

## **Contribution of Indian Tamil community to political development in Sri Lanka**

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The Indian Tamils of Sri Lanka who represent 5.1 % in total population were migrated from Tamil Nadu of South India, during the British colonial period to work in coffee, tea and rubber plantations. Indian origin Tamils live as a separate community with other races, majority in the Central province and the rest in Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces. These migrant workers are the backbone in the plantation sector economy in the country. The Donoughmore commission in 1931 recommended universal franchise, and this was included to plantation workers as well. However, "The Ceylon Citizenship act" of 1948 disfranchised the Indian Tamils and "The Sirima – Shastri pact" of 1964 paved the way for repatriation of 600,000 persons of Indian origin Tamils to India.

This paper pays attention how do Indian Tamils behave in main political stream, as a migrated community in Sri Lanka.

As a migrated community, Indian Tamils joined the local politics to ensure the party politics as well as to win their social and economic rights.

The CWC was formed as an Indian estates workers trade union in 1950 and became the largest trade union in Sri Lanka. Mr. Thondaman the leader of the CWC was named as appointed MP from 1960 to 1970. Since 1978 the CWC represented the Cabinet contributing the ruling government.

The Up-country People's front was established in 1990's as an opposition to CWC. This party also joined the ruling government and further expanded the political activities of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka.

However, both parties had been worked for economic and social well-being of Indian Tamils in Central highlands of Sri Lanka.

The main objective of this paper is to understand the political activities of Indian Tamils as a minority group and a migrated community. This paper is based on secondary data.

**Key words:** Indian Tamils, Migrant communities, Local politics, CWC, UPF

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