mortgages or leases an agreement is signed between the permit holder and the leasee or mortgagee. Even though such agreements have no legal validity in terms of colony land laws they are generally adhered to by both parties. Here the binding force appears to be that of fear of strong-arm tactics, social ridicule, and even isolation by both the entrepreneur group and the colony neighbourhood groups at large.

The permit holder is eligible for cultivation loans in terms of his rights to land. He uses the opportunity to obtain cultivation loans for the entire extent (e.g. 5 acres) for which he has a land permit even though in fact he may operate only a portion of it. If he has mortgaged a part of his land, he may venture to pay back the principal sum from the cultivation loan he receives in order to terminate the mortgage agreement. Any balance money which remains is kept to defray expenses incurred in the lands he actually cultivates or for his subsistence needs.

The land a permit holder gets back through the termination of a mortgage agreement is soon mortgaged again. Part of the mortgage money received is utilised to pay back the cultivation loan, so that he is eligible for another at a later date. Once again, any balance money left goes to defray his household or cultivation expenses. Usually the balance money is consumed by his household rather than by his fields.

This process invariably terminates with an eventual selling off the lands to creditors. The land extents leased out may eventually reach the same end-. On straight reckoning there has thus emerged in the scheme much hidden tenancy as a result of leasing and mortgaging out of paddy lands. In recent times this had led to an emergence of large *'landlords'* within the scheme. One such, a *mudalali* , was identified during the ARTI-ACDA Survey who is reported to operate nearly 100 acres of paddy lands leased- and mortgaged-in or bought outright from the colonists.

The institutionalised cultivation loan formulae in the above context appears to be deeply embedded in the day-to-day subsistence oriented livelihood among colonists.

In this context the phenomenon of under-utilisation of agricultural loans identified before (Table 11,) may be interpreted as a desire on the part of those colonists, who use cultivation loans to pay back money borrowed from private sources, to reduce the inevitable socio-psychological and economic stresses associated with loan-taking and indebtedness. The smaller agricultural loans sums desired by the colonists also perhaps parallel their perceived and de facto capacity to pay back.

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[1] These entrepreneurs are usually accompanied by a group of persons (relatives, friends) from their home villages who with them cultivate the leased and mortgaged in paddy extents. The mortgagee enjoys the entire produce of the land, which is treated as being equivalent to the interest on the principal sum of the mortgage, until the principal sum is paid back in full to him by the mortgager.

b, Colony taxes

Colonists are required to pay more taxes now than they used to pay in the pre-1970 period. A pre-1970 colonist household owning 5 acres of irrigated paddy had to pay an acreage tax of Rs.6/- per acre per year to the Cultivation Committee, and a land tax of Rs.10/- per acre as annual payment for the lands held under permit. Altogether a household was required to pay a total sum of Rs.80/- per year. Since 1970 a crop insurance premium of Rs.18/- per acre per year is charged from colonists' households. It brought the total expenditure of tax payment to Rs.170/- per year - 212% increase in total expenditure on tax premium payments.

On the eve of the 1977 elections a new water tax ; *"land betterment charge"*[1] was to be added to the total number of visible taxes which an average colony household has to bear. This new tax however was not enforced. Besides these taxes a colony household has to bear a host of disguised levies charged by the colony organisations for the supply of agro-chemicals, fertilizer and so on.

Invariably, it is the lower income groups in the scheme who are most affected and who react most by non-payment of taxes over years.

All allottees who had received land permits in the Minipe Scheme are required to pay a sum of Rs.10/- per acre per year for the lands held by them. The tax is collected by Overseers/Land Development Ordinance (OLDOs) residing in the colony. The payments made by the 98 households (ARTI-ACDS Survey to the OLDO (Handaganawa) for the 1960-76 years show a high default rate. For example between the years 1960-76 years nearly 50% of the sample households never paid the colony tax (See table 12.) below.

Table 12: Payment of colony tax by 98 households (1960 - 1976 years)

	Households No:	%
Households which paid the colony tax for at least one year	51	52
Households which have never paid the colony tax	47	48

Table 13_ Payment of colony tax by the 98 households categorised under income levels

(1960 - 1976 years)

Income Groups	Total households N = 98	Households which paid colony tax of at least one year No:	%	Households which never paid colony tax No:	%
High (above 830)	28	18	64,29	10	35.71
Medium(421-830)	53	29	54,72	24	45.28
Low(Below 421)	17	4	23,53	13	76.47

[1] Government of Sri Lanka, Land Betterment Charge Bill presented to the National State Assembly by the Minister of Irrigation, Power and Highways: June 2, 1976. Published in the Gazette (Colombo :Department of Government Printing : May 21, 1976).

It is also noteworthy that the highest proportion of households within an income group which never paid the colony tax was in the low income category. Within this income group 76% of the households was found to have never paid the colony tax. The higher income group showed the lowest proportion (36%) of colony tax defaulters. Higher burdens of economic pressure placed on low income families especially those which have more mouths to feed perhaps affected their ability to pay colony taxes.

CHAPTER III

THE EMERGENT COLONY SOCIETY

This chapter examines the colony society as it exists today in terms of its organisations and other social groupings, its paths of social mobility and patron-client nexus, as well as in terms of avenues of integration of colonists with the environment of the Minipe Scheme.

1. Formal and Informal Organisations

The entire Minipe Scheme is administered and served by the Central Government through regional offices of the Departments concerned.

The Stage I of the scheme in addition is serviced by a number of organisations, which operate both at the colony stage level and the colony village (diversion channel) level. The following table summerises the status and the level of operation of these organisations after mid 1977. (see Table I4 on page 30).

Some of the more prominent of these organisations are described below:

The Cooperative

A network of seven branch cooperatives whose activities are coordinated by an apex organisation- the Minipe Multi-Purpose Cooperative Union- serves the Stage I area. The cooperative union consisted of a Board of Directors who were responsible for administering the activities of the cooperatives in the area. The main activities of the cooperatives were:

(i) Sales of consumer articles
(ii) Purchase of Paddy
(iii) Issuence of cultivation loans through the rural bank branches attached to them.
(iv) Sale of agricultural implements, fertilizer, agro-chemicals and seed paddy.
(v) Provision of tractor-hire facilities.

The cooperative Union housed the main office of the Rural Bank while each of the seven branch cooperatives had a rural bank unit. Their activities were administered by a Credit Manager attached to the main bank office in the cooperative union.

The cooperative union had 14 members on the Board of Directors of which 9 were appointed by the Commissioner of Cooperatives on the recommendations of the area political authority and 5 were elected by the representatives from branch cooperatives. This recruitment procedure resulted in aligning the committee members of the ceoperatives strongly to the party in power and to the political authority.

The Agricultural Productivity Committee - Cultivation Committees

During the 1972-1977 period the Stage I area was served by an Agricultural Productivity Committee (the Minipe APC) which had under it 12 Cultivation Committees operating at the colony-village level. Each Cultivation Committee exercised its control over approximately 480 acres of colony territory,

while the APC operated at the colony stage level.

Within its area of authority the APC was in charge of promotion, coordination and development of agriculture, assisting in the formulation of implementation programmes and targets for productions of crops and live-stock acquisition and disposal of property within its area authority, and in the implementation of the Paddy Lands Act.

The APC consisted of 10 members while each Cultivation Committee also consisted of 10 members. All were appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands on the recommendations of the area political authority. The nature of recruitment of office bearers to the APC and CC made them strongly aligned to the political party in power.

Rural Development Society;

The Stage I area had a number of Rural Development Societies created by the colonists themselves. Many of them were not registered with the Department of Rural Development. The objectives of this organisation was threefold; Economic Development , Social Development and Cultural Development. The basic thought behind the Rural Development Societies was to strive toward achieving the above objectives through a spirit of self-help. Most of the members of this organisation were youth, of both sexes.

Generally the working committee of the Rural Development Society consisted of a President, a Vice-President , A Secretary and at times an Auditor. This organisation is affected in its activities by a lack of finances. The funds necessary for the society are collected from membership levies, voluntary donations from benefactors and such other sources.

The society is formed by the colonists themselves to cater to immediate needs like construction of a community well, road, and so on. The Committee of the Society is elected by a popular vote. The Society is informal and it represents diverse socio-political groupings which exist in the colony.

Village Council:

In 1970 the Minister of Public Administration and Home Affairs dissolved a large number of village councils and placed them under direct control of the Department of Local Government through the medium of special Commissioners, to administer the affairs of the council.

The Udadumbara - Minipe village council which served Stage I of the Minipe Scheme was also under the control of such a special Commissioner. No fresh elections had been held since then.

The village Council had the power to establish and maintain any public service which was required for the welfare and the convenience of the public. It consisted of 15 Councillors previously elected by popular vote to represent 15 wards. They elected from among their number a President and Vice-President to head the Council activities. However, during the 1972-77 period the Village Council was in a state of dormancy.

ORGANISATIONS SERVICING THE MINIPE SCHEME*

Table 14:

	Agriculture & General economic development (Production, service)	Community Development	Bargaining/ claim making	Land maintenance litigation	Local govt.	Management/ advisory bodies and service organisations.
Colony Level						
(Stage I)						
a. Statutory	1. Minipe M.P.C.S. 2. Minipe A.P.C.			1. Conciliation Board	1. Village council	
b. Non-Statutory			Political Parties 1. Stage I Organising committee U.N.P. 2. Stage II Organising committee S.L.F.P.			
Diversion Channel Level (Channels 19-21 Handaganawa)						
a. Statutory	3. MPCS Branch 4. Cultivation Committees			2. People's Committees		
b. Non-Statutory		1. Rural Development Society	Political parties 3. village branch UNP 4. Village Branch SLFP			1. Parent-teacher Association. 2. Temple Committees 3. Death Donation Societies

* The situation as at December 1, 1976.

Other Organisations:

Besides the statutory organisations like the cooperative, the Agricultural Productivity Committee, Cultivation Committee and Village Council and non-statutory but registered organisations like the Rural Development Societies, the Stage I area had a host of village level organisations created by the villagers themselves, to satisfy various localised needs. They are : The Temple Committees, Death Donation Societies (*Maranadhara Samithi*), Parent-Teacher Associations, Farmer Societies and so on. The Committee members of these organisations were elected by their membership. Most of the organisations were voluntary in nature. They did not command much funds. The only funds collected were through membership levies and donations.

Much of the work done by these organisations was through voluntary assistance given by their members. These organisations usually cut across cleavages of the colony society based on caste, economic and political status, and other considerations.

ii. Representation of Groups in Organisations

Most of the persons who may be called '*farmer - trador*' intermediaries belong to the middle and upper income categories. Almost all of them are highly represented in many major colony organisations. This brings into focus the imbalanced nature of representation of different income groups within the organisations. Though a number of colony organisations like the Agricultural Productivity Committee - Cultivation Committees and the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society are meant to safeguard the interests of '*under-privileged*' groups, the economic status of office bearers of these organisations reveals a strong bias towards intermediate to high income groups. The only exception lies in the Rural Development Society which is '*a poor man's organisation*' (See Table below).

Table 15 : The distribution of office-bearers of selected organisations according to status

Organisations	Representation of office bearers in income categories		
	Upper %	Middle %	Lower %
MPCS (Union)	60.0	40.0	-
MPCS (Branch)	40.0	40.0	20.0
APC-CC	70.0	20.0	10.0
RDS	20.0	20.0	60.0
Average for study area	27.6	28.6	44.8

Source : ARTI-ACDA Survey : Questionnaire Data

Most of the office bearers of the major colony organisations serving the study area society were of '*middle - upper*' income groups. All of the office bearers of Agricultural Productivity Committee and the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society were appointed on the recommendations of the area political authority. Invariably, these Committee members belonged to the same political party (The Sri Lanka Freedom Party) as the area political authority.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, the Chairman of the Agricultural Productivity Committee and the Handaganawa Cultivation Committee are prominent figures in the SLFP organisational network in the Minipe Scheme Stage I area. Invariably,

the nominated members in their Committees were those who had been recommended by them to the area political authority as suitable candidates on the basis of political and personal loyalties to the party and to the Chairman. The political affiliations of office bearers of colony organisations identified by the ARTI Survey are shown below:

Table 16: Political affiliations of office bearers of organisations

Organisations	Political affiliations		
	SLFP %	UNP %	Unknown %
MPCS (Union and Branch) Chairman	100,0	-	-
Other Committee Members	78,0	11,0	11,0
APC Chairman	100,0	-	-
Other Committee Members	100,0	-	-
CC Chairman	100,0	-	-
Other Committee members	57,0	-	43,0
RDS President	-	100,0	-
Other Committee Members	25,0	75.0	

Source ; ARTI-ACDA Survey : Questionnaire and Informant Interview Data.

The findings seem to indicate that the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in power at the time of the survey, had a firm foothold on the recruitment of members to the Committee of major organisations.

In the non-statutory organisations the relatively affluent sectors in terms of income and family heritage hold positions of importance. These are a group of influentials (the *Goigama Radala Group*) who form a type of reference group for the rest of the colony society in terms of social standing. They usually occupy positions of 'Treasurer' and 'Patron-adviser' in non-statutory organisations, which are considered to be prestigeous positions in the colony society. The following table illustrates the representation of the *Radala* group in the non-statutory organisations of the colony.

Table 17 : Positions held by the Govigama (Radala) group in non-statutory organisations

Family Name	Organisation	Post held
Rambukwella	Temple Committee (Handagal Vihara)	Treasurer
	Rural Development Society (Handaganawa)	Patron-Advisor
Madugalle	Temple Committee (Indrarama Vihara)	Treasurer
Karaliadde	Parent-Teacher Association (Handaganawa)	Treasurer

Sources : ARTI-ACDS Survey ; Records of Organisations

These individuals because of their higher social recognition are invited as guests of honour to important village functions. Certain leaders of the study organisations who had achieved such positions on the basis of political affiliations, attempt to gain social recognition through association with the Govigama Radala group. For example, the Chairman of the MPCS Union, was a low country businessman, (mudalali) who came to the scheme in the later 1940s. *(Persons who originate from the low country regions of the island, especially those of the Wet Zone lowlands, are treated with an element of social disdain by the colonists who are of Kandyan Origin)* The Chairman of the MPCS Union in addition belonged to the Karawe caste. This was lower placed in the semi-feudal caste hierarchy of the island. Even though many colonists were dependent on him, as a result of his retail trade concerns and his links with the political authority, the police and hospital authorities, they did not accord him the same social recognition they accorded to the impoverished members of Govigama Radala houses who lived in the colony as fellow colonists. The Mudalali attempted to strengthen his position by winning the support of the Korale Mahattaya[1] a member of Mediwaka - Madugalle families (Govigama Radala group) mentioned before. At the local-level (Handaganawa) he is on friendly terms with the members of Rambukwella and Madugalle groups.

iii. Colony Influentials and Paths of Emergence

Though almost all of the original allottees have begun their colony life with a nearly uniform base in land extent, housing conditions , irrigation and agro-inputs facilities, and so on , as time went on only a few have emerged as the more affluent and influential.

Previous experience in irrigated paddy cultivation, in marketing produce and in organisational activities certainly seems to have had a bearing

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[1] A title given to an administrative officer in charge of a territorial unit known as Korale (roughly equal in size to a present-day Assistant Government Agent's Division). The authority held by a Korale Mahattaya was however, more than what is held by a present day Assistant Government Agent. The Korale Mahattaya system was replaced after independence with the District Revenue Officer System (and later on by the Assistant Government Agent).

on this situation.[1] Some of the cultivators had a certain amount of experience in working irrigated paddy lands under village *pathahas* and in marketing paddy and vegetables, carried over from their home villages. Some of them held posts of responsibility in organisations of their home villages. Generally most of them gathered experience in organised activities in the scheme itself, which had a multitude of statutory and non-statutory organisations.

Caste and lineage were important factors in determining the social acceptance of emergent cultivators in the scheme, especially since all of the allottees were from a single cultural region bound together through Kandyan cultural traditions and its caste system.[2] It is a noteworthy fact that all of the colony cultivators who have risen to positions of importance in the major organisations (including the political organisational network) in the scheme belong to the Goigama caste, generally accepted to be the uppermost rung in the feudal caste hierarchy of the island.[3]

Traders, especially those from the low country regions who came to the colony in the early years of settlement also form a group of intermediaries between the area political -authority and the colonists. These traders appear to exercise their influence in the scheme, through a number of stages, beginning with the opening up of business concerns (like a grocery store or an eating place). Certain allottees who appear to be intermediaries in the scheme also appear to go through the stage of opening up such small business concerns.

Through these business concerns they build up their clientele who gradually become attached to them as a result of purchasing goods on credit. These businessmen (of both trader and allottee origins) popularly known as the Mudalalis provide patronage to non-statutory village organisations like the Death Donation Societies, Temple, Societies, Young Farmer Clubs , Rural Development Societies, and so on, which usually do not get central Government funds. Through donations in cash and kind they make themselves an

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[1] A studies of response of farmers to irrigation facilities under similar circumstances showed that persons who had previous experience and skills in cultivating and managing irrigated lands, who had experience in marketing, have emerged as more enterprising than the rest. They were found to be more innovative and showed more entrepreneurial initiative.

Source: Baviskar, B.S. "Opportunity and Response: Social Factors in Agricultural Development in Maharashtra", IDS Bulletin, Vol. 8, No: 2, (Sept. 1976) p. 23.

[2] See Appendix III for a general description of the stratification of colony society.

[3] This feature was also noted in another Dry Zone Colonisation Scheme . See: Ganewatte, P., Patterns of Leadership in Colonisation Schemes: Leadership Study .. Dewahuwa special Project , (Colombo : Land Commissioner's Department , January, 1972) pp. 7 - 8.mimeo.

indispensable part of such organisations and are usually elected by the members as their patron-advisors and Presidents. This stage in the upward mobility serve to widen the networks of contacts of these individuals and establish them as popular social workers of the colony community.

At another stage in their upward mobility they attach themselves to a particular political cause and are invariably appointed (or elected by their clients) to large statutory organisations which serve the entire colony. Thus, an extension of personal influence of these individuals from a locality-level to a colony level position is achieved. Through political affiliations some of them extend their influence into other organisations in the scheme. For example, nearly all of the apex persons identified in the MPCS, the APC and the RDS by the ARTI-ACDA Survey were found to hold positions of responsibility on one or more other organisations besides the particular ones in which they were identified. The following table illustrates the postition.

Table 18: FORMAL POSITIONS HELD BY APEX PERSONS OF STUDY ORGANISATIONS

Study Area Organisation	Post	Positions held in other Organisations			Date
		Other organisations	Post	Location	
MPCS Union	Chairman	Peoples Committee	Chairman	Morayaya	1970 to date
		Death Donation Soc:	Chairman	Morayaya	1972 to date
	Committee Member	MPCS Branch	Chairman	Morayaya	1974 to date
		Conciliation Board	Vice "	Minipe Stage I	1974 to date
		Cultivation Comm:	President	Bembiya	1970 to date
		Buddhist Society	Secretary	"	1962 to date
		RDS	Treasurer	"	1965 to date
		Minipe Eye Donation Society	Treasurer	Stage I	1975 to date
MPCS Branch (Sirisangabo)	Secretary	SLFP Branch	Secretary	H'nawa	1974 to date
		APC	Com. Memb.	Morayaya	1974 to date
APC	Chairman	Indrarama Temple Committee	Com.Mem.	H'nawa	1953 to date
	Secretary	Conciliation Board	Chairman	Minipe Stage I	1974 to date
		Buddhist Society	President	Morayaya	1971 to date
		Morayaya Central School	Treasurer	Morayaya	1972 to date
CC	President	Minipe VC	VC Chairman	Minipe Stage I	1963 [illegible]
		Minipe Divisional Development Council	Asst:Sec:	Minipe Stage I	1972 to date
		People's Committee	President	H'nawa	1972 to date
		Community Centre	President	H'nawa	1972 to date
		Farmers' Trade Union	President	H'nawa	1972 to date
		SLFP Branch	President	H'nawa	1974 to date
		Sirisangabo MPCS Branch	Secretary	H'nawa	1963 to date
RDS	President (1975-76)	Temple Committee (Sandagal Vihara)	Committee Member	H'nawa	1976 to date

Source : ARTI-ACDA Survey : Questionnaire Data ; * As at 1.12.1976
Records of Organisations/

Thrpugh the attachment to a particular political cause and through involvement in colony level organisations these emergents come into close contact with the area political authority. This contact position is usually usurped by these emergents to achieve the status of an intermediary between colonists and the politician. Colonists of both Stage I and Stage II area of the scheme usually obtained letters of recommendation from such intermediaries and from the area political authority. The picture which emerges is thus one of a strong dependency relationship of the colonists on the intermediary.

On another dimension intermediaries may be identified as risk takers for the colony community. As a result of their drive to emerge from the colony society and to extend their influence they occupy strategic positions which

are at the crosss roads for various types of relations and actions such as political party organisational network, administrative institutions and State authorities, economic units of production and so on.

The strategic positions they occupy are, however, impermanent, especially since most of them are derived through their commitment to a particular political cause.[1] The very realisation of this aspect by the intermediaries has pushed them to strive for friendship ties with notable supporters of an opposing party in order to survive a possible political change. The move to generate and maintain affinal relations with political opponents takes different forms in the colony. Preferential treatment is accorded to strong political opponents by means of agro-service and consumer service organisations (like the MPCS and APC) which are meant to serve all colonists on an impartial basis. The intermediaries hasten to act on complaints voiced by the opponents in non-statutory organisations created by the colonists themselves which serve particular needs. The high degree of participation and informal behaviour of members observed in the activities of these organisations (in shramadana work, in temple ceremonies, in chores associated with weddings, funerals, Pirith, and Dhana ceremonies of individual members of the organisations) provides ample opportunities for winning over *"opponents"*.

Another group of influentials exist, who draw on traditional sources of power like caste, lineage, family connections and economic strength. They usually do not occupy positions of responsibility in major colony organisations. These play a role of *"unobtrusive dominance"* controlling and manipulating both types of intermediaries discussed above, as well as even the political authority himself. They even exert some influence over the regional bureaucracy. They are best categorised as the *Goigama Radala* group. They belong to the Goigama caste and are members of houses of note in the Kandyan region.

In the Minipe scheme context they form the apex group in terms of social acceptance. Some members of this group are not colonists, but are big landowners who reside in the scheme environment.

However, the ARTI-ACDA Survey noted several examples of impoverished members of these houses residing in the scheme as allottees. These not only exhibit a higher business acumen than an average colonist but are also accorded a relatively higher social recognition by fellow-colonists at a locality-level. For example, it was noted that members of these families usually were elected as patron-advisors and Treasurers (popularly considered to be prestigious local-level positions)of organisations like the Temple Society and the Rural

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[1] This is exemplified in the Minipe Scheme where a low country Mudalali in the Stage I area and a rich colonist in the Stage II area who held positions of importance in major colony-level organisations through their political and personal affiliations with the MP for the scheme area in the 1970-77 period lost all the positions immediately following the General Election of 1977. Their property was destroyed and they themselves were evicted from the Minipe Scheme by enraged colonists who had suffered long under their control.

Development Society. The higher business acumen these persons exhibit and the tendency of other colonists to treat them as persons of high integrity may be interpreted as a carry over of social class differences, traditions, and special aptitudes (business acumen) from their home villages.

iv. Bases of Integration

Though an internal differentiation of the colony society on the basis of income, and other such criteria exists, retention of customs like attam and the presence of non-statutory organisations not only satisfied spontaneous needs but also were potentially capable of levelling down existing differences in the colony society. They serve to keep the colony society together.

The ARTI-ACDA Survey showed that 78% of the heads of sample households in Handaganawa practice attam. Though among the colony poor, the proportion practising attam was slightly higher (84%) than among the few households which formed the colony affluents (70%), as a general practice based on the principle of cooperation in agricultural activity the custom was widely accepted.

Because of the largeness of paddy holdings in the colony attam at most is a triadic contract made among owners (usually bound together by kinship ties) of contiguous paddy holdings. The contract entails an obligation on the part of an owner of a paddy holding who is helped in certain cultivation tasks by another to return the favour. The cultivation activity in the colony is conducted along a relatively tight schedule which coupled with the largeness of holdings hardly leaves time to help each other in cultivation activities on a more extensive scale.

In the colony community voluntary exchange of certain high utility articles satisfies particular needs related to agricultural work. For example, *petromax* lamps (a trade name for a pressure lamp) are among the high utility articles in agricultural work especially at the threshing stage. A cultivator who owns a petromax lamp usually lends it to a certain number (usually 2-3) of close associates during the threshing times of their paddy when many such lamps are needed. They in turn lend their own lamps to the cultivator when his turn has come for threshing.

Except for expenses incurred in getting kerosene for the lamps and replacing filaments and so forth, which are borne by the borrower(s), no other monetary involvement is attached to this exchange process. In instances where the borrower does not have a petromax of his own, he completes his side of the obligation by providing some other article useful in threshing or a bottle of liquor to the lender. The same process also is present in case of draught animals which play a vital role in land preparation and threshing work. The spirit of mutual help which pervades these exchanges brings in certain amount of harmony in social relationships among different groups in the colony.

An element of integration exists in occasional Shramadana campaigns organised by both formal and informal organisations in the colony. Since the sponsorship of such activity is through organisations like the Rural Development Society there is wider popular participation which cuts across caste, political and income groupings. About 200-250 persons usually join on such occasions. During the period on which shramadana activities are

done either the sponsor organisations or a number of affluent homes, or both provide victuals for the workers. The work is done on a high spirit of camaraderie. For example, among the Handaganawa sample households (ARTI-ACDA Survey) 90% indicated that they had been involved in Shramadana work during the last three years. Among the colony poor it was 84% and among the colony rich it was 93%.

The colony society in Handaganawa is also served by a number of non-statutory organisations. A Rural Development Society, two temple organisations, a Death Donation Society and a Parent-Teacher Association. Unlike in the statutory organisations like the Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society, the Agricultural Productivity Committee and the Cultivation Committee, office bearers for these organisations are elected at a meeting of the general membership by a show of hands. Popular participation in the activities of these non-statutory organisations is high. Popular participation is high especially because the organisations have been created by the colony society itself - to serve specific felt-needs not accounted for by the statutory organisations. For example the Death Donation Society was created to help the colony families to tide over expenses incurred by a death of a member. The Rural Development Society was created to attend to the building up and maintenance of localised infra-structure facilities (bridges, culverts, roads etc)., which are not attended to by the village Council or other large statutory organisations. The Temple Committee strives to satisfy various cultural needs associated with the temple like religious ceremonies and so on. The parent-teacher Association similarly forms the meeting ground for both sectors to voice grievances and to decide on courses of action aimed at helping to keep up educational standards. Such organisations provide a meeting ground for different socio-economic groups. Occasionally inter-group conflicts surface at functions organised by these organisations.

At the inceptional stages in the formation of the Minipe Scheme certain time allowances were made by the state for the newly settled families to choose neighbourhoods they most preferred. The land permits were issued after they settled into such settlement niches.

A great deal of homogeneity in terms of caste, kinship relations, place of origin, is at present seen among the households which form these settlement or neighbourhood groups. For example, certain diversion channel area settlements represent families who have moved out of certain villages. Within individual diversion channel areas there are small aggregations of households knitted together on the basis of caste or kinship ties.[1] As with villages outside the colonisation scheme, marital and other social relationships, economic ties and other linkage elements bind these *'discrete'* aggregations of households into a single colony society.

The infiltration of national political parties into the colony has contributed towards the integration of the society temporarily along political affiliations. For a short period before or after general or local (village council) elections the various neighbourhood groups coalesce into almost distinct political groups - usually around United National

[1] The Bulankulama study (1970) also notes the socio-cultural homogeneity within these neighbourhood groups in the Hanadawa (Handaganawa) area.

Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. However, except for a hard core of party supporters the rest soon fall back into their former niches in the colony.

The scheme as a whole is distinct from the surrounding areas in terms of its economy, its infra-structural facilities and the relative prosperity of its settlers. In contrast, the nearby villages of the Dumbara region are more congested and economically poor. The villages across the *Mahaweli River* to the East in the *Mahiyangana* area consist mostly of *veddas* - an ethnic minority who are both economically and socially well below the colonists or the villagers of the Dumbara region. There thus has emerged a feeling of togetherness among colonists -that they are a distinctive group in the Minipe environments. Terms such as '*Janapada Vasi*' '*Janapada Minissu*' used by colonists when identifying themselves and '*Kolonikarayo*' when they are identified by villagers of the Dumbara region express the distinctiveness of members of the scheme vis-a-vis the members of traditional villages. Yet this distinctiveness has not isolated the colony or its people from its environment.

The Minipe Scheme is '*integrated*' well with its surrounding areas. Since an overwhelming majority of the colonists are from the villages of the Dumbara region in which the scheme is located there is a constant outflow of wealth from the colonists to their relatives in the home villages. There is also a heavy seasonal migration of labour from villages of the Kandyan regions during peak labour demand times in the colonisation scheme. These are mostly unemployed persons between 14 - and 30 - 35 years of age, of both sexes, who usually find temporary accomodation in homes of their relatives in the colony. They work as casual labour in paddy cultivation for one or two months before going back to their home villages.

Marital relationships are maintained between the colony and the home villages, though this feature appears to have declined over time with the increasing stability and development of the scheme. Now most eligible males and females find their partners from within the colony itself.

An excellent transportation network connects the Minipe scheme with the rest of the island. For example in the Stage I area, single bus plies up and down once a day between the Minipe junction (near the main anicut) via Handaganawa and Morayaya junction settlements and the Mahiyangana town, across the Mahaweli river. A postal link connects the two main post offices located at Hasalaka and Mahiyangana towns and a number of affiliated sub post offices in the scheme with the rest of the island. The special project status of the scheme has intensified the activities of the central government in the scheme.

The Minipe scheme in general exhibits features of both internal integration of the colony society through organisations, similarities on the basis of area of origin of the settlers, economic activities and facilities, as well as external integration with the outside environment through the economic and social relationships which it has formed with traditional villages. It is also strongly linked to the national administrative and developmental matrix through its status as a special colonisation project.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

On a limited land extent whose borders cannot be extended further because of physiographic limitations and whose surface cannot be fragmented among heirs beyond the limits prescribed by colony land laws governing inheritance, population has undergone nearly a threefold increase between 1953 and 1976.

Within the colony context a handful of families have managed to achieve high income and high living standards amidst a mass of settlers who eke out a day - to - day existence. Indebtedness, lack of saving habits, and subsistence orientation among most colonists (especially the relatively poorer groups) have made them particularly sensitive to occasional environmental perturbations like a failure of a monsoon affecting their crops or to price fluctuations in paddy. Such micro changes generate disproportionate hardships in the poorer groups who maintain a precarious balance between low levels of subsistence and abject poverty. They attempt to weather such changes in their physical and economic environment by leasing out and renting out their lands to the colony affluent households, traders and other entrepreneurial types. The already affluent have as a result become richer and the poor become increasingly dependent on them for survival.

Administrative actions by the governments like writing off debts to Rural Banks, introducing new loan formulae have not had a desired effect since many of the colony poor were found to have adapted their life patterns around these loan formulae. Rapid improvements in agricultural production over years served more to increase disparities among various income groups than to generate improvement of living conditions of the colonists at large. New credit formulae and other agro input services benefit more the affluent sectors among the cultivators who are capable of putting the agro input services to better use than the poorer lot who adapt their life style around them. For many of the latter group access to institutionalised credit has merely extended the period of transformation from permit holders to tenants and agricultural labour in their own lands.

In terms of accessibility to agro-inputs services and other service facilities and accessibility to sources of regional authority which lie behind organisations and the entire agrarian structure of the colony, the Minipe scheme presents a picture of privileged few on whom are dependent a large mass of the colony poor.

The shifting sources of regional authority especially after 1970 have not only increased the outward orientation of colonists, who now have to seek the help of outside authorities like local politicians for needs like land to cultivate and live in, but also have deepened the patron-client relationships in the scheme to an exaggerated extent.

A privileged minority through political affiliations and personal friendship ties have formed links with both the regional bureaucracy and the political authority, and serve as intermediaries between these sources of authority and lesser privileged colonists. The same links are also utilised through colony organisations to extend their influence in the colony society and to emerge as its spokesman.

This seemingly basic patron-client relationship is complicated by a traditional element which had survived in the colony - the presence of a group of influentials (the Govigama Radala group) who draw on inherited sources of prestige and authority.

The intermediaries mentioned before in turn form a client group dependent on the traditional influentials. Some of the influentials who have friendship and affinal ties with the regional bureaucrats and the political authority are looked upon by the intermediaries to intervene on their behalf on different occasions. They serve as patrons le grande to the Minipe Colony Society at large.

Innovativeness and development have not gone hand-in-hand in the Minipe scheme. The Amarasinghe study (1972) showed a high degree of innovativeness among colonists in adopting new paddy varieties, fertilizer , insecticides and pesticides.[1]

However, the expected improvements in living standards have not come about among colonists though production had indeed increased over years. Since many of the poorer households mortgaged or leased out their paddy lands and worked as share croppers in the lands managed by richer allottees or Mudalalis, they in fact readily adopt agro innovations thereby hoping to increase the quantum of paddy coming to them as their 50% share of the harvest.

Even though the colonists attempt to lessen the costs incurred in agricultural activities through the retention of customs like attam and Kaiyya activities, the large size of holdings (generally 5 acres of paddy per permit holder colonist family) deters their effective performance. Attam is effective when individual holdings are small since the time spent on working the land is shorter. When the average holding size is large (as in the Minipe Scheme) a colonist cannot obtain the help of more than two other colonists, since according to the attam contract he in turn has to provide free labour to those who helped him. On larger holdings attempt to counteract this situation by trying out modifications of the attam practice in exchanging buffaloes and agricultural implements. Labour is substituted by exchange of implements in completing the dyadic contract position of attam.

The society which has emerged in the Minipe Scheme since its inception has fallen short of the ideal of a prosperous self-supporting multitude of peasant proprietors as visualised by its founding fathers. Rather, for a majority of the colonists, especially second and third generation types, it is a retrogression into the traditional Kandyan village type subsistence economy with many common elements of poverty generation such as fragmentation, landlessness, unemployment inequitable distribution of wealth and dependence relationships. Artificial restrictions placed on normal processes of land sub-division among heirs are leading on the one hand to an out migration of second and third generation landless colonists from the Minipe scheme in

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[1] Amarasinghe (1972) pp 74-79.
The study showed that in case of new high yielding varieties in paddy, the adoption speed was high with H/4 variety (an old HYV) taking 4 years before peak adoption is reached and subsequent new NHYVs showing peak adoption within the first year of introduction (p. 75). Usage of fertilizer in 1971/72 showed an improvement of approximately 30 percent, pest and weed control an improvement of 42 per cent, and chemical weed control by 34 per cent over the 1967/68 reported figures (p. 79).

search of land and employment, and on the other, towards encroachment on colony lands which are reserved on ecological considerations.

The thinking behind the laws governing inheritance and transfer of colony lands was that such laws would promote a form of consolidation of holdings, especially that of paddy (on a yaya basis). Such a consolidation was considered vital towards the achievement of the goal of commercialised agriculture in the scheme. That a strong trend towards commercialisation of agriculture is underway has been clearly indicated by both Jogaratnam and Schieckle(1969) and Amarasinghe (1972) studies . Yet, as the ARTI-ACDA study (1976) notes,this trend appears to be a surface phenomenon. The desired quality of the land base (that of consolidation) is being increasingly weakened through disguised fragmentation as a result of sub-division among heirs , disguised leasing and selling-out of lands by permit holders, and through encroachments.

Disguised landless as a result of illegal leasing-out and sale of colony lands, coupled with open landlessness as a result of the failings of the colony land laws poses a dilemma which is at a tangent to the "independent commercial farmer" ideal expected of the scheme.

The scope for creation of a more dynamic body of settlers in the future who could challenge these restraints on upward mobility more effectively than their forefathers is limited at present. Young children are withdrawn early from schools to serve as free and additional labour units for cultivation work and household chores. They do not receive sufficient education to grasp the technicalities of commercialised agriculture required in the scheme. Even at present many of the second and third generation people who are fortunate enough to get a land permit merely follow the subsistence oriented behaviour - exaggerated spending habits. Little or no savings, and day-to-day existence of their parents. A large mass of second and third generation settlers who have no legal claim to the colony land as they lack land permits serve at the most as agricultural labour. Most, however, are drifters without proper education and a firm foothold in the colony economy.

The provision of adequate infra-structural facilities, relatively large allotements and other incentives in line with the policy of " guided colonisation"[1] appear to have provided a time-lag of one or two decades before the many post-settlement problems began to be felt in the Minipe scheme. Problems such as fragmentation, landlessness, disguised tenancies, under-employment and unemployment, indebtedness and exploitation by traders and other entreprenurial types have now emerged to the fore-front. The state response to post-settlement problems has been too slow. It has been slow in anticipating problems and somewhat lackadaisical in introducing ameliorative measures- especially in the presence of a wealth of experience in frontier settlement that goes back to the early years of the 20th century.

The extension of the land margin of the Minipe scheme since late 1950s with the opening up of Stages II, III and IV have helped more the landless in the villages of the Dumbara region than the landless problems in the Stage I area have continued to worsen. The Political expediency of providing lands to landless in villages seems to have superceded the programme expediency of affecting immediate intra-scheme ameliorative action to problems of landlessness that had emerged in the already settled parts of the scheme itself.

While the colonists themselves have largely fallen short of expectations as a result of their inability to exploit the incentives provided in the Minipe scheme for their own economic betterment, the unemployed, especially the youth, of the overcrowded villages of the Kandyan region have gained from the irrigated paddy cultivation of the scheme. They move into the scheme during peak labour demand times in the cultivation cycle as casual labour, and take back with them the wages they earned to their home villages.

An overriding impression which emerges from the foregone analysis is that resettlement of peasants in a colonisation scheme merely as remedial action for defects found in the means of livelihood in their home villages is "failure prone". As Clayton describes ",..,whatever technical merits it might possess, a contrived agricultural organisation (viz: a colonisation scheme) is unlikely to cope with all the social, cultural and economic factors relevant to a particular situation ".[1] The imposition of new forms of agricultural organisation on a peasant who has no particular aptitude which could exploit the new opportunities to his advantage create conditions as exemplified in the Minipe scheme, which impinge adversely upon the non-agricultural aspects of way of life, so much so , that an average colonist is more insecure and more easily exploited than an average villager. Growth trends of the society and the economy of the Minipe scheme so divergent in character from the expectations about the scheme poses a question whether frontier land settlement is in fact a panacea for defects in the agrarian structure and important deficits in employment opportunities found in village environments.

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1 op.cit. Clayton, E.S.,Agrarian Development in Peasant Economies (Oxford U.K., Pergamon Press, 1964) . p. 59.

APPENDIX I

A NOTE ON POLICY CHANGES AFFECTING COLONISATION: 1920 - 1978

A view prevailed among the local prominants in the 1920s that crown land should directly benefit the peasant sector especially in regions seriously affected by the problems of landlessness and unemployment which were deemed to have been created by the colonial land policies of the 19th century , whereby much of lands owned by the peasants of the densely populated wet zone were taken over by the crown.[1] Colonisation as a method to alleviate the problems of landlessness and unemployment became thus an important part of the struggle for independence from colonial control.

The outbreak of the World War I curtailed food inflows to the Island. This led to a strong realisation in the government of the need to increase domestic food production. The base of the resultant drive for agricultural prosperity was the *'peasant proprietor'* which became a popular cliché in the Legislative Council debates and on public platforms. A result of this outcry was the appointment of an official committee on whose recommendations the *'application system'* was introduced. Landless and unemployed seeking land were required to apply to District Revenue Officers who leased out crown lands in small extents to elegible applicants. The extents were leased out on easy terms. The emphasis of the application system was on individual initiative. No other facilities beside land were given to the applicants. This resulted in many of the allottees returning to their home villages after weathering endemic health hazards like Malaria and other debilities.

From this temporary arrangement evolved a more lasting experiment in the *"peasant proprietor"* system of early 1920s . Under this scheme carefully selected applicants received lease with restricted tenure enabling the leaseholders to enjoy certain advantages. The Government,however, reserved the right to reject settlers who proved to be unsatisfactory.

A policy change in colonisation came about through the setting up of the Land Commission in 1927. In was based on the view that Land Development must pass from individual initiative (as was emphasised under the previous application system) to the state in its capacity as the public trustee of lands.[2]

Following the recommendations of the Land Commission a phase of partially protected colonisation began in 1929. The selected settlers had to clear the jungles and prepare the land for cultivation as well as build

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Samaraweera, V. "Land Policy and Peasant Colonisation" 1914 - 1948, in History of Ceylon , Vol: 3, (ED),K.M. De Silva(University of Ceylon, Peradeniya, 1973) p. 446 - 453.

[2] Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book: 1955, p. 192

houses. For these tasks they were provided with financial aid. The provision of infra-structural facilities such as roads, schools, medical facilities etc., was the responsibility of the state.

In 1939 colonisation policies underwent a change. This change came about mainly due to the economic depression of the 1930s which was followed by widespread unemployment and distress in the densely populated wet zone areas.

By 1939, it was realized that the pace of colonisation was inadequate to make an appreciable dent in either solving landlessness and unemployment or in increasing food production, which had assumed important proportions as a result of food shortages associated with the World War II. Fired by a combination of nationalistic fervour and liberal democratic ideals the prime movers of colonisation during this period, like D.S.Senanayake, who was the Minister of Agriculture, believed that allottees should start their lives in colonisation schemes free of debt to the government. These problems and sentiments resulted in an introduction of a " *New Policy*" towards colonisation in 1939.[1]

This was a policy aimed at providing an increased scale of aid to the colonists in order to lessen the rigours of frontier settlement, especially at the initial stages. It was especially aimed at expediting the process of development and to derive a maximum return in the shortest possible time in the shape of food, for capital invested by the Government in resettlem-

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[1] Main proposals of the new policy were:

1. That clearing should be done at Government expense
2. That each colonist should receive a subsistance allowance till he reaps his first harvest.
3. Houses should be constructed at Government expense for the colonists.
4. Any work required to be done after the first harvest such as ridging and stumping the paddy land of colonists should be paid by the Government.
5. Each colonist to receive free planting material, a loan for purchase of implements and buffaloes, repayment to be wholly or partially waived if satisfactory progress has been made by the colonist
6. Government was responsible for domestic water supply, major irrigation channels, roads, the reservation of sites for schools, hospitals, and communal buildings, for provision of a special colonisation office ; and meet through the Marketing Department and the Registrar of Co-operative Societies for the organisation of marketing.

Source: Department of Census & Statistics, Ceylon Year Book:1949(Colombo)p.70

The estimated cost per colonist excluding cost of irrigation and other infra-structural facilities was Rs.700/- as against an average of Rs.250/- estimated for a colonist in the pre-1939 period.

ent. In essence, it was one of "*protected and guided colonisation*".[1]

In 1941, additional recommendations on housing and development of lands further extended the scope of the "*New Policy*". The scheme of protected colonisation proposed by the "*New Policy*" has, with modifications, continued up to the present.

With the new policy the pace of dry zone colonisation accelerated. Between 1935-48, 1470 allottees were settled in 12,624 acres of colony lands and between 1948-1966 , 81,730 allottees were resettled in 887,376 acres of colony lands under very much better terms of settlement than was before 1939.[2]

By 1950, it was felt that the additional cost to the state through the activation of the "*protected colonisation*" policy was not commensurate with increases in production and living standards achieved in the colonisation schemes. In addition, mounting economic problems in the country did not warrant such heavy expenditure in colonisation.

This resulted in various attempts by the state at reducing the costs of colonisation in the post - 1950 period.[3]

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[1] "*Protected*" aspect of colonisation was mainly the result of the Land Development Ordinance No: 19 of 1935. Besides the provisions for setting up of machinery for mapping-out crown land and its disposal, it made further changes in the tenure of land alienated by the crown in order to prevent fragmentation. It provided for the protection of land even from the allottee himself and assured that land will remain in the family as long as it was properly cultivated.
(Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book: 1949 pp. 69-70

[2] ARTI: Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in Sri Lanka-Country Review Paper (ARTI, Colombo, 1978) p. 10.

[3] A development which went contrary to the general trend in the post-World War II period towards economising on settlement of persons in colonisation schemes was the opening up of the Gal Oya Multi Purpose Scheme - involving the provision of irrigation, generation of hydral power, and infrastructural facilities for rapid settlement of persons, agricultural development, urban and industrial growth. This multi-purpose scheme as conceived and developed in the 1946 - 1965 period was thus different from the normal run of colonisation schemes developed before and after this period up to the creation of the Mahaweli Diversification Project of the 1970s.

The example of the Tennessee Valley Authority (U.S.A.) and the Damodar Valley Corporation (India) was followed in the setting up of the Gal Oya Development Board to centralise development functions associated with the scheme.

Up to 1965, the total cost of the scheme was Rs. 861 million, the total extent brought under the scheme 124,140 acres, and the total number settled was 11,936 families.

Source : Report of the Gal Oya Project Evaluation Committee Sessional Paper No 1, 1970 ; (Courtsy : River Valleys Development Board, Colombo.)

In general, the state policy towards colonisation between 1932 - 50 was marked by expanded assistance from the state to the colonists. Within the liberal democratic ideals of the sponsors, it was dictated by a feeling that colonisation was a panacea for ills within the overcrowded wet zone regions of the island. The policy of expanded assistance was also geared towards popularising colonisation and establishment of colonisation on a sound footing.

In 1951 an IBRD mission to Sri Lanka suggested (1) a reduction of the standard unit of allotment to each colonist in order to accommodate more per scheme (2) a reduction of cost of clearance borne by the Government (3) reduction of cost of colonist cottages by housing specifications which are less expensive. It was suggested, that the onus of enlarging the colonist cottages be left to the colonists themselves.[1]

The IBRD mission suggestions as well as self realisation of the economies of resettlement on the part of planners resulted in the launching of a scheme of development aimed at reducing the costs of resettlement under colonisation schemes. The guiding objectives of this scheme were:

(1) to aim at achieving a maximum output of development of colonisation schemes with limited public funds

(2) to aim at eliciting maximum cooperation from colonists themselves in the initial development and subsequent improvement of land

(3) the size of allotment to be reduced from a total extent of 8 acres (5 acres of paddy and 3 acres of highland under previous settlement policies) to 5 acres (3 acres of paddy and 2 acres of highland). The development of land by the State prior to settlement was curtailed. Stumping work of allotments was to be the responsibility of the colonists. They were provided with financial aid for this task. Cost of housing was reduced from an earlier estimate of Rs. 3500/- to Rs. 1300/- per type plan house. Many other items involving costs were either deleted or curtailed.[2]

In 1956 - 57 the State introduced a new policy of *"Advanced Alienation"*. According to the new policy the colonists were to come into the land two years before the projected date on which irrigation would be available, and before the completion of houses and the preparation of highland. Subsidies were given to them by the state for clearing and preparation of Paddy Land. This new policy was introduced :

(1) to reduce the initial heavy expenditure by the State for clearing and preparation of land, and

(2) to foster a more active participation of colonists in the task of development.[3]

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[1] Department of Census and Statistics, Ceylon Year Book : 1955, p. 194.

[2] Department of Census and Statistics , Ceylon Year Book : 1955 p. 194

[3] Weerakkody, K.N. Colonisation in Ceylon : A Review (1972) p. 5

The new policy of advance alienation achieved a number of results between 1956 - 1970:

(1) it generated rapid alienation resulting in the provision of immediate relief to the landless and the unemployed ;

(2) it resulted in a considerable saving in expenditure ;

(3) the land was cropped on a shifting cultivation (chena) basis earlier than previously ;

(4) colonists derived a greater sense of possession ;

(5) it prevented encroachments by early disposal of the land to selected persons.

This policy of advanced alienation was operative between 1956 - 1969. A Board of Review in 1969 found that the success of advance alienation depended to a great extent on the provision of irrigation within the two year period when the advanced alienation phase of a colonisation scheme was operative. However, it was found that the irrigation authorities were unable to meet this target with the result that the transision period where the "*chena*" form of cultivation operated and where colonists were dependent on the vagaries of climate was extended. Many were found to have left their allotments and gone back to their home villages.

As economic conditions deteriorated rapidly over the yaars, investment and expenditure in several sectors began to be critically examined. One such sector was the liberal nature of colonisation policies. The point of attack of colonisation policies was that gains from peasant colonisation schemes were not commensurate with the vast expenditure incurred.

In 1966 an IBRD mission to the island directed the attention of the Government on the urgent need to increase productivity per acre in major colonisation schemes so that there would be an optimum return on the very heavy capital investment made in the scheme. It recommended the introduction of a "*Package Programme*" aimed at increasing productivity. The main objectives of the package programme were:

(1) to maximise production through improved methods of cultivation,

(2) to strengthen institutional arrangements for credit and marketing of the required inputs and produce

(3) to encourage community development with the object of achieving a self-sustained growth in these schemes.[1]

On the basis of these recommendations the government introduced the "*Special Project*" scheme. After the success achieved in the Elahera colonisation scheme which was selected as a test scheme for the introduction of the "*package programme*" the special project status was extended to 10 major colonisation

[1] Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Year Book - 1977. p. 53

schemes in the island. Twenty three major colonisation schemes covering a total of 146,996 acres now operate as special projects.[1]

Up to 1968 , the selection of allottees was based largely on *"family size" "landlessness"* and *'unemployment'* criteria than on the stability of the allottees in terms of their agricultural acumen and attitudes towards agricultural employment, In 1968 a new procedure was adopted for the selection of allottees on a *'point system'*. Under this, maximum weightage was given to young, married, landless , credit worthy persons with two or three children, In addition such persons having previous experience in agriculture with evidence of familiarity with improved practices and related skills and holding a practical farm school certificate were preferred over others, The change in selection criteria reflected the changing trends in colonisation policies towards a goal of enhancing agricultural production,

Since 1970 a novel element in colonisation policies have developed which goes beyond the conventional lines of creating a class of land owning peasants through colonisation, While the normal function of alienating land under colonisation schemes along the lines laid down by the *" New Policy"* with subsequent modifications continue, a preceptible emphasis lies in a trend towards a greater social planning of settlements and towards removal of the heavy bias on paddy cultivation which hitherto has been followed in the development of colonisation schemes,[2].

The colonisation policies of the present Goverment places a heavy emphasis on maximum utilization of lands under colonisation schemes to achieve a higher productivity,

The allotment size has changed to three acres (2 acres of paddy plus one acre of highland,) In terms of the use of NHYV technology the allotment

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[1] Ibid p, 53,

[2] Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, The Sector Plan ; 1978 - 82 p, 284-87

size is deemed to be capable of generating a surplus yield over susbistence requirements of a colonist family.[1]

Even though mammoth efforts at resettlemtnt like the accelerated Mahaweli Development Project are under way, yet the new policy of increasing productivity as against a mere extension of the agricultural frontier is becoming prominent.

Policy changes related to colonisation since 1920s reflect basically an increasing conflict of ideologies between the disirability of the welfare motive and that of the need to maximise productivity.

Until the 1940s , the colonisation policy was marked with a heavy emphasis of the welfare motive. Families from over-crowded villages of the wet zone were selected on " *Landlessness*" " *unemployed*" and "*family size*" criteria to be settled in the newly opened up colonisation schemes. Through the "*New Policy*" and its subsequent developments and attractive scale of assistance was provided to the selected families towards a speedy settlement in these schemes. Invariably the settlement costs were heavy, however, such heavy expenditures were considered -justified in order to make frontier settlements sufficiently attractive to the rural poor.[2]

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[1] Under the Mahaweli Multi-purpose Development Project, the allotment size is even smaller, 2,25 acres, 2 acres of irrigated agricultural land (Highland or lowland) plus 1/4 acre of highland for a house within a a planned hamlet like housing arrangement

The Mahaweli Project is the largest combination of water and land resources development ever undertaken in Sri Lanka. This project envisages a diversification of the Mahaweli river (the largest river in Sri Lanka) towards the dry zone. It also forms the basis for a major agricultural programme that is aimed at a speedy expansion of the country's domestic supplies of rice. The "*master plan*" envisages the development of 900,000 acres of land (246,000 acres of land with paddy and sugar cane and 656,0000 acres of new land). It also envisages the settlement of nearly, 500,000 families and employment for about a million persons. The proposed development is divided into three phases and was eventually scheduled to be undertaken over a period of thirty years at an overall cost of about Rs.6,700 million.

The new government which came into office in mid-1977 has launched an accelerated Mahaweli development project to be completed within a shorter period of 5-6 years . This accelerated programme envisages solving the pressing problems of mass unemployment, scarcity of food, etc., The accelerated project is estimated to cost Rs.15,000 million.

(Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka Year Book: 1977; p. 57-60)

[2] Senanayake D.S, Agriculture and Patriotism (Colombo: The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd., 1935) p. 19

Since the late 1940s , deteriorating economic conditions have forced governments to rethink on the feasibility of continued advocacy of the welfare motive as the main factor behind the setting up of colonisation schemes. Over the years the need to lessen the cost of settlement and the need to maximise agricultural production in the colonisation schemes emerged to a primary position. The cost of settlement was curtailed by various strategies. Introduction of the NHYV technology, emphasis on both highland and lowland cultivation , and the introduction of tighter selection criteria which increasingly emphasised prior skills in agriculture were geared to maximise productivity. Though greatly reduced in cost, the welfare objective was however accommodated alongside the objective of increasing productivity. In terms of NHYV technology and a more careful planning of services, the present allotment size of 2 acres (of irrigated agricultural land) is thought to be quite adequate to generate a surplus. In terms of the allotment size colonisation schemes sponsored at present can absorb more families per acre than ever before.

A basic objective of settlement that has been followed in Sri Lanka is to select persons who will remain in the lands that are alloted. The selection of colonists in order to achieve this objective has until 1968 been on the basis of their <u>needs</u> such as landlessness, low incomes and low levels of living. Not much consideration was accorded to the effect these needs would have on the <u>ability</u> of the selectees to achieve the objective (of independent commercial oriented farmers) in colonisation schemes . Since 1968 the ability of the selectees is being tested through more rigorous selection procedures. Their agricultural acumen is being preferred over the traditional criteria of landlessness, unemployment and family size. In this context the present colonisation policies even venture to extend the scope of selection to even owners of micro extents of land who, however, show a relatively higher degree of agricultural knowledge.

In the entire process of colonisation from the early 1920s to the present two projects stand out distinctively from the normal run of projects sponsored by the state. They are the Gal Oya scheme and the Mahaweli Diversion Project. The cost of individual colonisation schemes usually ranged from about 5 million to about 50 million. In contrast, the cost of the Gal Oya Multi-Purpose Project was around Rs.861 million while the accelerated Mahaweli Development Project is estimated to cost Rs.15,000 million. In addition whereas a normal colonisation scheme would be concerned mostly with settlements and agricultural production, the two mammoth projects are multipurpose schemes involving settlement, agricultural production, the generation of hydral-power and regional development. In terms of economic factors the Gal Oya scheme was subjected to much critisism. It was felt that in terms of cost benefit factors to the economy Gal Oya Project did not come up to expectations . The same criticism could well be applied in case of the Mahaweli Project. However, in terms of the number of persons who had benefitted from the schemes and the level of regional development that has occured, the experience of Gal Oya indicates that the benefits of colonisation schemes cannot be thought of purely in terms of economic factors.

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1 Report of the Gal Oya Project Evaluation Committee - Sessional Paper No: 1 of 1970.

One may ask, what could have been the situation in the overcrowded villages in the wet zone if irrigation and resettlement programmes had not been undertaken, The already adverse economic conditions would have worsened, leading possibly to a disruptive social upheaval. In this context the redistribution of the excess population through the setting up of colonisation schemes may be interpreted as a move made by Governments to provide an escape valve to the mounting tensions of unemployment, landlessness and low levels of living in the densely populated areas. An example of this *"Stop gap"* type settlement policy lies in the experiment in opening up youth settlement schemes in 1966. Settlers were 18-25 years old and were generally G.C.E. (General Certificate of Education) qualified.

Around 1966 about one forth of the estimated number of 500,000 unemployed in the island consisted of youths who had studied up to the G.C.E. Some of them had even undergone training at Practical Farm Schools. Though the main declared purpose in initiating these schemes was to wean the youths from expecting white collar employment[1], fears expressed by parliamentarians both within and outside the legislature show the urgency of the need to move this youthful population away from contributing to an upheaval of the country, and instead draw them towards utilising their skills for more productive goals.

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1 Weerakkody K.N. (1972) p. 10

APPENDIX II

COLONY LAND PROBLEMS

CASE OF ELLEPOLAGEDERA PALINGUMENIKA [1]

(Lot 3/12 ; Minipe Stage I)

Palingumenika comes from the Bembiya village, located 1 mile up river from the Minipe anicut. Her husband, *Ellepolagedera Appuhamy* (also from Bembiya) served as a manual labourer, between 1932 - 1938, involved in jungle clearance work for setting up of the Stage I of the Minipe Scheme. In 1938, he received a land permit for allotment No: 12 in the diversion Channel No: 3 area (Stage I of the Scheme). The size of the allotment was 7.50 acres (lowland : 4.50 acres; highland: 3.00 acres).

Through the union with *Appuhamy*, *Palingumenika* had a son *(Ellapolagedera Ranbanda)*. Appuhamy died in 1940. Palingumenika who had been named by Appuhamy as his sole heir inherited the entire extent of 7.50 acres . She received a land permit to this effect in 1941. She , assisted by her relatives from Bembiya for a time , cultivated the land.

In 1947 she married one *Katupullegedera Punchibanda* (also from Bembiya). Through the second marriage she had a son (Katupullegedera Gunawardena). Before long Punchibanda began to harrasss her with a view to force her to name him as the sole heir to the land. Punchibanda petitioned the GA/Kandy, claiming his right to be named as the sole heir[2] while Palingumenika as the title holder petitioned that she opted ,instead ,to name her two sons (Ranbanda by her first husband and Gunawardena by her second husband) as her heirs. On her refusal to accede to his land inheritance demands she was forcibly evicted from her land by Punchibanda who brought in another woman to live with him . In 1949 Palingumenika went back to Bembiya. With the eviction of Palingumanika from her lands began a series of ownership and inheritance problems which were to burden her over 30 years upto 1977 (the period of the ARTI-ACDA Survey).

1949 - 1959 Period : In 1949 Palingumenika again petitioned the Government Agent against Punchibanda to get back her land. This time she petitioned that the entire extent of 7.50 acres be equally divided between herself and Ranbanda (her son through the first marriage) and separate land permits be issued by the G.A.'s Office.

Punchibanda in turn wanted the G.A. to divide the land between him (as the *defacto* operator of the land) and his own son (Gunawardena) through Palingumanika.

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[1] Based on records of the case kept at AGA's Office, Hasalaka (as at December, 1976)

[2] Punchibanda's petition claimed that he had no land to his credit at Bembiya, that he did not receive any land allotment in the scheme area, and that he had a right to Palingumenika's land as he had worked the land since 1947.

Palingumenika won the day, as the sole permit holder to the land. The land Commissioner's Department on the advice of the G.A./Kandy permitted her a division of her lands (Lot 12 of Diversion Channel No: 3) in the following manner :

(a) One-and-a-half acres of highland with the type plan house and two-and-a-quarter acres of paddy land to go to Palingumenika;

(b) One-and-a-half acres of highland and two-and-a-quarter acres of paddy land to go to Ellepolagedera Ranbanda (Permit holder's first son),

Punchibanda (the second husband) and his son were completely disowned but he refused to leave the land. Since petitions to the G.A did not result in Palingumenika getting back the land she took to legal recourse (advised on such a recourse by minor officials at the Kachcheri), A lawyer whom she contacted advised her to obtain a divorce from Punchibanda as an initial step. She was advised to appeal to the G.A.

1959 - 1962 Period : The G.A. who had the authority to register and also to annul customary law marriages granted her a divorce in 1959. With the granting of the divorce the status of Punchibanda became that of an encroacher. He no longer had a legal hold on the land. A new notice was accordingly sent to Punchibanda by the G.A ordering him to vacate the land with immediate effect. On the advice of his own lawyer Punchibanda appealed against the notice on the ground that he had been the *defacto* cultivator of the land since 1947. The G.A. in turn accepting the fact that he had kept up the productivity of Lot No: 12 for over a decade made an attempt to give him a fresh block of land from another part (Stage II) of the Minipe Scheme. Punchibanda however refused on the ground that the land offered (two and a half acres of paddy) was insufficient for him, his son Gunawardena (through union with Palingumenika), his second wife and her three surviving children of the five born to her between 1950 and 1960.

As the pressure on the regional bureaucracy mounted against him Punchibanda sought political patronage for his claim through the member of parliament for the Minipe area. Punchibanda appealed to the then Minister of Agriculture Land, Irrigation and Power (Hon.C.P.de Silva). In this appeal Punchibanda sought a different solution to the land problem in that he showed an agreeability to an equal division of the Lot No: 12 between himself and Palingumenika. Accordingly, the Minister requested the G.A./Kandy to look into the matter. On the G.A.'s appraisal of the legal status of Palingumenika to the Minister the matter was dropped. Punchibanda however continued to remain on the land and each fresh order sent by the G.A. was reciprocated by Punchibanda (on the advice of his lawyer) with an appeal for a division of the land.

Records of the case around 1960 indicate that Palingumenika on the basis either on advice given by officials of the regional administration or by her lawyer returned her land permit to the Government Agent and relinquished her right to the land through a letter to that effect.

On the assumption that the land (Lot No: 12) was now government property and that Punchibanda as an encroacher could be evicted under Section I of the Crown Lands Encroachments Ordinance No: 12 of 1840, as amended by

the Crown Lands Encroachments (Amendment) Act. No: 8 of 1954,[1] the Government Agent took the matter to Magistrate's Court (at Teldeniya). A Court ruling was accordingly given that Punchibanda as an encroacher should immediately vacate the Land.

Punchibanda, on the advice of his lawyer, appealed against the Court decision. At the Appeal Courts in 1961 it was ruled that the Teldeniya Courts judgement was faulty and thus invalid.

A ruling was given that *'voluntary surrender'* of the land permit by Palingumenika to the Government Agent did not tantamount to a *'cancellation'* of the permit, so that the permit holder could not make further claims to the land. It ruled that Crown could not take back the land given to a permit holder unless the permit holder contravened one or more conditions under which he or she held the land. Since Palingumenika apparently did not contravene these conditions, the Court ruled that she was still the sole legal claimant to the land. The court ruled that it was Palingumenika and not the Government Agent who, therefore, should take the matter to Courts.

Accordingly, the Land Commissioner instructed the Government Agent to give back the land permit to Palingumenika and advised her to take the matter to Courts , herself. Palingumenika through the years from 1948-1961 had mortgaged and finally sold what little *Paraveni* lands she had in Bembiya to pay the lawyers and to defray costs incurred in her frequent visits to the G.A.'s office in Kandy. By 1962 she had been reduced to a state of beggary. Her first son Kanbanda, who over the years had married, lived separately at Bembiya.

1962 - 1976 Period : In view of the numerous appeals she had made to the G.A.about her plight he helped her to become a recipient of a pauper allowance of Rs.20.00 per month. The payment of this allowance ceased in 1972 as a result of a clerical mistake and Palingumenika was left completely destitute. By 1976 she was found to have joined a road gang involved in constructing a motorable road from the Minipe anicut to the Bembiya village in order to survive.

Throughout this period she continued to appeal to the Government Agent in Kandy, to the Assistant Government Agent of Minipe, to the Colonisation Officer and to the Grama Sevaka,and at the time of the ARTI-ACDA Survey she was expecting help from the Conciliation Board (a quesi-judicial body).

In the 1976 - 1977 years the Assistant Government Agent for Minipe made a determined bid to solve the problem. One such bid was to advise both

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1 Through the 1954 Act, the Section I of the Crown Lands Encroachments Ordinance (1840) was amended ", ... so as to enable the ejection of any person who had occupied Crown Land without the permission of the Government ".*

* Op cit : Government Ceylon, Report of the Land commission . Sessional Paper X, 1958. (Colombo: Government Press : September 1958) p. 25.

Palingumenika and Punchibanda to agree on a half share basis so that fresh land permits could be issued to the effect.

The attempt failed principally because both parties by this time were determined to get complete control over the allotment. Neither of them want land allotments from any other part of the scheme. At the time of the ARTI-ACDA Survey Palingumenika was an old woman of 62 years of age living a hand-to-mouth existence. She lives in a small hut in a tiny parcel of land (about 15 perches) all alone in the Bembiya village, and earns a living by working with a road gang. She as the sole permit holder for an extent of 7.5 acres of colony lands has been unable to achieve a permanent solution to her land problem through administrative and judicial authorities for nearly three decades.

Punchibanda her former (second) husband lives illegally in Palingumenika's land. He has a relatively bigger burden to bear. Through his second wife he has five surviving children (of the ten born to her upto 1977). His son by Palingumenika (Gunawardena) is living on the same land as Punchibanda. He is married and has two children of his own. Punchibanda has continually developed the Lot 12 since 1947. He no longer is satisfied with half share of the land and his claim to the land has assumed much weight and justification.

However, on moral grounds, the claim of a woman who by law should own the land and who had struggled for nearly 30 years of her life to get back the land which was hers ,and who had been the victim of exploitation by lawyers, mis advice and administrative bungling by the regional bureaucracy cannot be lightly discarded. However, in the event the land is given back to Palingumenika, Punchibanda and his family, his son and family, who have sunk their roots in the Lot 12 would suffer.

Palingumenika herself is caught in a vengence syndrome. She is against her two sons ,in addition to Punchibanda. Ranbanda (son by first marraige) has stayed away from the feud. He has his own family and resides at Bembiya. He does not help Palingumenika. In later years Palingumenika dropped him as a claimant to the land, Gunawardena is too firmly committed to the cause of Punchibanda.

The prevailing view of the authorities responsible for land problems of the scheme is that only time will solve the problem - presumably with the death of Palingumenika.

APPENDIX III

STRATIFICATION OF THE SOCIETY[1]

The Colony consists of a complex array of hierarchically arranged social categories which generally emerge in interpersonal relationships among its members. They are based broadly on regionality, caste, access to political power, and access to land.

REGIONALITY:

A primary stratification rests on the broad locations of the area of origin of Colony residents - that of Uda Rata (Up Country) and Pahatha Rata (Low country). Thus, outwardly though there is much social and economic interaction between the two groups, privately they view each other with suspicion and contempt. It is an oft heard complaint among the up country colonists that they are being exploited by the low country Mudalalis (traders)[2]. A feeling of contempt for the naiveness of the up country colonists exists among colony residents of low country origin. The low country people, being in a minority are somewhat clannish irrespective of differences in economic status.

CASTE:

A majority of the households of the scheme belong to the goigama (farmer caste group) which forms the upper rung of the semi feudal caste hierarchy of the island. Within the goigama caste a few of the families belonged to the Radala (families descending from aristocratic houses of the Kandyan region) group .[3]

The primary occupation of members of all the castes in the area is in paddy cultivation. However, some of them also ply their traditional caste functions (Like Laundry work, Astrology , Jaggery making, and so on). In marital relationships the social differences among the different caste groups were strong.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Extents of lands owned, and tenure , had social status connotations in the scheme. In terms of the land ownership colony society may be

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[1] Based on information collected during the ARTI Survey (1976 77)

[2] The Minipe Scheme essentially catered to the up country rural poor of the Dumbara valley. Those of the low country who now exist in the scheme are mostly businessmen or marriage partners of the up country colonists.

[3] *C.F.Pieris. R., Sinhalese Social Organisation* (Colombo University of Ceylon Press : 1956) for and analysis of the caste system prevailing in the Kandyan Society.

broken down to three major divisions;-

(1) The colonists who are permit holders to colony lands.
(2) Colonists who are tenants of (Mahiyangana) temple lands which come within the scheme.
(3) Encroachers who have no legal rights to the land.

The permit holders in the colony owned more lands and enjoyed a relatively higher social standing than the rest. Much of the colony level organisations are being controlled by the more dominant among these colonists.

About 1000 acres of both highland and lowland belonging to 38-48 diversion channel areas within the Stage I of the Minipe Scheme are temple lands (*Viharagam*) which belong to the Mahiyangana temple located near the Minipe scheme. The colonists who operate allotments within these are tenants of the Mahiyangana temple. They generally pay a ½ share of the total produce of their lands to the Mahiyangana temple as land rent. Even though in terms of land laws governing colony land these tenants have access to legal rights as others who are found in the rest of the colony, in actual fact besides payment of an exhorbitant land rent they are obliged to perform various semi-feudal services to the Mahiyangana temple in lieu of their right to occupy the the land. The allottees in the temple lands belonging to the Minipe Scheme have smaller land extents than other allottees. The average allotment size of a temple land colonist family was about 4 acres of which 2-3 acres are in paddy land. In contrast the average size of an allotment of a non-temple land colonist family is 8 acres of which 5 acres are in paddy land. The rest of the colony treat allottees of the temple lands with a certain amount of social disdain, on account of the small allotment size they operate, their tenancy status and the services they perform to the temple. They exhibit a situation of semi-feudal bondage as against the "free-holders" in the rest of the colony.

The encroachers who occupy a low status position in terms of land ownership may be categorised into three sub-types on the basis of their relative social recognition in the colony. These sub types are :- the second and third generation children of colonists who had not received land permits and who illegally occupy many of the reservation lands which exist adjacent to the paddy lands of the scheme. These reservation lands are converted into paddy land by these encroachers. They illegally tap diversion channels, and field channels, in order to provide their own irrigational networks to their fields.

The second group of encroachers are the landless persons from crowded villages of the *Dumbara* region who had come into the scheme following the regular settlement of colonists. Of them, individuals who had previous business acumen in their respective villages have since coming into the scheme opened up small kiosks along strips of reservation land adjacent to the main roads. They eke out a precarious existence supplying grocery and other basic item needs of the colonists.

A large group among the landless who had come into the colony are encroachers who occupy the state reservation lands which border the colony. In their home villages most of them had been either tenants or landless labourers. In the reservation lands they occupy some of them have opened up small paddy fields watered by *Pathahas* (water-holes). Some also irrigate these paddy plots by constructing *Amunu* (dams) across small natural waterways. Generally their small paddy plots depend very much on rainfall than on the micro irrigation systems they had evolved. Most of them, however, seek employment in the scheme as agricultural labourers during peak labour demand times.

Among the three groups of encroachers the last group occupy the lowest rung in terms of social standing in the colony based on land ownership . The homes of these encroachers are mostly shacks. There is hardly any neighbourhood aggregation of individual families of this group on the basis of village of origin. They form a motley crowd without much say in the main stream of scheme life.

Thus, the apex position in the colony in terms of social recognition through the land criteria is held by the original colonists who own large extents of land. Among this group the highest positions are held by the Goigama radala group. In contrast, the most depressed group among the colony population in terms of social standing are the encroachers who reside on the fringes of the Minipe scheme. . The rest fall in between these extremes. Even though the allottees who belong to the temple land sector of the Minipe scheme are treated with[a]/certain amount of disdain by regular colonists on account of their semi-feudal bondage to the temple, yet in terms of land ownership they are very much better off than the encroachers.

POLITICAL GROUPINGS:

The colony society may be broadly divided into two political camps - those supporting United National Party political views and those supporting Sri Lanka Freedom Party political views. National Leftist political parties do not have a noteworthy following in the Minipe scheme. The divisions of the colony society on political affiliations are not rigid. Changes in political loyalties among colonists often result from personal rivalries that occasionally spring up among themselves.

However fluid the political divisions may be, politics form a base for the generation of power groups in the colony society. During the 1972/77 period when the SLFP was in power the supporters of this party formed the dominant power group. After the political change in mid 1977 the supporters of the UNP occupy this position. Within both the SLFP and the UNP groups, power cliques who were socially more active than the rest were the decision makers in various large colony organisations which have a bearing on the colony society during the period when a particular political party is in power.