



CASE STUDY No: 2



22754

THE
Whana
colony village

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20

THE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION FLOW
IN
SELECTED VILLAGES IN SRI LANKA

CASE STUDY 2

UHANA COLONY UNIT-14

GAL OYA COLONISATION SCHEME

R.D. Wanigaratne

A joint publication of the Agrarian Research
and Training Institute and the Communication
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Colombo, Sri Lanka 1976

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*The names of individuals
and the colony village
referred to in the
monograph are pseudonyms*

FOREWORD

The Village Action-Research Project is a joint undertaking of the Communication Strategy Project and the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI).

The Project selected the following areas for its action research-viz: Medagama in the Galle District; Ambana in Mirigama; Duwa in Negombo; Naduodai in Batticaloa; Colony Unit -14 in Amparai, Ussan in Jaffna and ~~Kahapathivilagama~~ in the Anuradhapura District.

The work commenced with case studies in each of the selected villages and will be followed by training and multi-media action programmes in selected village organisations.

The case studies were undertaken by Ranjit Wanigaratne of the ARTI with the assistance of the UNESCO Advisor to the Communication Strategy Project, Dr (Mrs) Florangel Rosario-Braid.

The central purpose of the action programme was to evaluate the effectiveness of various communication approaches including group discussions, to identify various interpersonal networks through which social changes can be introduced and to experiment with the use of certain mass-media materials as tools in developing interaction among group members.

Specific studies on adoption-diffusion, evaluation of various mass-media materials, training for the development of effectiveness of group leaders and programme personnel will be made during the action programme.

It is hoped that the case studies and action programmes will provide useful guidelines for communication and training strategies for development.

C. Narayanasamy
Director, Agrarian Research and Training Institute

Anura Goonesekera
Co-Director, Communication Strategy Project

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The Project operates under the auspices of the two organisations—Agrarian Research and Training Institute and the Communication Strategy Project of the Department of Information and Broadcasting, Sri Lanka.

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R.D.W.

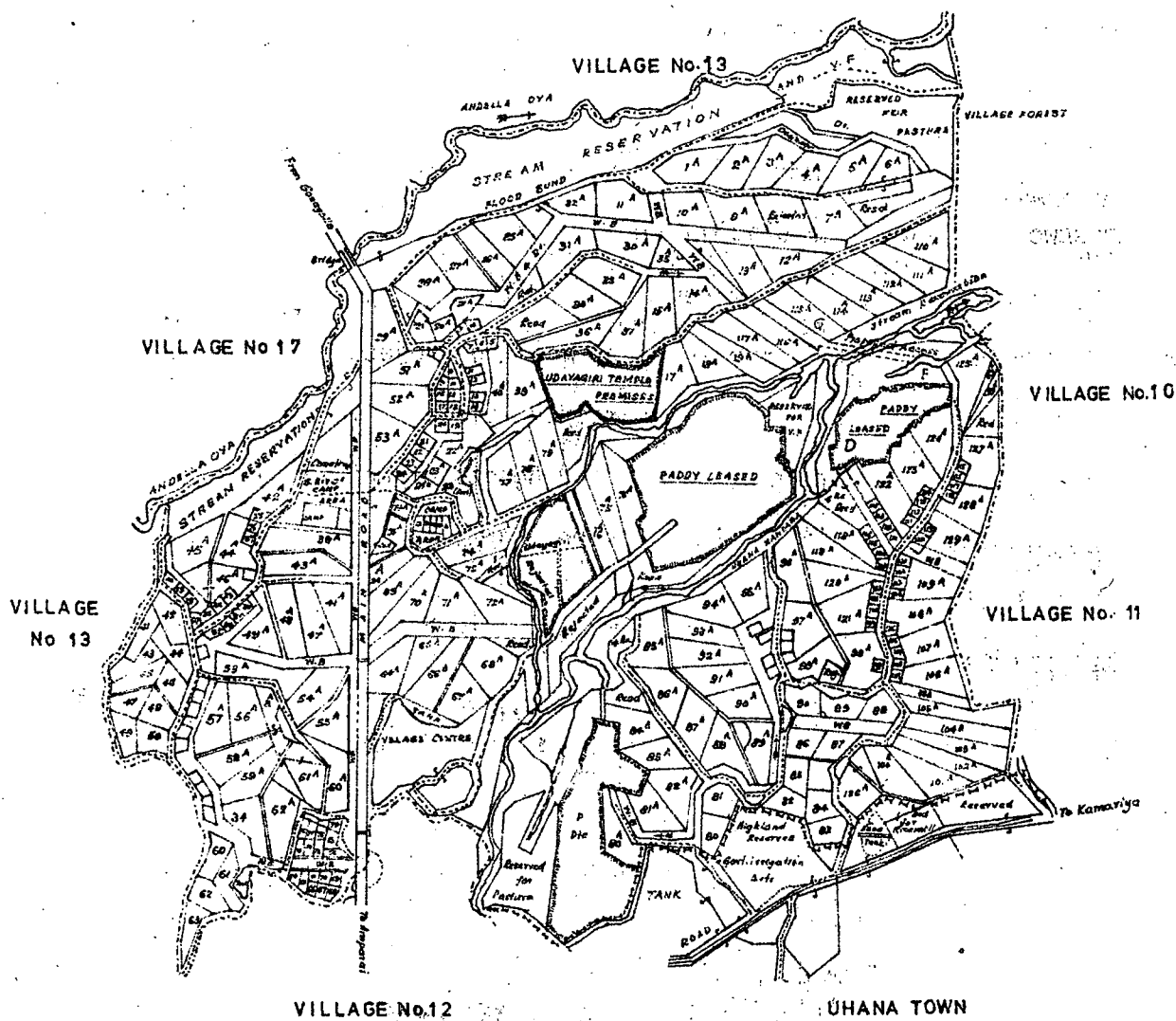
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VILLAGE No 14

Paddy allotment 1^A to 129^A
Highland Allotments 1 to 129



Reduced & traced by S. Sylvester.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCING THE COLONY AND THE PROJECT

Location

Uhana Colony Unit 14, is a part of the Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme, which was completed around 1953. It is located in the Meda Palatha Korale, and lies seven miles north-west from the town of Amparai, in the east-central zone of Sri Lanka.

The colony lies in a rolling plain with isolated hills ranging from 125-150 ft and falls within the Dambe Ela-Andella Oya drainage basin. The area receives between 50-75 inches of rain a year, mostly from the north-east monsoon. The natural vegetation is dry shrub jungle.

Choice of the colony

Colony Unit-14 was chosen as one of the seven research locations for study, for a number of reasons:

- i. The Colony was typical of the Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme -
 - (a) The people of the colony were of heterogeneous origin. They belonged to four groups according to their places of origin—i.e. the *Purana* village sector, the Tangalle sector, the Bibile sector and the Badulla sector.
 - (b) The heterogeneity of the population and frontier conditions have resulted in an extended period of adjustment towards resolving existing differences within the system itself.
 - (c) Landlessness and unemployment followed high population growth rates.
 - (d) Leadership in the Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme was seen to be built up on causal combinations unique to colonisation schemes of this nature.
 - (e) The Colony Unit like the other colonies in the Gal Oya Scheme had contacts with public functionaries for their survival amidst frontier conditions indicating the benefits and problems accruing out of this relationship especially for the rapid integration of the colony society.
- ii. Though the Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme area was the subject of a number of small and large scale surveys and research writings from the time of its inception, the particular colony unit investigated by the present study had been relatively untouched by surveys and research studies. Yet, what was **available** provided a background towards understanding the problems of the region which was useful for the survey.

- iii. The colony provided an area of strong heterogeneity in cultural backgrounds as a result of different migration origins and castes of the settlers. It was an area which acutely felt the pressures of population growth on land, food, and employment-opportunity shortages. It was a society into which politics have made deep inroads. It had a population which had not had the benefits of a programme of population education though they appeared to be greatly in need of it.

The nature of the project

A key research problem in the task of disseminating population education in a rural locality is the need for an *a priori* understanding of the potential recipients—their nature, the socio-cultural and economic setting in which they live and the communication paths through which they obtain and exchange information.

Towards understanding the nature of the problem before launching an action programme on population education, the Agrarian Research and Training Institute in collaboration with the Communication Strategy Project of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting undertook an empirical research study in seven research locations purposively selected from different parts of Sri Lanka. The Uhana Colony Unit-14, was one such location.

Investigation Procedure

The survey was conducted in the Colony Unit between 20 May and 27 September 1975—a period of 125 days in the field. Two investigators, were stationed in a private house about half-mile away from the colony, to minimise the possibility of their being involved in the interpersonal relationship network among the colonists and also for the convenience of travel. Field investigations began on 27 September 1975.

The first one-and-a-half weeks were spent on establishing contacts, transcribing household lists from the Uhana Kachcheri records, and cross-checking with lists kept by Grama Sevakas' and the Co-operative Stores for up-dating purposes. Colony land registers and membership lists of various colony level organisations were also copied down during this period.

At the end of the first week, a short questionnaire was administered in order to collect basic data on population, marital status, educational and employment status, rural institutional activity, membership, frequency of participation, awareness of information sources, awareness of contraception and so on. The questionnaire was introduced to the entire colony unit which at the time of the survey consisted of 192 colonist families.¹ The questionnaire survey was over by the end of June 1976.

¹ The head of a family is usually a male (the husband). However, in situations where the husband may have died, divorced or separated (in all cases where the husband is permanently removed from participation in decision-making action in a family) the *wife* is treated as the head of the family. The term 'husband' is defined as the socially

Information was also collected concurrently through informal interviews. The two investigators maintained daily diary recordings of responses and their own interpretations of responses which were categorised under various headings as research directions opened out during the survey. The categorisation took the form of transferring the diary recordings to different files which indicated the new research directions.

The recordings were periodically examined by the principal researcher in the field and advice and instructions given to redirect the investigators on fruitful lines for further in-depth investigation. A day-to-day administrative supervision was maintained by Mr. A.T.K. Chandradasa, Asst. Government Agent, Uhana, (who was also exceedingly helpful in making contacts and in providing lists of colonists kept at the Kachcheri, Uhana). He was also the area co-ordinator.

The data collection was completed by the 27 September 1975. Tabulation of data was done at the Agrarian Research and Training Institute (ARTI) in the course of two months between October-November 1975. The tabulation data was then examined by the researcher in consultation with the field investigators.

Two subsequent visits were made to the research location before the write-up to conduct a few additional spot interviews to obtain a better insight into a number of specific problems related to individuals and land ownership matters which cropped up during the examination of tabulation data.

The monograph which is based on the result of the study is geared towards the provision of basic data for the formulation of a training programme in Population Education planned for the Colony Unit by the Family Planning Communication Strategy Project. The conceptual build up has been greatly played down in order to present only the essentials necessary for drawing up of the training programme.

accepted conjugal partner of a woman. The usual family unit comprised a husband, a wife, and children. A single house may have more than one family. In such a case, the *head* of each family was interviewed.

The six polyandry cases (inclusive of two *ek-ge-kema* cases) were treated as six family units, even though each family unit had two husbands. In such a household the person who was legally married to the woman was treated as the head of the household.

Chapter 2

BASIC POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Introduction

The Colony Unit-14 could be classed into four broad sectors: The Tangalle sector, the Bibile sector, the *Puranagama* sector and the Badulla sector. The broad classification was based on the observable grouping tendencies among the colonists. It also broadly fitted the migration origins of a majority of the colonists. For example, 79 (42%) of the heads of households declared that they came to the colony from the Badulla area; 39 (19%) stated that they were descendants of the original settlers (*Puranagamkarayo*) of the area; 39 (19%) stated that they were from the south-Hambantota, Matara and Galle Districts; 10 (6%) stated that they were from the Bibile area. Only 27 (14%) heads of households were from other migration origins:

Migration Origin		No. of Individuals
Kandy	District	10
Colombo	District	6
Kegalle	District	5
Kalutara	District	4
Kurunnegala	District	2
Total		27

They, however, identified themselves with one or other of the four broad sectors when caste, marriage and other social considerations came up in their day-to-day existence.¹

As a society the colony is peripherally exposed to technical innovations. Except for transistor radios and a few sewing machines, much of the technical innovations that have come into the area are related to the base of the livelihood of colonists—i.e. agriculture. A number of affluent farmers own tractors which are hired out for threshing and land preparation work. Agro-chemicals and fertiliser and new high yielding strains of paddy are used by colony farmers to increase their production. However, recent increases in prices of agro-chemicals and fertiliser coupled with pest attacks which had affected the crops for the past three seasons have greatly reduced the economic capacity of the colony farmers to adopt agro-innovations.

¹It could be argued that the 27 families identified themselves with one or other of the broad groupings for greater security in numbers, amidst the dictates of an artificially created environment like a colonisation scheme.

Illiteracy is a common feature among the older colonists. Poverty among colonists has affected the education of the population in the school-going ages (e.g. below 20 years). Though almost all children have received some formal education, they are compelled to leave school very early, and begin to contribute through cultivation, to the family income. Male children are preferred to female children in the colony society because of their greater role in the colony agricultural activities. Physically, evidence of this preference is seen in a sex imbalance among the school going population with a dominance of female over male children in all grades above the 6th in the Uhana Central School. The male children begin to contribute to the family incomes at early ages.

The lack of space for outdoor recreational facilities and the lack of an inclination for recreational activities because of the ceaseless struggle for day-to-day existence perhaps have paved the way for the marked presence of anti-social activities like addiction to liquor, gambling, etc., observed in the colony during the survey. The conditions worsened recently due to the failure of the paddy crop which affected family incomes.

However, despite the worsening of economic conditions, many colonists note that drunkenness, gambling and other anti-social activities in the colony are very much less widespread than they were in the '50s. This may mean that despite present conditions the colony society is in actuality undergoing a process of settling down while distinct initial differences on the basis of regionality, caste, etc., are being progressively levelled down.

A small group of elites were found in the colony on whom the rest of the colony population depended in varying degrees for their day-to-day needs. Though a hierarchical set up was seen between the elites and the rest, a general spirit of neighbourliness with mutual help in time of distress was observed in the colony unit. The colonists were pushed into a dependent position on the elites only in situations with which they could not cope.

A regular form of dependence¹ on elites existed only among the Tangalle group notably on two individuals. This was essentially because these elites belonged to the Tangalle group and because the first generation colonists of the Tangalle group had been followers of the two elites even before they came to the colony from the Tangalle area.

The colony society at present is in the throes of contradictory forces—strong politico-economically based leadership which attempts to impose a hierarchical pattern of dependence with themselves at the apex, and neighbourliness which attempts to aggregate colonists on the basis of mutual dependence.²

¹Dependence usually took the form of awaiting cash gifts during funerals, weddings and other household functions, seeking loans and seeking contacts with ~~politicians~~ and area administrators for satisfaction of various material needs like land, housing and employment.

²Mutual dependence took the form of sundry cash, rice and other material needs, borrowings from neighbours, voluntary help provided on occasions like weddings, funerals, *Pirith*, *Dana*, puberty ceremonies, and so on.

Population

The 192 families interviewed had a total population of 1,210 individuals or 6.3 persons per family. Of the total population 640 were males and 570 females. The sex ratio was 112 males per 100 females.

During the one year period 1 January 1974-1st January 1975 the colony unit registered 43 births and 3 deaths. *This worked out to a 3.3% rate of growth per annum¹ with a population doubling time of 22 years.*

Children below 14 years of age accounted for 37.4% of the population; the average number of children below the age of 14 years was 2.4 per family. More than 1/3 of the population (33.9%) was in the ages between 15-29 years.

One-hundred and-thirteen (or 59%) of the total number of families interviewed had equal to and over 4 living children in each family. Fifty-one (26%) families had between 8-13 living children in each family. The average number of children per family irrespective of their present age was approximately 5, with 3 males and 2 females.²

Marital Status

Four-hundred and fifty-five (37.6%) of the total population were married. The number unmarried but in marriageable ages was 278 (23%). Of this number *those who were in the highly fertile age span of 15-30 years were 234, or 94% of the total unmarried population above the age of 15 years.*

The breakdown of the unmarried population of the age interval 15-30 years in terms of sex shows a preponderance of males over females: 147 males against 87 females (or 169 males per 100 females).

Though the age of marriage of the colony (25 years for males and 20 years for females) was lower than the national average (28.0 years for males and 23.5 years for females),³ it was computed on the basis of colony individuals who were already married. It is likely that the future age of marriage for either sex would rise because:

- i. Even at present the proportion unmarried in the age interval 15-30 in relation to the total unmarried in ages above 15 years is very high;

¹ This is very much above the national rate of population growth, which was about 2.0% by 1974.

² Only those families where the age of the mother was less than 45 years of age were considered for this computation. The average age of mothers in the colony was 37.3 years.

³ Department of Census and Statistics (1971).

- ii. The education levels of the youth are relatively higher than of older age groups. For example, the average number of years of formal education had was 7 for the 20-30 age group as against 6 years for the over 30 age group;
- iii. Opportunities for additional employment in the area were scarce, affecting dowries and suitable partners etc.
- iv. The lesser number of unmarried females in relation to males in the age group 15-30 indicate that at least some of the males of this age group would pass on to less fecund ages without marrying. Since some would look to partners from outside their home colony they would face growing competition from other eligible males of other colonies of the Gal Oya Valley for a limited pool of marriageable women, of similar castes and economic status for marriage purposes—assuming that approximately similar conditions prevailed in their colony units.¹

A possible rise in the age of marriage of either sex in the future would definitely have a bearing on the birth and growth rates of the colony population.

Marital Relationships

In the *Puranagama* sector and in the *Bibile* sector of the colony, marriages usually took place along cross-cousin paths. This was a feature introduced to the colony from the migration-origins of colonists. This prevented a fragmentation (through marriage) of lands owned by colonists.

Though in pre-marital and extra-marital sex relationships caste barriers did not seem to exert a strong restraining force, yet, they continue to play a very important role in certain sectors of the colony as far as marriages were concerned. Numerous instances were encountered during the survey of colonists of one caste talking proudly of disallowing one of their members from marrying from a lower caste in order to maintain their caste purity. Yet, the very same individuals did not consider it objectionable that pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships existed between the males of their caste and females of lower castes. However, the reverse situation was categorically abhorred.

¹ This may be a safe assumption, since research studies in other areas of Sri Lanka show the same phenomenon. This may explain the recently charted decline births throughout the island. (See - D.F.S. Fernando "Changing Nuptiality Patterns in Sri Lanka, 1901-1971". *Population Studies*, vol. 29-2, 1975; W.M. Tillekeratne, "Aluthgama-Bogamuwa on the verge of the "Demographic Transition", *Proceedings for the Conference on Cross Cultural Studies of Population Growth and Rural Poverty*: 9th-12th December 1975, Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, England.

Marital contracts usually occurred among two parties of the same caste but not necessarily of the same colony. A number of inter-colony marriages among individuals of similar caste were found to have increased in recent years¹ showing that a scarcity of suitable partners (with suitable employment, wealth, etc.,) within the colony has set in.

Among the *purana* village sector many instances were encountered of inter-racial marriages between Sinhalese and Tamils. These are the results of social relationships which had existed between the Sinhalese and Tamil *purana* villages prior to the setting of the Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme.

In such marriages the surname of the Sinhalese partner was transmitted to the progeny. The Sinhalese surname bias in such marriages apparently came into being as a defensive measure by which the progeny of such inter-racial marriages could escape detection and thus, discrimination in a region essentially populated by the Sinhalese.

Evidence of the presence of both polygamy (11 cases) and polyandry (4 cases) marital relationships were found within the colony. They were not treated as objects of social stigma by colonists. Two cases of *ek ge kema*² (usually two brothers marrying one wife), were encountered. In all instances the elder brother was responsible for the upkeep of the children. In one instance, an elder brother of an *ek ge kema* situation (R.36) talking about his views concerning this form of marriage, stated that he agreed to be a party to such a marriage on the insistence of his parents. However, he maintained that the lands belonging to the family were conserved in this way.

Customary law marriages were common among the *purana* village sector, while among the other sectors this feature is fast dying out.

1	Period	Within-colony Marriages (i)	Inter-colony Marriages (ii)	Difference (i) - (ii)
	1965-1970	18	11	+ 7
	1971-1975	19	14	+ 5

While within colony marriages which stood at 18 in the 1965/70 period only increased by 5% in the succeeding 1971/75 period, the inter-colony marriages which stood at 11 in the 1965/70 period increased by 27% in the 1971/75 period.

² *Ek ge kema* is a special form of polyandry, which is on the decline, usually found to be associated with the traditional cultural patterns among the up-country Sinhalese - who reside in the central hills, and in the dry zone as migrant settlers.

Residential Status

Only 76 (6.2%) of the total population were found to be temporarily out of the colony at the time of the survey.¹ An overwhelming majority may be classed as sedentary—tied to their day-to-day existence. Typical movement patterns of the colony were short movements from home to the field, from home to the tea-kiosk, etc.,—which indicate that most people were tied to the soil. Low education levels and the nature of the prime employment source—i.e. agriculture—affected the competitiveness of colony labour with respect to labour demands in the island.

Educational Status

Of the 191 respondents (175 males; 16 females), who answered a query concerning their educational status, 128 (67%) stated that they had received formal education in government schools. Fifty-seven (30%) stated that they had not received any formal education in a government school. The rest (3%) were found to have received education in temples and *Pirivanas*. However, almost all of them were able to read and write in Sinhala and many of the colonists from *purana* village sectors also spoke Tamil. Only two individuals were found to have had formal school education beyond grade 10. The average years of formal school education had, was six years for males and five years for females.

Employment Status

One hundred and forty-nine (78%) respondents were engaged in agricultural activity. Non-agricultural employment were mostly of the non-traditional occupation types: teachers, traders, road supervisors, salesmen, technicians, drivers, etc.

Two-hundred and ninety-two (84%) of the population above 30 years of age were employed in agriculture, whereas, only 17 (5%) were employed in non-traditional occupations. In the age group 20-30 years the proportion employed in agriculture was 118 individuals (43%) while 41 individuals (15%) were employed in non-traditional occupations.

Sixty-three individuals (23%) of the population of the age group 20-30 years were found to be unemployed, while in the case of the over 30 year age group the proportion unemployed was only 31 individuals (9%).

The relatively lower position of unemployment among individuals of over 30 years is reflective of their complete adoption (with a confinement of aspirations) to the possibilities and requirements of the colony community environment. Thus, almost every able-bodied male person in the age group was found to be involved in food production and other job types basic to the community.

¹ These individuals were not associated in out-movements involving residential shifts.

The relatively higher proportion among the youth who are employed in non-traditional occupations is reflective of their relatively higher educational status and exposure to informal sources. For example, in the Colony Unit the average number of years of formal education received by the 20-30 year age group was seven years— one year above that of the age group "above 30 years". Similarly, more of the 20-30 age group were found to be regular receivers of information from mass-media sources (radio and newspapers) than of the above 30 year age group.¹ Further, the *de facto* fragmentation of individual allotments of 4 acres given to original settlers, over time, has removed the hold land had on the aspirations of the second and third generation colonists. A direct result is that while more of the enterprising types among the youthful group are seeking or are forced to seek non-traditional occupations because of the lack of land for cultivation, a larger pool of able-bodied unemployed among this group remains in the colony.

A product of the existence of constricting employment opportunities in the Colony Unit especially on the second and third generation settlers is seen in the higher proportion of out migrants among the youthful sector (24 individuals or 6% of 20-30 year population) than among the older groups (21 individuals or 6% of + 30 year population).² Furthermore, 50% of the younger group who had migrated were found to have moved out of the Colony Unit for purposes of employment; in the over 30 year population group it was 36%.

¹This was based on the observed numerical superiority of the 20-30 age group listening-in to radios, reading newspapers, forming discussion groups in a number of spots (tea kiosk, bathing spots) within the Colony Unit.

²Out-migration is defined as a movement out of the Colony Unit boundaries involving a residential shift. All members of families who were involved in such a movement were defined as out-migrants.

Chapter 3

POPULATION AWARENESS AND AGENTS OF MOTIVATION

Population Awareness: Present Position

Almost all (186 respondents) were aware that the population of the colony had expanded during the last decade. An acute awareness of the dwindling space for housing and cultivation (109 respondents), unemployment (53 respondents) and food shortages (28 respondents) had conditioned colonists to view population growth as a problem to be urgently solved. Almost all (185 respondents) were aware of uncontrolled population growth as the major problem confronting the colony, which has led to other problems like land shortages and unemployment.

The 192 respondents advocated an average birth spacing interval of three years. However, the actual birth spacing interval was broader and had shown an increase over years. For example, on the average the first child was born to a colonist family two years after marriage of partners, the second child after four years and the third child after eight years. This lengthening of birth-spacing interval appears to be a recent phenomenon in the colony, which probably is a reaction to the economic pressure they are facing. For example, a majority (136 respondents), mentioned diseases associated with malnutrition as causal factors of their desire to advocate a higher birth spacing interval.

Beliefs about 'family size' were confused and often contradictory. Many believed that a colony family should have about 2-3 children. Many families (122 families) had over three children.¹

A majority (170 respondents) stated that techniques of family planning should be taught to colonists; 167 respondents thought it apt to teach such techniques to married persons of all ages and both sexes, than to unmarried persons.

Of the 183 who responded to queries about contraceptives, 89 were aware, while 94 were not aware of them. The slight difference in the numerical strength between those who were nominally aware and those who were not, hints at the narrowing down of the initial awareness gap about contraception as a result of information inflows.

However, 42 respondents (47% of those aware of the existence of contraceptives) were only able to identify a few of the contraceptive methods. Of them 18 respondents were only able to name

¹vide p. 6

a single method; 24 were able to name more than one method. Furthermore, of the 42 respondents, more named tubectomy (40% of the respondents) and the condom (15 or 35% of the respondents), as methods of contraception; vasectomy, the rhythm method and the IUD were least known. More of the respondents (47 individuals) among those who were aware that contraceptives exist possessed an initial awareness which was very slight.

Similarly, of those who were able to identify contraceptives, only 24 respondents (57%) showed a practical awareness through adoption of contraceptives. Of those who had achieved a practical awareness, more knew through adoption of the condom (10 respondents) and tubectomy (6 respondents), than of vasectomy (3 respondents), the loop (3 respondents), or the rhythm method (2 respondents).

Of the contraceptives only the condom was known by its trade name, "Preethi". Thirty-two colonists knew that "Preethi" was the local trade name of the condom. Yet, only a minority (10 individuals) of them did know how to use it. Four colony level incidents were related by respondents which showed an ignorance of its use among the colonists. One such incident was the case of (R.10) who had received wrong instructions from a particular *mudalali* of Uhana town from where he bought the contraceptive (a condom). The *mudalali* acted as an authority of the uses of the condom. The inaccurate instructions given by this individual had resulted in an unwanted progeny in the family.

A wide gap remains between what the respondents say and what they actually do. For example, though both the husband (R.23) and wife of a family which was interviewed were found to have known in some detail about condom and the loop for the past six years they have had three children during the period - which added up to a total of 10 children in the family. The couple felt that their household would be lonely without a baby's cry!

Certain other colonists (16 individuals or 8% of the total number of households interviewed) though they exhibited a desire to know more about contraception intimated that they felt too shy to consult even medical practitioners about such a matter. A number of colonists (7 individuals) expressed surprise that grocery stores do openly sell condoms.

Six (5 of women aged 15-45, who are married women), in the colony unit were found to have undergone the tubectomy operation. Many colonists on inquiry mistakenly interpreted the process as the removal of the womb or the turning of the womb. A number of individuals (8 heads of households) were encountered, who had used the condom sometime ago, but have since dropped out essentially because (as they said), they could not derive complete satisfaction through its use.

The loop and vasectomy were relatively new methods among the colonists and many did not know of the use of the pill. A few pill users¹ were encountered during the survey (8 wives of

¹ These were a few women who had been visited by the midwife on her occasional rounds in the colony.

colonists), who had dropped out because its adoption was found to affect their health.

Only an insignificant minority (11 respondents) were found to have read pamphlets or newspaper advertisements concerning contraception. Similarly, few (13 respondents) ever listened to radio programmes on family planning. Only 6 respondents announced that radio programmes were even partially responsible for changing their views about family planning.

A greater number of respondents (8 males; 26 females)¹ were found to have discussed problems about the use of contraceptives with the Public Health Inspector and the midwife who occasionally visit the colony and western and ayurvedic physicians who reside in the Uhana town. Only 5 respondents (1 male; 4 females) were found to discuss such matters with their friends, neighbours and relatives.² *Since contraception touched on intimate aspects of sex life it is not surprising the respondents prefer to discuss such matters with those who are acknowledged by the colony society to be not only confidential about inquiries made by colonists, but also to be outside the gossip networks of the colony.*

Most colonists have been unable to build up their awareness into a more productive state because of the lack of contact with the midwife and the Public Health Inspector (both of whom rarely visit the colony), and because of a natural reticence to discourse on matters of contraception with physicians.

In an environment untouched by organised family planning programmes and where economic hardships, illiteracy, tangential social traditions, resulting from factors like regionality of colonists and caste variations prevail, it is not surprising that small family traditions have not made sufficient inroads into the colony society.

Agents of Motivation

The survey discerned two major factors which have motivated the colonists towards an awareness of the size and growth of their population and the need for contraception. They were:

- i. the land shortages and adverse agro-economic conditions;
- ii. the exposure to information sources.

¹Of the 8 males, 3 were heads of households interviewed through the questionnaire; of the 26 females, 7 were heads of households.

²Of the 5 respondents who stated that they discuss contraception with friends, neighbours and relatives only one was a male head of a household.

Landownership

At the inception of the Colony, 127 colonist households were given a total of 599 acres, of which 512 acres were in lowland and 87 acres were in highland. Thus, on the average, a colonist was given 4.7 acres of land of which 4.0 was in lowland and .7 were in highland holdings respectively.

At the end of 1975, the number of registered colonists had increased to 209 (an increase of 88% over 1954).¹

The total extent of registered land held increased more slowly (51%) to 606 acres in the 22 years between 1953 and 1975 showing an increasing population pressure because of the limiting factor of land.² This is clearly seen under highland and lowland categories.

For example, by 1975 the average extent of lowland (paddy lands) per family was 2.45 acres, a reduction of 1.55 acre over the 1953 figure, while in the case of highland the reduction was .25 acre over the 1953 figure. If the present growth rate of the population remains constant over time, and since the extent of land under the Colony Unit is fixed, this per family extent of land would be halved around 2000 A.D.³

The 192 families interviewed through the questionnaire, held a total of 572 acres of land, of which 91 acres were in highland and 481 acres were in lowland.

However, of the 192 families only 153 claimed ownership of highland, while 39 families (13.7%) claimed that they did not own any highland. Similarly, only 136 families claimed ownership of lowland, while 56 (19.2%) claimed that they did not own any lowland.

¹ Fifty-seven heads of households (second generation colonists) were found to have built their homes in the highland allocations given to their fathers who were the original settlers in the colony. Their individual holdings ranged in sizes from about 8 perches to 15 perches of land. In one instance 5 houses (of which 4 belonged to second generation colonists) were found in a highland extent of 63 perches allocated to a first generation colonist - H.M.Kiriwanthe (R.45).

² At the inception of the colony 60 acres of land was reserved for other purposes like grazing land, parks, etc., which brought the total land area of the colony to 659 acres. Of the 60 acres, 7 acres were found to have been occupied through legitimate claims received from the Kachcheri. The entire remaining extent has been encroached upon. Where there was meant to be parks and grazing land, huts and paddy plots now exist.

³ The above analysis is based on data taken from the land ledger of Colony Unit-14.

Of the 22 families who owned only highland, 13 owned a total extent of 3.10 acres in individual holdings of less than half an acre in extent.

A majority of the colonists (131 respondents) owned both highland and lowland plots covering a total extent of 553.25 acres. One hundred and twenty-two (or 93%) of the total number of colonists who owned both highland and lowland owned on the average about 4.41 acres each. Almost all of them were original settlers or their first generation progeny who had legal claims to the land.

However, 34 registered colony families were completely landless in the sense that they had no legitimate claims to the land they lived in. These were mostly second-generation colonists coming from the large families of the original settlers. The apparent discrepancy between the registered land ownership and the land ownership figures of the colony obtained through the questionnaire, even after making an allowance for the lands held by the 17 households which were absent from the colony during the survey, may be the result of a combination of several factors.

- i. that many colonists had locally mortgaged and leased out their lands to the rich land owners who have emerged among the colonists. At least a certain proportion of them may have responded to the questionnaire survey by stating that they do not own lowland and/or highland;
- ii. during the entire period of the survey, a favourite past-time among the colonists were to gossip about the purpose of the survey. One rumour was that the survey was being done to give them more lands. Thus, it is quite possible that a certain proportion of the colonists did not give exact extents of lands owned;
- iii. A major proportion (64%) of the respondents who stated that they did not own lowland and/or highland were second or third generation descendants or the original settlers. Original colonists had large families and their children followed the same large family tradition. Most of the second generation and some of the third generation colonists who are married now have no land to claim upon. These responded as having no land.

¹A number of colonists were found to have mortgaged their lands on promissory notes to certain individuals which is illegal under the laws affecting Land Grants. Of the initial 127 settlers about 15 were found to have mortgaged their holdings to other colonists. Those who now operate the mortgaged lands face the potential risk of losing both their money and their claims to the land if taken to courts. However, the actual fact is that almost no cases are filed by the legitimate owner of the land against such a person, because such persons hold positions of social and political influence in the colony but also could physically harm the mortgagee if he broke his bond with the buyer to whom he mortgaged his land.

Agro-economic problems

Paddy cultivation in the Colony had suffered from the *Brown Hopper Pest* attack continuously for the last three seasons. Delays in conveying government aid to alleviate the sufferings of the farmers have resulted in worsening their economic conditions. Farmers stated that prior to the pest attack they were able to obtain about 70-80 bushels of paddy per acre. The harvests during the survey period were found to have dwindled to little more than 10 bushels per acre. Many had begun to leave paddy cultivation and to move into *chena* cultivation on the forest reserves of the Gal Oya valley. Some have given their paddy lands on lease¹ for a season or two and attempt to subsist on the proceeds.

An additional problem which has affected the state of low productivity which exists in the colony is the high cost of fertiliser and agro-chemicals. In addition, the Co-operatives have stopped issuing on a loan-basis fertiliser and agro-chemicals to colonists. The farmers lack sufficient cash to directly buy such needs.

A number of colonists have become debtors to the Co-operatives because of their inability to settle their agro-loans. Most colonists (126 respondents) believe that the new agro-insurance scheme is a fruitful step in the right direction, but despair that they are unable to become beneficiaries of such a scheme. Many do not have sufficient cash even to register themselves under the Insurance Scheme. For example, by the end of September 1975, only two farmers were found to have joined the Agro-Insurance Scheme.

Many colonists (152 respondents) believe that the inability of authorities to grant fresh lands to their children has been responsible for much of the unemployment problems in the colony.² The colonists do not aspire for government employment. They believe that they could improve their lot through agriculture if additional lands and other facilities are provided by authorities.

A side effect of the state of landlessness in the colony was a shortage in housing. A number of instances (26 cases) were noted where 2 or 3 families were found to be living in one small house.

¹ A few individuals were found to have increased their positions of affluence almost overnight by leasing-in the paddy lands of colonists left destitute by the pest attacks. These individuals form the landed elite of the colony.

² To illustrate: "Landlessness is the biggest problem in the Colony Unit-14. In every household, married children with their own families attempt to subsist on the four acres of paddy land given to their father. Their main aim in life is, naturally, to appeal for more land". (R.20: 09. 9.75).

The Gal Oya Colonisation Scheme does not show a broad programme of employment which could suit its expanding population. An expansion of the lowland extent under the colony may be desirable since all colonists believe that only through agriculture could a solution to the increasing state of unemployment in the colony be evolved - especially for their children who cannot hope for governmental employment in the area in the foreseeable future.¹

The fact that almost all of the respondents who have viewed population growth in the colony to be tied up with - (i) dwindling space for housing and cultivation; (ii) unemployment; and (iii) food shortages, shows not only the increasing effects of the limiting factor of land, but also that 78% of the respondents were involved in agricultural activity. Employment and family incomes were thus intimately tied up with the fluctuating fortunes of agricultural production.

Exposure to Information Sources

Of the 185 heads of households who responded to queries concerning exposure to newspapers, 73 respondents (39%) stated that they never read the newspapers; 112 respondents (61%) stated that they read the newspaper (either daily, once a week, or occasionally). The newspapers were read mostly at the colony tea kiosks and at neighbouring houses which could afford to buy newspapers. Of those who read newspapers, 80 individuals (71%) stated that they read the newspapers in the above quoted locations while 32 (29%) stated that they read the newspapers at home.

One hundred and one (55%) respondents stated that they read the newspapers to know about the local affairs and to improve their knowledge than to read about advertisements and for entertainment (cartoons, etc.,) purposes.

Of the 187 heads of households who responded to queries concerning exposure to the radio, ninety-eight (50%) respondents stated that they listen daily to the radio; 53 (31%) stated that they listen occasionally, while only 36 (19%) stated that they did not listen to the radio at all. The radio was easily assessable to the colonists with many homes having in their possession radio sets.² Ninety-two (61%) of the

¹ Awaiting "a timely help from the Government" seems to be a way by which colonists maintain hopes for betterment amidst the dictates of a harsh environment of water scarcity, unemployment, population pressure, land shortage, low incomes, etc., while it helps to blunt the psychological effects of apathy resulting from the reality of their environment, it also contributes to damage what initiative they have among them to encounter, where possible, the problems they face.

² The Colony Unit had a radio workshop-cum-sales room where transistor radios were assembled.

respondents¹ who listened to the radio stated that they listen to it in their homes; while 59 (39%) stated that they listen to the radio at the boutique, at homes of relatives, neighbours or friends.

Radio listenership in the Colony Unit was essentially 'a family affair' with family listenership in homes. An almost equal number of respondents stated that they listen to the radio for entertainment and to know about local affairs (100 respondents). Only a few individuals listened to the radio for advertisements (7 respondents).

Of the 186 heads of households who responded to queries concerning exposure to the films media, ninety-three (50%) respondents stated that they occasionally see a film. Only 22 (12%) respondents stated that they go at least once a month to see a film; only 9 (5%) individuals stated that they go at least once a week to see a film.

Perceived Importance of information sources

Of the 188 heads of households who responded to queries concerning sources of information about the extra-village environment 178 quoted gossip² as a major source of information. One hundred and thirty-two quoted the radio and 103 respondents the newspapers as information sources.³

However, in an order of perceived content-veracity of messages the newspaper was first with 83 (44%) respondents quoting it, followed by gossip (63 or 34% of the respondents), the radio (41 or 22% of the respondents) and hearsay⁴ (2 or 1% of the respondents) in a descending order of importance.

¹The colony had about 71 transistor radios in families at the end of the survey period-with an average of one radio to nearly three families, thus, of the individuals who stated that they listen to the radio daily and of those who stated that they listen to it at home a certain proportion who do not own radios listen to the radio daily and at a close relatives' place (like a son's home which is situated in the same compound as that of his father), which they consider as their own home.

²Gossip-an indirect exchange of news on various topics in an informal atmosphere which usually leads to the generation of rumours.

³It should be noted that certain respondents quoted more than one information source.

⁴Hearsay-a conversation that is overheard but where the person hearing it does not take part in the discussion.

The apparent discrepancy between what colonists quoted as a primary source of information in terms of the content-veracity of messages and what they quoted as sources of information about extra-village happenings is the result of the following factors:

- i. Gossip though quoted as a source of information served more to break the routine of the day-to-day lives of the colonists. It also did not give such a wide coverage of extra-village information, as for example a newspaper. Further, gossip usually took the form of interpretations of news conveyed through more formal channels like the newspaper or the radio. Thus, as far as the content-veracity of messages concerning extra-village matters were concerned, colonists attributed a greater importance to the newspaper than to gossip.
- ii. The radio is usually listened in for entertainment rather than for extra-village information. Further, radio information is more selective than the newspaper. Thus, to colonists the newspaper emerged more important than the radio in conveying extra-colony information.
- iii. Perhaps the most important cause of all was the political orientation of the colony. The leadership in the colony was based essentially on politics, and politics have been able to cut across barriers of regionality and caste which were very strong at the inception of the colony. Thus, by a desire for extra-village information the colonist usually meant following changes in the political currents of the island. In this context, they received more information of a higher perceived veracity from the newspaper, than through gossip. The radio with its emphasis on music, advertisement, cultural programmes and time constraints did not play an important role as an initiator of political discussions in the colony.

Besides interpretative aspects gossip also adds pieces of information based on the personal experience of others. Though gossip is not as important as the newspaper, it is perceived by colonists to occupy a superior position in the matters of conveying extra-village information (usually political).

As information sources for increasing awareness about population problems and contraception mass media sources were found to be less effective than interpersonal sources, both formal (e.g. midwife, Public Health Inspector and Physicians); and informal (e.g. friends, neighbours or relatives). More of the respondents quoted formal interpersonal sources than informal ones, probably because of beliefs associated with conception and contraception.

Chapter 4

POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING AWARENESS

The increasing pressure of population on land and associated problems of land-fragmentation, landlessness, housing shortages, food shortages and unemployment were apparently pressurising the colonists to become more aware of the spectre of uncontrolled population growth. Mass media was found to be ineffective in conveying information techniques of family limitation; the colonists sought a practical awareness of such techniques. The data on population pressure on land and attendant problems showed that the colonists do urgently need a sound education in population limitation techniques.

The activities of the Midwife and Public Health Inspector need to be broadened to incorporate the imparting of instructions of the uses and advantages of population limitation techniques from birth spacing to contraceptive devices. Since the survey showed a higher tendency among colonists to accept medical advice from qualified personnel in matters of contraception and conception-programmes of instruction on the subjects should be spearheaded by such personnel. However, in mobilising the colonists towards mass acceptance of such a programme, existing opportunities in the colony need to be fully harnessed. they are:

- i. the colony influentials who serve as opinion leaders of the colonists;
- ii. the tendency among colonists to aggregate for satisfaction of common wants.

Colony influentials: positions of influence

Three individuals: G. Wijeratne (R.20); D.L. Seneviratne (R.15); and S.K. Sumanadasa (R.71); emerged as the major socio-metric stars in the colony.¹ One-hundred-and sixty-one respondents quoted Wijeratne (R.20) as a colony influential while Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumanadasa (R.71) were perceived to be lesser influentials with respondent scores of 39 and 31 respectively.

In the same order of prominence all three individuals were quoted as important persons who are invited to be guests of honour at weddings, *pirith* and *dana* ceremonies and whose help was sought in times of distress.

¹Bio-data on the three individuals are given in Appendix II.

Wijeratne (R.20), Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumanadasa (R.71) as influentials in the colony were quoted by a majority of respondents (174 or 91%) as individuals whose opinions were sought-after in problems and incidents in the colony. However, their names were not mentioned by other colonists as individuals whose help was requested for cultivation work. Several inferences could be made from the above:

1. that Wijeratne (R.20) was perceived by the colonists as a person of a higher relative importance, who could be useful to them. This was because they were aware: (i) that he holds key positions in a large number of colony and extra-colony organisations; (ii) that he has the ear of the political authority for the area; (iii) that his known affluence could be harnessed to their advantage by inviting him for household functions.
2. they also feared the authority of Wijeratne (R.20). Since they were afraid that the nature of their responses to questionnaires may percolate to Wijeratne (R.20), they tended to include Wijeratne in queries - as to who they recognise as a village leader, and as a major invitee for household functions.
3. Wijeratne (R.20), because he had helped villagers irrespective of their political ideologies to obtain employment, to get land, to get pauper allowances and to receive aid in times of distress, won much goodwill among other colonists.
4. both Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumanadasa (R.71) were perceived as colony leaders and important invitees for household functions because - (i) both were affluent individuals - Seneviratne an affluent farmer and Sumanadasa an affluent businessman - and (ii) both represented a political force which was opposed to the political party through which G. Wijeratne (R.20) derives his authority. Colonists in general tended to be politically non-committal while looking up to Wijeratne (R.20) for various benefits did not fail to recognise the importance of both Seneviratne and Sumanadasa who may become dominant personalities in the future with a change in government.
5. Wijeratne, Seneviratne, and Sumanadasa were not perceived as individuals who would come even if they were called, to help in the cultivation work of individual colonists. This perhaps was because the colonists in their minds had elevated the three individuals to a higher social position than themselves. Thus they did not expect these three influentials to work side-by-side with them in the fields.
6. the land owned by these three individuals were cultivated by hiring labour from the colony. This gave the colonists to understand that Wijeratne, Seneviratne and Sumanadasa had no time or the inclination to work in their own fields on an equal basis with the hired labour. Observation of this feature may have resulted in the colonists overlooking the three names, when asked by researchers to name persons who closely associated with them in their paddy cultivation work.

To a query as to who the colonists usually consult for advice and information concerning colony level problems and incidents, it emerged that G. Wijeratne (R.20) was the most important, with 65 respondents quoting him; followed by D.L. Seneviratne (R.15) with 24 respondents and Sumanadasa (R.71) with 14 respondents. The apparent difference in the number of respondents quoting Wijeratne (R.20) as against the other two, is again a function of the political authority he wields, his involvement in numerous organisations and because of his intimate knowledge of problems and incidents in the colony which he gains through his broad circle of colony associates.

An interesting facet of the responses received to a query as to who the respondents perceived as colony leaders, was that while Seneviratne and Sumanadasa quoted Wijeratne (R.20), it was reciprocated by him, whereas neither Seneviratne nor Sumanadasa quoted each other as leaders, though both belonged to the rightist political causes.

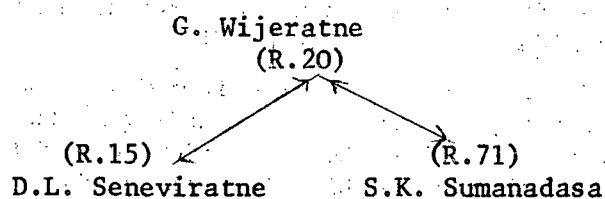
The relationship between Wijeratne (R.20) and both Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumanadasa (R.71) were cordial, marked by mutual favours bestowed on both sides. In this way the three leaders continue to reap benefits and survive the rise and fall of governments.

Further, all three are elites in the colony, in terms of wealth and in this economic domain they form an elite clique. The ability and the desire to retain the uniqueness of a clique is further demonstrated by the fact that H. Wijeratne (R.82) who is recognised to be one of the chief organisers of rightist causes alongside Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumanadana (R.71), in the colony, is G. Wijeratne's (R.20) own brother. Political differences do not affect various favours done to each other during different political climes—though outwardly they are political rivals.

Though a mutual attraction exists between two politically dissimilar parties—R.20 versus R.15 and R.71 (e.g. see chart I):

Chart I

Pyramid of Relationships among Power Elites
of the Colony



because of elitic considerations, a similar attraction does not exist between R.15 and R.71 who are both politically and economically similar. A state of repulsion exists between them. Since both are of similar elite state of politico-economic character, they struggle for leadership in the rightist political group of the colony.

D.L. Seneviratne (*Lekam Mahattaya*) derives a certain authority among *purana* villagers through the fact that his father had held a post of *Korale Mahattaya* and he himself was the Registrar of Births and Deaths for the colony through which he derived the honorific *Lekam Mahattaya*. He also has the highest educational qualifications among the *purana* villagers, having obtained his Senior School Certificate both in the Sinhala and English media.

S.K. Sumanadasa on the contrary, is a non-colonist. He is a trader who derives his authority through the financial control he has over many colonists who buy goods from his grocery store and who are recipients of his generosity in times of distress. He also wields influence over the *purana* village sector in the colony because he came to the area around 1948—before the Gal Oya Colony came into being.

The struggle between these two individuals is essentially guided by efforts - (i) to win the favour of *purana* villagers; (ii) to increase the state of dependence of colonists on them; and (iii) to win the favour of the second generation colonists by posing as the champion of their political aspirations. Thus, each acknowledges even a political rival (like Wijeratne) as an influential in preference to the other, who is too alike in political and economic strength.

At the time of the survey Seneviratne was facing a threat to his position because of the diversion of his social service activities from the colony to an extra-colony *purana* village called *Kohombana*. He had built up a Rural Development Society at *Kohombana*, and through it constructed a school—which he presented to the Government. His apparent overtures to align his interests with the present government has won him disfavour among the Uhana Colony Unit rightist group. This has indirectly enhanced the position of Sumanadasa as a champion of rightist causes. This in turn has drawn Seneviratne more towards Wijeratne. It is highly likely that Seneviratne would be completely replaced by Sumanadasa as the sole champion of rightist causes by the next elections.

Colony attitudes towards leaders

Leadership and politics go hand-in-hand in the colony. With each change of government some of the individuals who support the ideologies of the victorious political party assume positions of importance in formal organisations, thereby assuming a cloak of formal leadership in the colony.

Individuals like Seneviratne and Sumanadasa who lost their formal positions because of a political change were individuals who had helped the colonists irrespective of political differences when they were in power. Colonists continue to consult them on various problems about which these individuals had gained some insight during their stay in power; they continue to be invited to social functions of the colony as guests-of honour. In other words

colonists continue to treat them as leaders, though, in a more informal capacity.

To illustrate:

"Bekeriya Sudu Mahattaya, (Sumanadasa) defeated Wijeratne in 1965 and became the Village Council Representative for Colony Unit-14. Though he lost later to Wijeratne we like him because he helps people who are in difficulties during an illness or at the death of a colonist. He also gives goods on credit. (R.43: 24.8.75).

Sudu Mahattaya helps people when they are down and out. He is an active social worker despite the fact that he belongs to the United National Party. He gives loans, and goods on credit to the colonists when they are in distress. He is not exacting in asking money back". (R.121: 13.9.75).

Sumanadasa Mahattaya, though a resident of the Uhana town is very helpful to us colonists. He comes to our aid when we really need help. He also gives us goods on credit". (R.78: 15.9.75). "

Sumanadasa, the individual under scrutiny because of the nature of his business has been able to form connections with many of the colonists of the Uhana Colony Unit-14. Since he was a trader before the Gal Oya Colony began, his ties with the *purana* villagers are exceptionally strong.

Through them he draws much of his support. Even though he had lost a formal position which he held during 1970 (i.e. the President of the No.5 Co-operative **Stores** in the Colony Unit) the *purana* villagers continue to hold him in high esteem because of the help he has rendered in providing employment, enabling senior colonists to get Old Age and Pauper Allowances, etc., during his stay in power. Through such actions he has made individuals to look up to him and to respect him even after he lost his formal position in the colony.

Although Sumanadasa was not a colonist but a resident of the Uhana town, the colonists treated him as one of their own because of the fact that he assisted them in times of distress and because he was the chief organiser of the United National Party (UNP) political activity in the area which makes him a potential force in the colony. The very fact that he was not a colonist makes the colony unit residents disassociate him from regional factionalism which prevails in the colony among groups who have come from different parts of the island. He was, thus, able to occupy a fairly neutral role among factions in the colony.

The colonists seek to satisfy their immediate needs through their leaders. The importance of the need and the attitude of leaders towards such needs condition the relationships between the colonists and the leaders, and the desire of leaders to maintain positions of influence in the colony. The important needs in the colony at present are landlessness, unemployment and monetary or material aid in times of distress.

Attempts at satisfaction of both land and employment needs, however, entail a tying up of colony wants with the existing political structure of the country. This in turn means that the colony requires political spokesmen for their cause who could confront regional political authorities. Through this felt need has emerged colonists who hold formal positions in colony and extra-colony organisations because of their political affiliations. At present the chief among them is G. Wijeratne (R.20).

To quote some views of colonists about R.20:

"Wijeratne is not only an individual who takes an active interest in social services of the colony, but is also a person who helps people irrespective of their caste or class". (R.92: 12.7.1975)

"Wijeratne is the person who buys the coffin at the death of a colonist be he his party man, or of the opposite camp. He helps in weddings and other household functions in the colony. He is the person who helps us by voicing the problems of the colony to the political authority for the area. He helped many landless colonists in the colony unit to obtain fresh land from *Hinidurawa* scheme" (R.172: 19.7.1975).

"My son works as a *Grama Sevaka* in the *Bakkielle* area. Wijeratne *Mahattaya* helped him a great deal to get this job. Similarly, he has helped many others to get employment". (R.83: 10.9.1975).

A number of colonists (31 respondents) declared that Wijeratne was responsible for finding employment to about 30 or 40 individuals from the colony; others say that he was responsible for helping the destitute to obtain pauper allowances from the government and for taking care of expenses

during deaths of members¹ of poor families.

Thus, Wijeratne occupies the unique position in the colony as a broadly acceptable individual because he was able to satisfy or at least make an attempt to satisfy the general needs of the colonists like - land, employment and financial aid in times of distress.

Through another view point, though colonists acclaim Wijeratne as an influential who materially benefits the colony, many of them do not condone the vagaries of his personal life. They do not treat him as a person of high moral standards.² Colonists appear to expect their leaders to maintain a higher code of morals than themselves. When leaders indulge in nefarious activities it is much talked of in a derogatory note by the colonists. Apparently, such behaviour illustrates to the colonists that their leaders have the same human failings as themselves.

Colonists also tend to treat an individual as influential who could materially help them (by getting land and employment to have notes), though they inwardly resent their own dependence on him. They may be aware of his short comings as an influential, like the misuse of authority, but they turn a deaf ear to such faults because - (i) they fear to antagonise him by openly voicing their grievances against him; (ii) they stand to gain by perceiving only his good deeds.

Wijeratne may be cited as an example of an influential who is unwillingly accepted by some colonists (28 respondents) as an influential because of his strong political connections. They are aware of how he misuses his authority but they fear to voice their grievances for the reasons mentioned.

¹Examining closely Wijeratne's alleged generosity at funerals, we found that it was not as it seemed. During funeral preparations, at the death of a colonist, we observed him handing over a sum of Rs.200.00 exhibiting an air of high generosity. Wijeratne is the President of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Death Donation Society in the colony. This organisation provides a death donation to the closest relatives of a member, at his death, to tide over expenses. When the records of this society were examined we found a sum of Rs.150.00 voted for the particular death cited above. It meant that Wijeratne had spent only Rs.50.00 out of his own pocket. Yet, the people at the funeral house believed that it was all Wijeratne's money that they received. (The other committee members who own much to Wijeratne's political position were silent on the issue).

²Generally, as far as morality is concerned, people in the colony do not treat extra-marital sex as something which goes against the norms of the colony society. Since the colonists are of diverse origins and interests and since the colony is situated in a harsh environment where people's lives are conditioned by their struggle for day-to-day existence, moral codes are somewhat weak.

To illustrate:

"Wijeratne *Mahattaya* is definitely an important influential in the colony. However, in all activities he works for his own needs. He is an expert at diverting channel water to his own fields at the expense of the other colonists. He with a group of his henchmen use strong arm tactics and political power to control the lives of the colonists". (R.73: 4.6.1975)

"I made a number of complaints to Wijeratne *Mahattaya* about my fields not getting water supplies because of the activity of my neighbours, but he did not bother to help me out though he was so powerful. Wijeratne *Mahattaya* does not attempt to come forward and help people in distress unless he gets some benefit through such help. People are unwilling to criticise him because they fear his strong arm tactics". (R.111: 5.6.1975)

"Wijeratne *Mahattaya* is very active now-a-days in the colony but I do not accept him as a leader. He works for self-interest and not for the common good of the colonists". (R.153: 2.6.1975)

"Many of the colony leaders cut themselves off from us. They do not take notice of the problems faced by the colonists once they have achieved their position. They are more concerned with strengthening their own contacts with outside politicians and government officials than in helping us, who elected them. Wijeratne *Mahattaya* is a very good example". (R.86: 13.6.1975).

The above responses indicate a number of conflicting views and interests among colonists about the position of leadership.

The views are as follows:

- i. Colony influentials who had achieved positions of authority because of formal posts they occupied in various institutions consider it beneficial to themselves (re their rising aspirations) to form close alliances with high government officials and political interests than to stay on with the people who pushed them up.
- ii. Colony influentials who face a possible antagonism among a segment of their supporters prefer to cater to other segments so that those who oppose them will be humbled down to accept their authority.
- iii. Colony influentials tend to help certain small groups of individuals among their supporters who are noted for their organising abilities and who could be depended on during future elections to rural organisations.
- iv. Colonists elevate others to leadership positions because they expect certain benefits through such individuals for themselves. When such is not forthcoming they begin to

reducile or ignore the leaders in order to place the leaders into a position of dependence on themselves—so that the leaders would bow to their wishes, if they desire to continue to maintain their positions of authority.

- v. Between colony leaders and the rest of the colonists the struggle to place each other in a dependent position and the acceptance of either party of such a position, seem to underlie opinions expressed about leadership and the behaviour of leaders, themselves.
- vi. A number of former supporters of Wijeratne (R.20) and others, voice their grievances in confidence about the misuse of authority by the leaders. Yet, they are unwilling to organise themselves to oppose the leaders, because they still hope to reap fringe benefits for themselves by showing an outward appearance of appreciation of such individuals.

The outcome of conflicts of such interests would be that individuals like Wijeratne, may only survive as far as their political support is maintained. They can only retain a semblance of their former position of influence if they do get more involved, while in power and very much after, in socio-cultural activities in the society in which they exist.¹

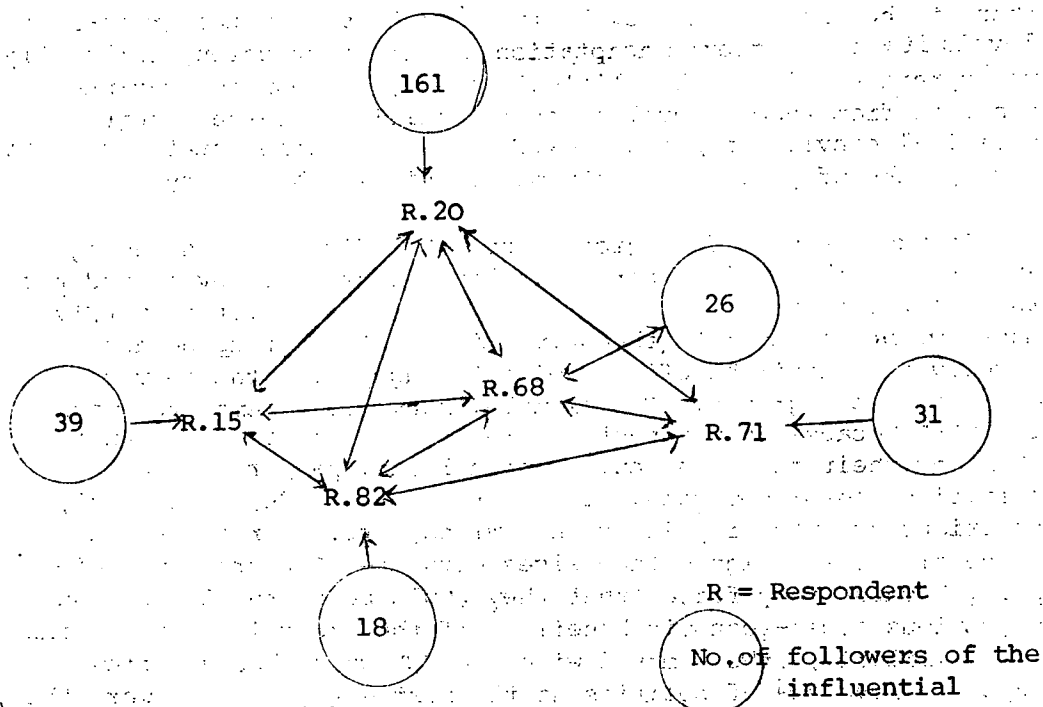
A number of other minor influentials who have tied themselves with particular political interests were identified during the survey. They have a small following in the colony. Many of them are treated with contempt by those outside their immediate groups. Since some of these individuals are addicted to various anti-social practices like brewing illicit liquor, gambling, misuse of agro-chemicals and insecticides (the distribution over which they have certain control), they are not recognised outside their following as influentials, though the posts they hold warrant such recognition. Because of the support these individuals get from influential quarters at the local level the colonists fear to openly oppose them.

¹ It may be a common feature in villages of Sri Lanka that many influentials who lost their formal positions because of the change of government, rapidly became involved in numerous socio-cultural activities in their immediate environment (like participating in *shramadana* movements, attending household functions, like *pirith*, *dana*, weddings and funeral ceremonies, etc.). They hope by these means to win the sympathies of the people, the very people whom they had neglected during their stay in power. They hope by these actions to dissipate memories of such misdeeds, among the people. Apparently this form of manipulation, to a large extent succeeds in convincing people, since such individuals are re-elected to positions of formal leadership after a break of several years.

Among the lesser influentials in the colony unit are two individuals, E.A. Emmanuel (R.68) and H. Wijeratne (R.82) who not only command respect among the colonists as social workers, but also have close relationships with the three influentials discussed before.¹ H. Wijeratne (R.92) is the brother of G. Wijeratne (R.20) but upholds rightist causes. He is thus, equally close to D.L. Seneviratne (R.15) and S.K. Sumanadasa (R.71). Emmanuel belongs to the Tangalle group and upholds leftist causes. He holds formal posts in a number of colony-level organisations. However, like Wijeratne (R.20), he is widely accepted as one who helps colonists irrespective of their individual political affiliations. He has close friendship connections with the three major influentials.

Both these individuals act in the role of peacemaker, not only among different caste, regionality and political factions in the colony, but also among the three major influentials—especially during occasions like all three are contenders to various posts in village-level organisations. They are listened to on such occasions by all three of the key influentials. Sociometrically speaking they serve to bridge the gap between Seneviratne (R.15) and Sumandaasa (R.71) (two of the major influentials) while adding their own following to the body of colonists who uphold the views of the influentials. (See Chart II below:

Chart II Generalised network of relationship among elites, mediators and other colonists



¹ See Appendix II for bio-data on the two individuals.

Bases of Community Aggregation

Almost all the colonists identified themselves with one or other of the four broad sectors, the Tangalle sector, the Bibile sector, the *Puranagama* sector, and the Badulla sector. Though the division was based on migration - origins (vide p.4), it had taken on different social status considerations, which came to the forefront when caste, marriage, nominations for posts in various colony-level organisations etc., comes into being.

Cutting through this four-fold division based on the regionality consideration was a more stable two-fold division based on politics, which appeared to be gaining ground ~~over~~ years.

A division of the Colony population on the basis of politics existed in the colony between those who champion rightist ideologies and those who champion the leftist ideologies. In social and religious activities of the colony this division comes to the surface in the form of open conflicts between the two groups. The colony boasted of two political branch organisations owing allegiance to the two major political parties of the island - the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP). Those belonging to either group stretched their differences to such a point that they even duplicated organisations in the colony. For example, the colony unit has two Death ~~Donation~~ Societies sponsored by the two groups.

The division was more marked among the individuals who provided a form of political leadership to the colony, than among the colonists at large. It is because the interests at stake had status and authority connotations and were very much wider at the upper levels than at the grass-root levels in the colony. At the grass-root levels it was a matter of adaptation to different colony influentials who sprang up with each political change, to reap the maximum benefits from them. Involvement in activities through actual political conviction, thus, existed in a rarefied state among the lower ranks of political party membership in the colony.

Though a sound ideological conviction did not exist among supporters of political parties at the grass root level, and for that matter to a certain extent even at the top, yet outwardly many ~~chose~~ to separate themselves into either group because of perceived economic benefits coming through tying themselves to such political groups. For example, many tied themselves with the SLFP because they expected more land grants to be given to them and their families; cultivation loans, pauper allowances, sufficient agro-chemicals, etc., for their fields; employment, positions of authority in organisations, etc., for themselves. Above all, they aligned themselves with the SLFP group principally because they feared that they would be at the losing end of various socio-economic benefits, if they refrained from doing so. Similarly, others moved with the UNP group because they expect a reversal of politics at the next elections and were, thus, preparing themselves to reap socio-economic benefits by showing their allegiance in advance.

An average colonist assessed the strength of a political party on the favours granted to him by colony influentials who were symbols of either party. Though a colonist may state that he was a firm supporter of a party, in actuality he was a firm supporter of an individual (a fellow colonist) who represented a particular political cause. The individual colonist usually attached himself to one who helped him at times of economic stress as at weddings, funerals, sickness, seasonal unemployment, etc.

Political power underlay the leadership pattern in the colony. The acceptability of certain individuals like Wijeratne (R.20), Sumanadasa (R.71) and Seneviratne (R.15) as colony influentials was determined by the authority they derived through their respective political parties and by the way colonists perceived the extent of their authority. For example, Wijeratne wielded a higher authority and the colonists perceived it to be so, than Sumanadasa and Seneviratne. It was because Wijeratne belonged to the SLFP and, thus, could bring to bear immediate results of his authority than the other two who belonged to the UNP.¹

A number of colonists had received employment with the Government, on account of the services they rendered to leftist political causes. This and similar incidents (like getting land holdings) has led to a strong belief in the colony that involvement in political activity (especially that of the winning side) was a pre-requisite for obtaining land and employment. A direct result of this belief was that many married but employed individuals, with large families, even beyond the age of 40 years were to be found to be members of the Sri Lanka Youth Organisation of the colony. They hoped to obtain positions of employment and additional lands for themselves through the derived authority of their membership in the youth organisation.

Younger sectors of the population, especially those below 30 years of age, appeared to move away from direct involvement in political activity—especially from the Youth Organisations of the ruling party. This was because—(i) the youth organisations had been unable to cater to their primary, often unvoiced need—employment; (ii) joining an organisation of a ruling party at the tail end of the period of Government was always a risk to youth, who were at the beginning of their productive lives. (The youth in the colony almost always took calculated risks in the matter of joining politically based organisations).

¹ G. Wijeratne (R.20) holds positions of responsibility in about 19 colony and extra-colony organisations, most of which were political appointments. In contrast, Sumanadasa (R.71) only holds positions of responsibility in two colony level organisations (a Death Donation Society and an UNP branch organisation) which, however, were political organisations. Seneviratne was a Justice-of-Peace and was the President of a Rural Development Society in another colony unit.

Despite its inevitable shortcomings politics have been an integrating force in the colony. At the inception the colony population consisted of four distinct groups, of different regional backgrounds. For over a decade the group divisions were so distinct that marriages and other social relationships across groups were almost insignificant. Politics came to play an active role in the lives of the colonists after 1960 and especially after the year 1970.

Bigger and general issues like economic and social security pushed into prominence by problems resulting from excess population growth were increasingly drawing the colonists away from their former animosities with individuals of other groups, which were dictated by socio-cultural and economic differences in their former home environments. The second and third generation colonists were firmly rooted to the colony environment and perceive the above differences yet more weakly than their parents. On the other hand the colony population is being re-grouped into a broad and a relatively more stable two-fold political division found elsewhere in the island.

Both regionality and political divisions form complex combinations in all the colony level organisations. Some of the functioning organisations of the colony with details of their membership are given below:

Colony Unit-14 Name of the Organisation	Committee Members (Number)	Ordinary Members (Number)	Frequency of Meetings per month
Cultivation Committee ..	10	-	1
Death Donation Society No. I (SLFP) ..	9	86	variable
Death Donation Society No. II (UNP) ..	10	64	variable
Janatha Committee ..	9	-	1
Meda-Palatha Agricultural Productivity Committee ..	10	-	-
Parent-Teacher Association..	9	101	1
SLFP Youth Society ..	10	58	1
SLFP Branch Society ..	12	83	1
Sri Visaka Women's Society..	10	38	1
Udayagiri Temple Committee..	11	81	1
UNP Branch Society ..	9	68	1

More participated in colony organisations which spelt immediate benefits. For example, more participated in committee meetings and general meetings of the Death Donation Societies (109 respondents), the Cultivation Committee (21 respondents), the SLFP Branch meetings (17 respondents), than of Temple Committee (6 respondents) the Parent-Teacher Association (5 respondents) or the meetings of the UNP Branch Society (6 respondents). All of the above indicated organisations, except the Death Donation Societies met once a month. In the case of the Death Donation Societies, they usually met in times of a death of one of their members in order to decide the extent of the donation to the funeral house.

Of the existing organisations, the ones which would be of immediate utility for an action programme would be the Agricultural Productivity Committee (APC), the Cultivation Committee (CC), the Parent-Teacher Association, and the Women's Society.

Both the APC and CC were intimately tied up with the political authority for the area. These institutions also co-ordinate all of the area development functions. Colony influentials G.Wijeratne (R.20), was the President of the APC, while his Brother H.Wijeratne (R.82) was a member of the CC. In enlisting these organisations the obtainment of a political authority for the action programme should be initially procured. It should be followed by a complete training session in contraceptive devices and general population education for both R.20 and R.82. A complete realisation of the nature and the value of the training by these two individuals would not only be of great value in obtaining the full co-operation of both the APC and CC but would also be of equally great value in winning the colonists to the cause. The two individuals not only represent the two major political factions in the colony, but they also command popularity which cuts across political and regional barriers.

The Parent-Teacher Association was of special use in that individuals like D. Kodituwakku, the Principal of the Uhana Central School, who is also the President of the PTA, commanded much respect among the more concerned parents in the colony. He had the additional advantage of being an outsider, who was not drawn into the colony factions. He, thus, had the support of more responsible persons of all factions—including all the influentials.

E.A. Emmanuel (R.68), who acted as a popular social worker in the colony and as a mediator among the influentials as well as among the rest of the colony population is also a prominent committee member of the Parent-Teacher Association.

Enlisting PTA for a population programme would -

- i. pave the way for getting both the political and popular support in the colony through individuals like Emmanuel;
- ii. prepare the way for adult education programmes which can be best handled by professional educationists (e.g. the teaching staff component) in the PTA;

With adequate training sessions given to professional educationists and with the provision of training aids, they could do a more thorough job of diffusing the population message to those who most need it.

The Women's Society, the *Sri Visaka Kulangana Samitiya*, though it had a relatively smaller following with respect to other societies in the colony, was unique in that it provided a forum for the colony women. Further, women in the society had the ear of the politically powerful male influentials

like Wijeratne (R.20) who in turn gave a lending hand to the society. The Vice-President of the society, Babinona Wijeratne, was the wife of G.Wijeratne (R.20). The Society could act as a forum for the initiating of a mother's club in the colony. Such a club could be effective in three ways:

- i. serve as a forum for field worker presentations at club sessions;
- ii. extend the influence of field workers through the medium of club members;
- iii. serve as a forum for open discussions on the message-contents of literature on family planning.

At the core of an action programme on population education should be a group of trained personnel from the Department of Health, since at the moment what many of the colonists need is sound medical advice on the uses of contraception and the provision of facilities for its adoption. Organisations like the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) need to be drawn in for supplying contraceptives to help quicken process of adoption.

The colony organisations and influentials indicated in the preceding pages are more suitable to: (i) mobilise the colonists towards the cause; (ii) provide facilities like accommodation for instruction and discussion sessions; and (iii) to place the message-contents of rumours about the action programme in a correct perspective.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All available space in the colony which was originally meant to be reserved space for playgrounds and grazing land, etc., have already been occupied by the second and third generation descendants of the original settlers—in the 22 year interval between 1953-1975.

Pest problems, high costs of agro-chemicals, diminishing credit worthiness among cultivators and landlessness mainly affecting second and third generation colonists are pushing many towards *chena* cultivation on the forest reserves of the Gal Oya valley. Their fields were found to have been leased out to an emergent group of colony politico-economic elites.

Exposure to land, employment and production problems have made the colonists to become more aware of the root cause—excessive population growth (3.3% per annum, during the survey period) in the colony. Almost all of the colonists believe that this population growth need to be curtailed, through a sound training in family planning methods.

On the awareness of such methods only 24 respondents were found to have achieved a practical awareness through actual adoption of contraceptives though 89 were aware that contraceptives existed. Further, the fact that only 46% of the total number of respondents interviewed knew of the existence of contraceptives, even though almost all of them were aware of the excessive growth of the colony population, indicates a need for an information diffusion programme to increase the general awareness of the colony population on methods of contraception.

A programme to improve the awareness levels of the colony population need sponsorship of the colony society. In this task the influentials of the colony and the colony-level organisations which could be harnessed to help in an information diffusion campaign becomes vital.

Three primary elites in the colony, G. Wijeratne (R.20), D.L. Seneviratne (R.15) and S.K. Sumanadasa (R.71) were considered ideal for selection to an information diffusion campaign because:

- i. they represented different political factions in the colony;
- ii. they commanded a popularity which cut across caste, regionality and political barriers.

The other lesser influentials - E.A. Emmanuel (T.68) and

H. Wijeratne (R.32), were considered necessary for the stability of such a campaign essentially because:

- i. they served as connecting links and mediators between the politically volatile factions and elites;
- ii. they also served as individuals whose views were respected both by the elites as well as by the rest of the population.

Political power not only underlines the leadership pattern in the colony, but also had been an integrating force in the colony. Over the last 22 years it had been primarily responsible for diluting the feelings of regionalism, and caste differences which had divided the colony society at its inception. The two-party political division is gradually remoulding the colony society into a relatively stable pattern. Thus, the drawing in of colony-level organisations like the Agricultural Productivity Committee, Cultivation Committee, and to a lesser extent the Parent-Teacher Association and the Women's Society, need to be channeled through the existing political authority in the area for it to be effective.

As organisations the Agricultural Productivity Committee, Cultivation Committee, Parent-Teacher Association and the Women's Society, were considered suitable to be drawn into the entire programme because of the facilities they offer towards such a programme-like accommodation for training sessions and personnel who could be trained so that they could cater to different audiences.

At the core of an information diffusion campaign should be a group of medically trained personnel from the Department of Health who could provide the expertise in generating a practical awareness of contraception and an organisation like the International Planned Parenthood Federation, which could make available the types of contraceptives most readily accepted by the target population.

BASIC STATISTICS

Table 1. Uhana Colony Unit-14 Population
(specific age group)

Age Group (years)	Males	Females	Total
Less than 1	8	10	18
1 - 4	72	67	139
5 - 9	73	72	145
10 - 14	80	71	151
15 - 19	65	69	134
20 - 24	68	85	153
25 - 29	80	43	123
30 - 34	46	38	84
35 - 39	33	26	59
40 - 44	21	25	46
45 - 49	23	19	42
Above 50	71	45	116
T o t a l	640	570	1,210

Table 2 Uhana Colony Unit-14 Population
Number of children in families N = 192

Number of children	Number of families
0	19
1	12
2	19
3	20
4	21
5	23
6	19
7	8
Above 8	51

Table 3. The Number of Families Owning Land
(by Land Size Classes) N = 158*

Land Size Class	Only Highland (acres)	Only Lowland (acres)	Both Highland and Lowland (acres)
Less than 1/4	13	-	-
Less than 1/2 and above 1/4	6	-	-
Less than 1 and above 1/2	1	1	-
Less than 1 1/2 and above 1	1	-	3
Less than 2 and above 1 1/2	1	4	6
Equal to and above 2 acres	-	-	122
Total	22	5	131

* 34 families did not own any land

Table 4. Total Extents Owned by Families
(by land size classes) N = 158*

Land Size Class	Only Highland (acres)	Only Lowland (acres)	Both Highland and Lowland (acres)
Less than 1/4	3.10	-	-
Less than 1/2 and above 1/4	3.00	-	-
Less than 1 and above 1/2	.75	1.00	-
Less than 1 1/2 and above 1	1.25	-	3.75
Less than 2 and above 1 1/2	2.00	8.00	11.00
Equal to and above 2 acres	-	-	558.50
Total	10.10	9.00	573.25

* 34 families did not own any land

Table 5 The Per-family extent owned
(by land size class) N = 158*

Land size class (acres)	Per-Family		Extent
	Only Highland (acres)	Only Lowland (acres)	Both Highland and Lowland (acres)
Less than 1/4	.24	-	-
Less than 1/2 & above 1/4	.50	-	-
Less than 1 & above 1/2	.75	1.00	-
Less than 1 1/2 & above 1	1.25	-	1.25
Less than 2 & above 1 1/2	2.00	2.00	1.83
Equal to and above 2 acres	-	-	4.41
T o t a l	.46	1.80	4.20

* 36 families did not own any land

Table 6. Age at Marriage N = 188*

Age Interval (years)	R e s p o n d e n t s		
	Males	Females	Total
10 - 14	-	1	1
15 - 19	13	7	20
20 - 24	79	7	86
25 - 29	61	2	63
30 - 34	15	-	15
Above 35	3	-	3
T o t a l	171	17	188

* 4 respondents (3 males, 1 female) could not recall their ages at marriage.

Table 7 Formal Education Status (a)
N = 192

Type of formal Education	No. of respondents
Government School	128
Temple or <i>Pirivena</i>	-
Technical School	-
University	-
Other types of educational Institutions	6
No formal education	58
T o t a l	192

Table 8 Formal Education Status (b)
N = 191*

Duration of formal Education	No. of respondents
0	58
2 - 4	48
5 - 7	55
8 - 10	28
Above 10	2
T o t a l	191

* 1 respondent did not report.

Table 9 Employment Status: Type of Employment
N = 192

Types of Employment	No. of respondents
Farmers	249
Labourers (both agricultural and non-agricultural)	15
Traders	6
Drivers	4
Teachers	2
Technicians	1
Supervisors	1
Salesmen	1
Unemployed	13
T o t a l	192

Table 10 Awareness of Village-level Organisations
N = 192

Types of Organisations	No. of respondents *
Co-operative Stores	154
Death Donation Society	144
Cultivation Committees	103
Agricultural Productivity Committee	84
Janatha Committee	82
Rural Development Society	33
SLFP Branch Organisations	22
Temple Committee	5
Others **	

* 126 respondents quoted awareness of more than one organisation

** Includes Parent-teacher Association, the Village Council, UNP Branch Organisation, *Praja Mandalaya*, etc.

Table 11 Frequency of Participation in
the Colony-level Organisations
N = 159

Frequency of attendance of Committee members	No. of respondents
Once a week	4
Once in two weeks	68
Once a month	62
Rarely	25
Never	

Table 12 Information Sources of Primary Awareness
of Extra-village Incidents N = 188*

Information Sources	No. of respondents
Gossip	178
Radio	132
Newspapers	103
Films	53
Hearsay	22
Others **	62

* 108 respondents quoted more than one information source

** Formal interpersonal contacts with Government and
quasi-government officials of various types

Table 13 Information sources of primary awareness of
Extra-village incidents (on the order of
perceived content-veracity of Messages)
N = 192*

Information Sources	Scale of perceived content-veracity					No. of respondents
Newspaper	..	..	..	..	..	82
Gossip	..	..	..	..	..	63
Radio	..	..	..	..	..	41
Hearsay	..	..	..	..	..	2

* 4 respondents did not report

Table 14 Frequency of Newspaper Readership (n)
R = 185*

Frequency						No. of respondents
Daily	..	..	..	..	..	57
Once a week	..	..	..	..	..	5
Once a month	..	..	..	..	..	-
Rarely	..	..	..	..	..	50
Never	..	..	..	..	..	73

* 7 respondents did not report

Newspaper Reading Locations (t)
N = 112

Location						No. of respondents
At home	..	..	..	..	..	32
Other locations*	..	..	..	..	..	80

* A friend's or relative's home; the colony tea-kiosk

Reasons for Newspaper Reading (c)
N = 112*

Reason						No. of respondents
To know about local affairs	..	..	..	..	..	101
To improve their existing knowledge	..	..	..	..	..	50
For commercial advertisements	..	..	..	..	..	14
For entertainment (reading cartoon quips, short stories, etc.,)	..	..	..	..	..	5

* 84 respondents quoted more than one reason

Table 15 Frequency of Radio Listnership (a)
N = 187

Frequency	No. of respondents
Daily	98
Occasionally	53
Never	36

* 5 respondents did not report

Radio Listening Locations (b)

Location	No. of respondents
At home	92
Other places **	59

** At the village kiosks, at homes of relatives, neighbours or friends

Reasons for Radio Listening (c)
N = 112*

Reasons	No. of respondents
For entertainment	108
To know about local affairs	102
For commercial news	7

* 76 respondents quoted more than one reason for listening in to the radio

Table 16 Frequency of Film Viewing (a)
N = 186

Frequency	No. of respondents
Once a week	9
Once a month	22
Rarely	62
Never	93

Reasons for Film Viewing (b)

Reasons	No. of respondents
For entertainment	71
To improve knowledge	27
No fixed reason	11

* 7 respondents quoted more than one reason for film viewing

Table 17

Awareness of Contraception

(a)

i. Nominal Awareness

N = 183

Extent of Awareness	No. of respondents *
Knew that they existed ..	89
Did not know that they existed ..	94

* 9 respondents did not report

ii. Nominal Awareness

N = 42

Method Named	No. of respondents
Tubectomy ..	17
Condom ..	15
Vasectomy ..	4
Loop (IUD) ..	3
Rhythm ^m method ..	3

* 24 respondents quoted more than one method

Practical Awareness

N = 24

(b)

Method adopted	No. of respondents
Condom ..	10
Tubectomy ..	6
Loop (IUD) ..	3
Vasectomy ..	3
Rhythm method ..	2

Table 18 Reasons for Birth Spacing
N = 192 *

Reasons	No. of respondents
Economic (landlessness, low incomes, housing shortages, unemployment)	136
Health (Malnutrition, health of mother and children)	130
Future welfare of the family	97

* 74 respondents quoted more than one reason

Table 19 Perceived Colony Problems
N = 192*

Perceived problem	No. of respondents
Agricultural problems (pest attacks, lack of agro-chemicals, etc.-)	73
Landlessness	70
Housing shortages	52
Unemployment	34
Health and nutrition problems	32
Anti-social activities	7

* 63 respondents quoted more than one problem

APPENDIX II

BIO-DATA ON COLONY INFLUENTIALS

G. Wijeratne (R.20)

He was 47 years of age. He has seven children - of which 4 were females and 3 were males. He was married twice. The first marriage took place at the age of 26 years and the second when he was 35 years of age.

R.20 was an experienced cultivator. He cultivated about 30 acres of paddy in each *kanna*. He owned 4 acres of paddy and about an acre of highland which he received from the Government when he joined the colony. The remaining lands operated by him were leased-in lowland paddy stretches which he had obtained from other colonists for a *kanna* or two. An example of his state of affluence as a farmer was that during the last *kanna* he sold Rs.63,000 worth of paddy to the Government. He employed agricultural labour to do the tasks associated with paddy cultivation.

R.20, came to the colony from the Tangalle area (south of Sri Lanka). He was a fisherman in his home area who had left his home after a clash of interests with a fish *mudalali* (a business man plying the fishing trade) over the creation of a fishermens Co-operative.

He joined the colony in the early '50s, accompanied by about 25 other families who supported his cause in his home village. This group under the leadership of R.20, has been responsible for introducing a **leftist** political orientation to the activities of the colony. In 1960, R.20 was elected the representative for Colony Unit-14 to the Village Council.

In the year 1960, he also became the Secretary of the Uhana Co-operative Society and from the very inception he was responsible for much of the social service activities in the colony. He initiated a *Maranadhara Samithiya* (a death donation society), and a Village Development Society in the early '60s. With the political change in 1965 he was deprived of all the formal positions he had prior to the elections. In 1965, he recontested the Village Council seat in the colony, but lost to S.K. Sumanadasa (another colony influential).

The 1970 political change saw reemergence of R.20, as a significant personality in the colony. His formal leadership position grew with his involvements in a large number of colony and extra-colony activities. After 1970 he had held positions of responsibility as Patron, President or the Secretary, in about 19 colony and extra-colony organisations. His emergence to many of these positions had been an outcome of his close liaison with political and economic activities in the colony. He not only played a dominant role in organised activity affecting the colony but also had a deep understanding of the socio-economic problems such as landlessness and unemployment, the need for social security

especially for the aged, rural debt, and public health problems in the Colony Unit.

One of the many criteria for his emergence to a position of an acceptable leader was his ability to satisfy the needs of the colonists using his personal and political connections with personalities in the extra-colony environment. Because of his business ability, probably resulting from his experience in the fishing industry, he had emerged to be an affluent individual in the colony. Though the rightist group in the colony show a tendency to disapprove of his politics, yet, he had won them over through his ready help to persons irrespective of their political inclinations.

He feels that during the past decade the village population had increased and he considered it as a problem. He perceived the resulting problems as landlessness, unemployment and theft in the colony and felt that a scheme of adult education and job training should be set up in the colony.

D.L. Seneviratne (R.15)

He was 48 years of age and had eight children (7 males and one female ranging in age from 3 months to 22 years). He was educated up to the 11th Grade in a Government School and understands Sinhala, Tamil and English. He was a cultivator and operated a total extent of 25 acres of paddy most of which is leased-in land. He owned about 4 acres of paddy and about 1/4 acre of highland.

Among the older residents of the colony he was the only individual who had obtained both the Sinhala and English medium Senior School Certificate. Prior to 1970 he was also the Registrar of Births and Deaths for the colony and was responsible for initiating a Rural Development Society and a Death Donation Society in the Colony. He was recognised as a *Lekam Mahattaya* by the colonists. He was cited as the individual responsible for directing rightish political viewpoints in the colony in the post 1958 era.¹ Because of his political inclinations, he had lost all the formal positions he held prior to 1970, though he remains as a Justice of Peace. He wielded influence in the colony because of his past and present politico-social activities.

Because politics act as the kingmaker force, colony leadership shows a high degree of impermanence. Political changes which occur periodically completely supplant the existing formal leadership with a new set of individuals who fit into the ideological atmosphere of a new ruling party. Seneviratne, was a victim of such a circumstance associated with a political change. He was an influential with powerful formal positions in the colony in the pre 1970 era. He is now an influential on an informal basis in the colony.

¹For example, during the 1958-1975 period he was responsible for mobilising his supporters towards *shramadana* work in and around the Colony Unit-14.

Seneviratne believed that the village population had increased over the last decade and treated problems like landlessness and food shortages as being due to population growth. Among the other problems of the colony environment he stated that the *Kahatagasyaya* Rural Development Society had not been registered, and the school which was built by the Society had not been provided with teachers by the Department of Education. He was responsible for the setting up of the Rural Development Society and the School.

Since he encountered a rival named Amaradasa, in initiating a politically biased social activity in the colony, he had diverted his attention towards the socio-economic development of an adjacent colony in *Kohombana* (which was built around a *purana* village of the same name in the Gal Oya Colonisation area).

He was treated as an influential in the *purana* village sector of the colony. *Purana* villagers observed that even though he was the principal influential among the rightist sectors, lately his position of influence had declined to a certain extent - (i) because he had lost the formal positions he occupied in the 1965-70 period, and (ii) because of the diversion of his interests from the colony unit to *Kohombana*. However, he had an element of derived influence in elevating his status among *purana* villagers because his father was the *Korale Mahattaya* among the *purana* villagers. Their recognition of his father's status, and the personal contacts they had formed with his father, apparently continues down to the son.

S.K. Sumanadasa (R.71)

He was 45 years of age and was not a colonist. He was a resident of the Uhana town and was the chief organiser of the rightist causes in the Uhana Colony Unit. The colonists associated very closely with him. The villagers expected him to come to their aid during their periods of illness and financial difficulties. Others aligned themselves with R.71, because of his political activities. He was noted for helping his associates. In 1965, he contested the colony Village Council seat and won it. At present he is the President of the Colony Death Donation Society sponsored by the rightist ideologies. For a time, he worked as a President of the No.5 Co-operative Unit of the colony. At present he is the chief organiser of the rightist causes in the colony because the position of Seneviratne (R.15) as a rival rightist organiser in the colony is on the wane.

The relationships of the colonists with R.71 were essentially based on his role as a *mudalali* in the Uhana town. Since many of the colonists buy goods on credit from him a state of dependence exists between villagers and R.71.

E.A. Emmanuel (R.68)

He was 55 years of age. He is a cultivator who came from the colony from the Tangalle District. He received his formal education up to Grade VI in a Government School. He owned 4 acres of lowland and 1 acre of highland. He had six children (2 males and 4 females)

Emmanuel was a member of the Board of Directors for the Co-operative Society and the Peace Council and was a representative of the Janatha Committee, the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Branch organisation and the Vice-President of the Death Donation Society (SLFP).

Colonists of both leftist and rightist factions were unanimous in saying that Emmanuel was very active in socio-cultural activities of the colony. They also observed that he helped everyone irrespective of their individual political sympathies. Emmanuel believed that modern techniques of family planning should be taught to all people in ages between 18-40 years irrespective of their sex and marital status.

H. Wijeratne (R.82)

He was 51 years old and had 8 children (3 males and 5 females) ranging in ages from 7-26. All his children were unmarried. He was a cultivator and came to the colony from the Tangalle area and owned 4 acres of lowland and 2 acres of highland. His formal education was up to the 7th Grade in a Government school.

He is at present the Secretary of the Parent-Teacher Association of Uhana Central School, a Committee Member of the Village Development Society and the Secretary of the Death Donation Society, United National Party (UNP). During the period 1965-1970 he worked as President of the *Meda-palatha* Co-operative Union and as the President of the Cultivation Committee. Politically he has affiliations with the UNP and was the organiser of the Tangalle sector of the colony for the UNP during the 1970 elections, and because of the political change he lost his formal positions. He was broadly accepted as an individual who had been involved in social activities of the area for over a decade.

Wijeratne considered his brother *G. Wijeratne (R.20)*, and himself as being the chief influentials in the colony unit and stated that he along with his brother helped colonists in many of their day-to-day problems.

He advocated education in the use of contraceptives and birth spacing for all persons above 30 years of age and stated that if family planning was taught to people below 30 years it might adversely affect their behaviour patterns in the village. He was of the opinion that the population of the colony had increased over the last decade and cited unemployment and land fragmentation as the most important problems resulting from population growth.

DEFINITIONS

Technical Terms

- Gossip - an undirected exchange of news on various topics in an informal atmosphere, which usually leads to the generation of rumours.
- Hearsay - conversation that is overheard but where the person overhearing it does not take part in the discussion.
- Kiosk - usually a wattle-and-daub hut which serves tea and/or coffee. It may also serve bread, buns, plantains and sweetmeats. The kiosk may have a low wall and/or a few benches for customers to sit while they sip tea or coffee.
- Interpersonal communication - when information transference occurs through a process of word-of-mouth among individuals.
- Incoming choices - associated with an individual are the number of individuals who quoted him as a friend, or a leader, or invitee for household functions, or a rival, etc.
- Rumour - is a message carrying a high degree of speculation and distortion around an information bit, which may not be true, and is generally unconfirmed. The rumour is usually transmitted through interpersonal channels though formal communication channels at times utilise it to generate positive or negative public opinion towards a person or an objective.
- Social networks - fields of social relationships built around interpersonal links based on kinship ties, choice of friends, invitees for social functions, etc. A social network can be graphically shown by linking persons according to the ties that exist between them.

Local Terms

- Attam - unpaid, mutual exchange of labour. Among paddy cultivators whose fields are worked through this form of labour provide free meals to the workers as a token of gratitude.

<i>Chena (Hena)</i>	- a form of shifting highland cultivation practised in many parts of Sri Lanka
<i>Dana</i>	- almsgiving
<i>Kanna</i>	- a cultivation season
<i>Korale Mahattaya</i>	- a regional headman
<i>Lekam Mahattaya</i>	- a Secretary
<i>Mudalai</i>	- a Trader - this term is generally used as an honorific by villagers to indicate both the professional and economic status of such individuals
<i>Pinkama</i>	- a religious ceremony, centred around a temple. This may involve festivities like folk drama showings which are quasi-religious in character
<i>Pirith</i>	- Buddhist sutras
<i>Pirivana</i>	- a school in the temple premises
<i>Puranagama</i>	- The traditional village. In the Dry Zone regions of Sri Lanka an usual <i>Puranagama</i> would include a small tank, an extent of paddy (<i>puranawela</i>), highland settlements above the tank (<i>Gangoda</i>), and a surrounding forest (<i>bedda</i>) - which is also utilised by the village for its daily supplies of firewood (among other uses). This strip of forest extends around the village for about quarter to half mile. The forest which lies beyond this strip (which belongs to the Government) is the one in which <i>chena</i> cultivation is usually done.
<i>Paranagamkarayo</i> <i>Puranagamvasi</i>	- Residents of a traditional village
<i>Shramadana</i>	- labour freely given towards a collective effort in building a road, a school, weeding a paddy field, and so on.

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