

Abstract 71

A Study on the Language Planning Situation in British Colonial Ceylon

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Language is one of the prominent resources that should be planned for the socio-political well-being of a multilingual and multi-ethnic country. This study intends to examine the Colonial Period Language Planning of Ceylon, particularly from 18-19 centuries, which is in the British Colonial Period. The study was done with special focus on the types of language policies introduced by the British to govern their official domains, specially the administrative process and the judicial services. The data was collected from official documents such as Colebrook and Cameron paper, books, journals and from discussions. According to the findings, English has been introduced as the only official language for administration, Judicial and other official domains in this particular time period and it was established through Colebrooke, Cameron and Doughty constitutional reforms. Research findings show that majority of the Ceylonese were either Sinhala or Tamil native speakers and limited number of people could work in English. According to the recommendations of this research the monolingual policy, is not suited for the multilingual and multi-ethnic country. However, British rulers should have introduced the national level for the Sinhalese and Tamil Languages. This gap caused many problems during that period and afterwards. Findings of this research can be used in preparing a better language planning Policy in Sri Lanka and the other countries where multi-ethnic groups exist.

Key words: British Colonial Period, Constitutional Developments, Language Planning, Language Policy, Official Language