Sri Lankan refugees in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu

The Sri Lanka Project
The Refugee Council
London

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Sri Lankan refugees in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu

1. Background

Sri Lanka lies 22 miles south-east of Tamil Nadu, the southernmost state of India (Map 1). The proximity has led to close historic and cultural ties and population migration over the centuries. The one million Plantation Tamils of Sri Lanka are descendants of people brought by the British from Tamil Nadu in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to work in coffee, tea and rubber plantations (Annex 1). In recent years, particularly since 1983, continuing violence on the island has resulted in Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing to India seeking safety among the 55 million Tamil population in the southern state.

Following large-scale violence against the Tamil community in July and August 1983 in Sri Lanka, over 100,000 Tamils fled to Tamil Nadu. The Indian government provided refuge to them although India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees. By 1987, 29,000 refugees were housed in 170 government camps and another 106,000 lived with friends or relatives or in rented accommodation.

The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 aimed at ending the island’s conflict, provided that ‘the government of India will expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of those granted Indian citizenship to India concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu’. Under the agreement, an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) arrived in Sri Lanka to promote peace. In August 1987, United Nations refugee agency UNHCR and the Sri Lankan government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (Annex 2) establishing a UNHCR presence in Sri Lanka and cooperation for refugee relief and rehabilitation.

Repatriation of refugees from Tamil Nadu began in December 1987 during a period of turmoil and UNHCR established a Special Programme of Limited Assistance for the refugees in Sri Lanka. By September 1987, the IPKF had become involved in the conflict and launched a major offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) fighting for a separate Tamil homeland in the north-east of the island. Around 22,000 refugees had been returned to Sri Lanka by July 1988, through Talaimannar on Mannar Island and Kankesanthurai in the Jaffna peninsula. Repatriation continued while heavy fighting was taking place between the IPKF and the LTTE.

The Indian government refused access for UNHCR to the refugees on Indian soil for the purpose of assessing the voluntary nature of the repatriation. UNHCR officials carried out the assessment and registration on the ship returning the refugees. NGOs criticize such procedures where assessment to determine the voluntary nature of the return was made after the refugees had left Indian soil. The UNHCR suspended the repatriation in April 1989 due to ‘large-scale potential violence and general insecurity in Sri Lanka’.

Following a pact with the LTTE in 1989, the Sri Lankan government began pressurizing India to withdraw the IPKF. The withdrawal of the IPKF began in October 1989 and was completed in March 1990. But in June 1990, the cooperation between the LTTE and Sri Lanka government ended and fresh fighting broke out. An economic blockade was imposed on northern Sri Lanka and the airforce began large-scale bombing of the north-east. Within six months, 150,000 Sri Lankan Tamils had fled to Tamil Nadu. By the beginning of 1992, there were 230,000 refugees in India - 120,000 were in camps and others outside.

Twelve leading members of the Sri Lankan Tamil group Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), including its leader K. Pathmanabha, were killed in an LTTE attack in Madras on 19 June 1990. The former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on 21 May 1991 by a suicide bomber, while he was on an election campaign at Sriperumpudur, 25 miles south of Madras. The LTTE was named as the main suspect.

The murders sent shock waves through India and following the killing of Rajiv Gandhi, the refugee scene in south India changed dramatically. The sympathy enjoyed by Sri Lankan refugees among the people of Tamil Nadu turned to one of hostility. The Indian and Tamil Nadu governments took a hardline attitude in relation to Sri Lankan refugee issues. Over 1,000 Tamil Nadu police took part in Operation Flamingo in September 1991, to clear LTTE bases from the 300 mile coastline south of Nagapattinam. Refugee camps in the coastal areas were moved to 25 reception centres in the interior of the state.

India outlawed the LTTE on 14 May 1992 for two years under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The ban has since been extended every two years. When it was extended in May 1994, over 1,600 LTTE suspects were held in Tamil Nadu prisons and special camps, 26 of them accused of involvement in the Rajiv Gandhi murder. The LTTE appealed against the proscription in 1998 to a tribunal appointed under the Act. The tribunal held its enquiries at Trichy in Tamil Nadu and in New Delhi. On 31 January 1999, the tribunal held that the Indian government decision to ban the LTTE was valid and dismissed the Tigers’ appeal. The Rajiv Gandhi murder trial was concluded in January 1998. All 26 people, ten Indian and 16 Sri Lankan, accused of conspiracy, were sentenced to death by a special court. The accused appealed to the Indian Supreme Court. The Supreme Court, on 11 May 1999, confirmed the death sentences of two Sri Lankans and two Indians. Three were sentenced to life imprisonment and 19 others were acquitted.

The refugee repatriation programme resumed in January 1992, under an agreement between the Indian and Sri Lankan governments, but UNHCR refused to become involved, declaring that the conditions in Sri Lanka were not conducive for safe returns. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, wrote to Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in May 1992, after UNHCR staff on Mannar Island reported mounting cases of forcible return among the 23,000 refugees repatriated since January 1992. But by August 1992, UNHCR had changed its mind and become involved in the repatriation, despite the ban on NGOs and UNHCR into refugee camps in Tamil Nadu.
In August 1992, the Madras High Court lifted its suspension on repatriation imposed after a public interest petition lodged by two politicians in Tamil Nadu. There were accusations that camp conditions were allowed to deteriorate and assistance to camps delayed deliberately in order to coerce the refugees to leave India. Rehabilitation Officers were instructed, according to reports, to gather by whatever means the targeted number of refugees for repatriation to Sri Lanka.

Some 5,000 returnees were stuck on Mannar Island, because their homes were destroyed, occupied by the army or were in LTTE-controlled areas. In 1999, many refugees returned from India are still languishing in camps in Mannar, Vavuniya and Trincomalee, unable to go back to their home areas.

The British Refugee Council (BRC) wrote to High Commissioner Sadako Ogata in November 1992, on behalf of 16 international NGOs, raising doubts over the voluntariness of the repatriation, emphasizing the importance of providing access for NGOs and UNHCR to refugee camps. After a meeting with the Indian High Commissioner in London in December 1992, BRC suggested a joint NGO-UNHCR mission to India and Sri Lanka for assessment of the situation. The UNHCR, however, felt that a joint mission, particularly to Tamil Nadu, should await an agreement with the Indian authorities on UNHCR’s access to the refugee camps.

The Indian government allowed the UNHCR in Tamil Nadu to monitor the voluntary nature of the refugee returns. However, denial of access to refugee camps led to UNHCR interviewing refugees in transit centres or at the point of departure. UNHCR said that it was only facilitating returns and insisted that returnees knew they faced ‘a less than ideal situation and have weighed the risks involved’. In this second phase of repatriation, over 29,000 refugees were returned to Mannar Island off the western coast of Sri Lanka and Trincomalee on the eastern coast. The programme was suspended in October, but recommenced on 13 August 1993.

Hopes of peace were dashed when peace talks between the LTTE and the new People’s Alliance government collapsed in April 1995. Renewed fighting led to large-scale internal displacement in northern Sri Lanka. As a result, the repatriation of refugees from India was again suspended. Some 56,750 refugees were in 115 camps in Tamil Nadu at the time and an estimated 100,000 outside the camps, many living in rented accommodation depending on remittances from relatives abroad. Between 1992 and 1996, 54,059 refugees were repatriated to Sri Lanka from Tamil Nadu. Since August 1996, following heavy fighting in the northern Vanni region in Sri Lanka, after the launch of military operation Jayasikurui (Certain Victory) to open a landroute to Jaffna, a further 15,000 refugees have fled to Tamil Nadu. Refugees continue to arrive in small numbers in the southern Indian state from the western coast of Sri Lanka.
2. Across the Palk Strait

Most of the refugee families in Tamil Nadu camps are poor and were forced to undertake the hazardous journey by boat across the Palk Strait, the 22-mile stretch of sea dividing India and Sri Lanka. Refugees fleeing from Sri Lanka usually take a boat near Pesalai on Mannar Island or at Nachchikudah, 26 miles north-east of Mannar, paying boatmen, many of whom are said to be controlled by the LTTE.

In July 1990, 35 people drowned when a boat carrying refugees fleeing army operations in Vavuniya, capsized. Some 185 Tamil refugees fleeing the war zone are known to have died in the Palk Strait since October 1996. Over 130 refugees died when an overcrowded trawler capsized at sea within a mile from Nachchikudah on 19 February 1997. Many of them were women and children displaced from Jaffna following military operations in December 1995. Forty five more refugees, including five children, drowned on 25 July 1998 when another boat sank near Rameswaram in south India.

Refugees face other difficulties when crossing the Palk Strait. The Sri Lankan and Indian naval vessels patrolling the sea, mainly for the purpose of preventing the LTTE from smuggling weapons, often intercept the refugees. The Sri Lankan Navy has brought many refugees back to Mannar, to be charged before courts for leaving the country illegally. Despite these risks, the continuing military operations in the Vanni and aerial bombardment by the Sri Lankan Airforce are forcing refugees to flee Sri Lanka. In October 1998, some 125 refugees landed in Tamil Nadu. Another 48 were arrested on 7 October 1998 at sea by the Sri Lankan Navy and returned to Mannar. Over 120 people fled from Mannar in boats to Tamil Nadu on 2 July 1999, following Operation Rana Gosha (Battle Cry).

Refugees fleeing the country encounter other problems. In its March 1997 report, the US Committee for Refugees (USCR) said that UNHCR should not actively dissuade Sri Lankans from seeking refuge in India. USCR welcomed UNHCR's open relief centre (ORC) as an alternative to flight for those who may want such flight, but emphasized that neither the Sri Lankan government nor UNHCR should seek to impose the ORC on would-be refugees or use its existence as a pretext for interdicting and returning refugees to Sri Lanka.

Refugees from Sri Lanka usually land at Dhanushkodi on Pamban Island and are screened by Indian authorities at Rameswaram on the same island to determine if they have links with the LTTE. Thereafter all refugees are sent to Mandapam camp on the mainland in Ramanathapuram District. The Mandapam camp, earlier used as a transit camp for repatriated Hill Country Tamils under the Indo-Ceylon Agreements of 1964 and 1974, now serves as a transit camp for Sri Lankan refugees. From this camp refugees are sent to other camps in various districts of Tamil Nadu. Those suspected of links with the LTTE are detained and sent to special detention camps. Some persons, after being cleared by courts of suspected militant activities, continue to be detained in special camps charged under the Foreigners Act with illegal entry.
3. Number of refugees

UNHCR says that at the end of 1998, there were 70,337 refugees in 131 camps in the districts of Tamil Nadu. According to other reports, male adult refugees are 38% and female adults 35%. Male children are 14% of the refugee population and female children are 13% (ie. 73% adults and 27% children).

The camps include three special camps for Sri Lankan Tamil militant group members and their families. In the Chenkalpet District, a special camp contains 4,097 persons of 1,070 families who belong to the militant groups Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). Some 80 LTTE cadre are held at the Tippu Mahal special camp at Vellore in North Arcot Ambedkar District, which in reality is a detention centre. Another 27 LTTE cadre are detained at the Melur special camp in Madurai District, which is also a prison. Many government buildings including cyclone shelters have been converted to refugee camps. The Indian government has constructed shelters within many camps. NGOs are currently not permitted into special camps or into the Mandapam transit camp, which currently accommodates over 3,900 refugees.

4. Refugees outside camps

Although earlier some 80,000 to 100,000 people who fled violence in Sri Lanka were non-camp residents, UNHCR estimates that there are now only 40,000 persons living outside government-run refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, with friends and relatives or surviving on remittances from family members in Western countries. It is likely that Plantation Tamils - mainly from the Hill Country in Sri Lanka - live with relatives, while those from north-east Sri Lanka depend on money from relatives abroad. Some are gainfully employed or have set-up businesses. The refugees outside camps do not receive any assistance from the Tamil Nadu or Indian government.

Following the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in July 1987, the Indian government called on all Sri Lankans living outside refugee camps to register with the District Collector (the highest ranking administrative officer in a district). At the time only 12,675 people responded and registered themselves. Thereafter the government directed the District Collectors to carry out surveys to identify Sri Lankans living among the local population.

Initially, Sri Lankans outside camps were given visas for three or six months and they were able to obtain extensions from the Collector’s office after producing a clearance certificate from the police. A person resident for more than three months was also expected, in addition, to obtain a tax clearance certificate from the Inland Revenue Department. Immediately after the killing of the EPRRLF members in June 1990, the Tamil Nadu government renewed its call for registration of refugees who lived outside refugee camps.
In October 1991, there were 120,000 Sri Lankan refugees in government-run camps and another 110,000 outside. Less than 30,000 of those living outside refugee camps had registered and others were regarded as LTTE suspects. In an attempt to break LTTE’s grip on the southern state, 2,060 people identified as Tigers were rounded-up after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and detained in high-security isolation.

The Tamil Nadu government issued a public notice on 28 June 1991 requiring all Sri Lankan Tamils living outside refugee camps to register with the nearest police station within seven days with details such as name, address and occupation. Owners of houses and lodges providing accommodation for Sri Lankan Tamils were also ordered to give details about their tenants within seven days. The deadline for registration was extended later by two weeks. The government issued another notice on 25 September 1992, asking refugees to register themselves before 1 October 1992. Those who had already registered, but had changed their place of residence were also advised to provide their new addresses. The government made it clear that those who did not register would be removed to special camps for eventual deportation from Tamil Nadu.

The refugees living outside government refugee camps must ensure that they have a valid visa or police registration. After the initial visa expires, in most cases police registration is deemed sufficient. The police issue no document proving registration. The police provide a Registration Number, which the refugee is expected to quote when difficulties arise relating to residence in Tamil Nadu. If the refugee wishes to leave the country, he/she needs to provide the Registration Number and the date of registration. In effect, the Registration Number replaces the visa.

Non-campus Sri Lankan refugees who are employed are expected to obtain work permits. People who are resident for five years or more and those married to Indian citizens may apply to be included in the electoral list. They are also entitled to apply for a Ration Card, which enables them to obtain consumer goods and fuel at a subsidized price. Many of the refugees who have completed five years in India and applied for Ration Cards have not received any response.

In earlier years, refugees living outside camps experienced problems from Tamil militant groups, who always pressurized them for money. Threats, extortion and abductions were reported. Inter-group rivalry and fighting between militant groups created enormous problems for refugees. There was also tension between the local Tamil Nadu population and refugees living outside camps. Refugees who received money from relatives abroad were blamed for the rapid rise in the price of consumer goods and rents. Immediately following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991, those outside camps were open to abuse and in some instances even to physical attacks. Although some problems remain, the tensions now seem to have dissipated, with each community recognizing the other’s problems.
According to reports, the Indian Home Ministry sent a letter to the refugees outside camps in September 1998 advising them to leave India within two weeks. No reason was assigned for the decision. Some refugees say that they have not received any reply to their appeal over the decision. However, up to July 1999, no action had been taken to remove the refugees from India.

5.0 Refugee camps

5.1 Camp administration

The local Village Administrative Officer (VA) is in charge of the camp in his area and to attend to camp affairs he/she is provided with two assistants (Thalayaris). The Revenue Inspector (RI) of the area supervises the VA and receives representations from the VA. The District Revenue Inspector (DRI) (Thasildar) is in charge of all the refugee camps in the district. At district level, in the Collectorate (The Collector is the most senior government administrative officer in the district), a Regional Divisional Officer (RDO) and a Rehabilitation Revenue Inspector (RRI) (Thasildar) attend to camp affairs. The Q Branch of the police provides security to the refugee camps.

Currently, if a refugee wishes to go out of a camp for any purpose, he/she must obtain letters of recommendation from the VA and the DRI. Q Branch and the RRI must approve the application. The RRI’s approval must also be obtained, among others, for the following:

1) Passport to go to Sri Lanka
2) Application for increases in cash dole when children reach to age of six or twelve.
3) Registration of children for inclusion in the Refugee Card.
4) Removal or inclusion of names on records relating to refugee camps.

NGOs have encouraged the formation of various committees within the camp to attend to the needs of the refugees. The following committees function in every camp:

1  Camp Committee
2  Student Movement
3  Women Committee
4  Sports Committee
5  Teachers-Parents Committee

5.2 Shelter

The lack of proper shelter is one of the main problems in the refugee camps. Most huts in the camps were built nine years ago as temporary housing and are in a poor condition. These huts which are usually made of corrugated tar sheets with a door but no windows, have very little living space inside. High temperatures in the summer and heavy rains during monsoons make life in the huts extremely difficult. In some areas refugees are accommodated in cyclone
shelters, government buildings or farm buildings. These are partitioned with cloth, cardboard or other light material. Where possible, each family creates a flimsy rectangular enclosure with sarees or bedspreads. In these open halls there is little privacy, particularly for women. These and other buildings used as refugee camps are also in need of repairs. The government has issued strict instructions that NGOs cannot become involved in the construction or installation of what are referred to as “permanent” structures in the camps. These include housing, electricity and water supply.

After the DMK government came into power in Tamil Nadu in April 1996, Rs 50 million ($1,200,000) was allocated to improve housing. NGOs working with refugees in Tamil Nadu urged the government to permit their involvement in building new huts or alternatively pay the money to refugees to enable them to repair the existing huts or construct new huts. Unfortunately, the government employed a contractor to build new shelters within the camps.

The shelters constructed by the contractor are barrack-like linenrooms. The walls are flimsy and may collapse at any time. Most of the roofs have been blown away in the wind. The roofs are made of tin sheets, and where they are still intact, make the shelters extremely hot and uninhabitable. Currently no one lives in these linenrooms. The money allocated by the government has been wasted entirely.

5.3 Sanitation and health

The government has constructed toilets in several camps, but without any water supply. They are therefore unusable. People have been forced to use open spaces in the vicinity of the camps. Most camps are in remote areas and therefore the water supply is mainly from tube wells using hand pumps. Doctors visiting the camps say that communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, typhoid and diarrhoea are prevalent. Many camps are far away from urban centres where medical facilities are available.

Studies conducted in 1993 and 1995 among refugee children indicated that 32% to 53% of the children were moderately to severely undernourished and underweight among children under five years of age was high. High incidence of anaemia, dental caries, night blindness, refractory errors and respiratory infection were noted and the children faced high risk of impaired growth and development.

A large number of refugees have problems relating to mental health. Nearly 20% suffer from anxiety, depression and obsessive compulsive thoughts, which have led to suicides and attempted suicides, adolescent reaction and early marriages. The poor economic resources available are a contributory factor in mental health problems.

There are also disabilities such as impaired mobility, impaired speech, hearing and vision and mental handicaps. Concealed disabilities such as chronic undernutrition, diabetes, mental disturbances, congenital heart diseases, dyslexia and chronic asthma are also problems within refugee camps according to doctors.
5.4 Employment

Employment is a major problem for refugees living in camps and depends on the location of the camp. Only a small percentage of the refugees are able to find employment and it is harder for women than men to find work. In some areas, employment is available in the vicinity of the camps. Where the camps are remote, obtaining employment is almost impossible and the refugees must seek employment in other areas. If a refugee obtains a job in an area far away from the camp and is compelled to stay in that area for a number of days, then he/she faces the risk of losing registration at the camp.

Refugees are generally able to obtain casual jobs only, which means that they are recruited on a daily basis and paid daily. Such jobs, where available, are in shops, factories and fields. Road construction projects are implemented in Tamil Nadu and refugees are employed in stone quarries to provide stones needed for the roads. Those employed in quarries are not provided with protective gear and many refugees have suffered injuries, particularly to their eyes.

5.5 Freedom of movement

On 27 May 1993, the Tamil Nadu government banned NGOs entering refugee camps and introduced new restrictions on the movement of refugees in camps. The Commissioner of Rehabilitation, in his instructions to District Collectors, said that ‘only those who are required to go out to work will be allowed to go in the morning at 8.00am on the condition that they would return before 6.00pm on the same day’. The order also said that camp refugees who want to visit their relatives in other areas must obtain written permission from the camp officer (Thasildar) issued in consultation with the ‘Q’ Branch of the police.

The restriction effectively shut refugees out of the local dawn-to-dusk labour market and deprived them of supplementary income. But the new government order in February 1998 granting access of refugee camps to NGOs also removed this restriction.

UNHCR says that it has received a fairly large number of complaints from residents in special camps, which range from conditions in the camps to the lack of freedom of movement, to the indefinite nature of stay in such camps. Residents in the special camps are allowed to go out of the camps only if they leave the country.

5.6 Education

Sri Lankan refugee students (and other students from Sri Lanka) have faced difficulties as a result of Tamil Nadu government decisions in extending educational facilities. In July 1988, the state government issued an order [Government Order (GO) No 597] stating that,
a) students in Standard 10 and below would not be permitted to continue studies after the 1988 academic year;

b) no new admissions of students would be allowed in colleges, polytechnics and universities;

c) student visas will be restricted, and

d) visas would be extended on condition that parents do not insist on staying in India until completion of the student's courses.

This order was not implemented following protests by refugee and human rights groups.

In 1989, Tamil Nadu's DMK government issued an order allowing the admission to schools and colleges and reserving seats for children of Sri Lankan refugees. The government reserved 40 seats in engineering, 20 in medicine, 10 in agriculture in colleges and 40 seats in polytechnics for refugee children.

Following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991, admission of Sri Lankan refugee students to all schools for the academic year was suspended by Tamil Nadu's new AIADMK government in September 1991 and the reservation of seats was withdrawn. (Education Department letters dated 3 September 1991). The government allowed education only in August 1993, by an order which stated that refugee children would be permitted to study up to Standard 12 in schools in Tamil Nadu during the academic year 1993-94.

The Tamil Nadu government stated: "The question as to whether the Sri Lankan refugees' children be permitted to study in schools ......has been re-examined, as in every camp, refugees have been pleading for restoring status quo ante since it is a human problem.......Accordingly, in modification of instructions.......the Sri Lankan refugees' children be permitted to study up to +2 (Standard 12) in the schools of Tamil Nadu, during the academic year 1993-94" (Letter of Secretary to the Government dated 12 August 1993). Refugee students and other Sri Lankan students were thus denied the opportunity to pursue higher education in colleges, including professional colleges for the academic years 1993-94 and 1994-95 (Government letter No. 634 dated 8 August 1995).

In May 1996, a local refugee agency, the Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OFERR), submitted a petition to the Tamil Nadu government for the restoration of college admissions. The ban on higher education was lifted in June 1996. Government Order No 126 dated 25 June 1996 stated: "The Government have carefully examined the request......Accordingly, the Government lift the ban imposed......for admission and permission for continuance of Sri Lankan students with regular passport and visa and the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee students to study in College/University courses including professional courses with immediate effect". A subsequent order in July 1996 (Government Order No. 437 dated 15 July 1996) extended the date of student admission by one month.
The Director of Collegiate Education issued instructions for relaxation of the admission age for refugee children in June 1997 (Proceedings No 76222/R4/96 dated 24 June 1997). In 1997, 90 refugee students entered colleges for higher education, including three for medicine and seven for engineering.

Following representations made by OFERR, the government instructed the Director of Collegiate Education in July 1998, to issue orders to principals of colleges and heads of universities 'to admit Sri Lankan Tamil refugee students for 1998/99——over and above the limited seats with extension of time limit for one month'. Instructions were also issued to relax the age of admission, if necessary. For the academic year 1998/99 the following allocations have been made for Sri Lankan refugee children in universities: 20 seats for medicine, 20 for engineering, ten for agriculture in colleges and 20 seats in polytechnics.

Currently, there are some 22,000 refugee children of school age, a quarter of whom are expected to drop out between the ages of 10 and 13 to find work or care for younger children in the family.

5.7 Debt

Indebtedness is an increasing problem within refugee camps. The amount of cash payment by the government was determined nine years ago and since then the cost-of-living has risen manifold. Employment is difficult to find and refugees are forced to borrow from lenders at very high interest rates. Family weddings or funerals or occasional travel also increase their expenditure. Management of funds at family level is poor, leading to severe debt and causing anxiety. Indebtedness has arisen in many cases due to excessive expenses on liquor or pilgrimage to holy sites in south India.

5.8 Government assistance

The Tamil Nadu government provides assistance to refugees and spends around Rs 50 million ($1,200,000) a year. The Indian government reimburses the cost of assistance. Each refugee must be in possession of a Refugee Card to live in a refugee camp and to receive assistance. The Refugee Card contains photographs of all members of the family and details such as Sri Lanka National Identity Card number, educational qualifications, names and addresses of relatives in India and the value of assets brought into India (Annex 3). Refugee families are also issued a Ration Card in which the details of consumer goods issued at subsidized prices are entered (Annex 4).

The government provides cash doles for the refugees which is paid in two instalments each month. The head of the family receives Rs 230 (£3.30) per month. Each other member of the family above the age of twelve receives Rs 144 per month. Each child between the ages of six and twelve is paid Rs 64 and a child below six years of age receives Rs 36 per month.
The government also provides essential goods at a subsidized price. Rice, the staple food, is provided to refugees. Twelve kilograms (kg) of rice is issued to each adult at 57 paise per kg (one rupee = 100 paise and one kg = 2.2 lbs) per month. A child is issued three kg per month. The price of rice in the open market is between Rs 2 and Rs 4 per kg. The Cooperative Department supplies the rice for the refugees. The difference in price between the amount charged from the refugees and the market price is paid by the Rehabilitation Department to the Cooperative Department. The refugees complain that the rice issued is of poor quality and contains small stones.

Every refugee family is issued two kg sugar per month at Rs 15 per kg. If the refugee camp is in or near an urban area, ten litres of kerosene (paraffin) is also provided to each family for cooking and for lamps, at Rs 30. If the camp is in or near a village area, only five litres are provided, on the basis that firewood may easily be obtained in these areas for cooking. The goods issued at subsidized prices are inadequate and often refugees must buy rice and kerosene in the open market at a higher price. Further, the amount of money paid to the refugees was determined several years ago and has not been revised despite the rising cost of living over the years.

The government provides some clothes each year to the refugees without any charge, generally before the Hindu Deepavali festival in October or November. Some years ago, each family received two sarongs, two sarees, banians, towel, underskirts, trousers and gowns. But in the last few years, only a versty and a saree are provided. The government also supplies kitchen utensils each year to every family. Refugees say that clothes and kitchen utensils are not given in some areas. The government provides travel passes to students free of charge.

Most camps are supplied with electricity and the government has also provided a television to each refugee camp.

7 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

A number of NGOs are involved in providing assistance to the refugees. When Sri Lankan refugees began arriving in Tamil Nadu, inter-church service agencies assisted them and the Madras Christian College became involved in helping refugee and other Sri Lankan students. The Organisation for Eelam Refugee Rehabilitation (OFERR) was founded in 1984 with the main objective of providing assistance to Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka. Among other agencies involved in assistance to refugees in Tamil Nadu are the Church of South India, Jesuit Refugee Service and Multipurpose Social Service Societies.

The NGOs provided a variety of services to the refugees, which included supplementary feeding of children, the elderly and pregnant and lactating women, classes in camps, educational services such as payment of fees and supply of text books, income generation projects, additional medical and health services and counselling. The ban on NGOs into camps curtailed these services.
Since its involvement in Sri Lankan refugee repatriation from India, UNHCR has not been allowed into refugee camps to assess conditions or to check the voluntariness of the returns. Following instructions from New Delhi, the Tamil Nadu government decision on 27 May 1993 banning NGOs from working in Sri Lankan refugee camps and restricting refugee movements, effectively closed the camps to the outside world. A circular dated 1 June 1993 from the Tamil Nadu Rehabilitation Commissioner addressed to all District Collectors said that the decision to impose a total ban on NGOs was for ‘the proper maintenance of the refugee camps’ and ‘to ensure internal security’. At the time there were 80,000 refugees in 130 camps and another 120,000 living outside the camps in towns and villages.

NGO relief and rehabilitation projects inside camps were disrupted and led to further suffering of the refugees who lost access to supplementary assistance such as vocational training, involvement in education, counselling, medical assistance and improvement of accommodation. Doctors visiting the camps at the time found under-nutrition among children, which was expected to worsen with the ban on NGOs.

Local and international NGOs made representations to the Indian and Tamil Nadu governments over the issue of access to camps. The British Refugee Council and other concerned agencies wrote in May 1993 to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha calling for a dialogue with the NGOs. The human rights agency, Asia Watch, in a report in September 1993, cited NGO exclusion as “implicit coercion”.

In August 1994, the British Refugee Council wrote on behalf of six international NGOs to Tamil Nadu Governor Chenna Reddy and Chief Minister Jayalalitha expressing concern that since the 27 May 1993 government order which curtailed assistance programmes run by local voluntary agencies, housing, health and educational facilities had deteriorated significantly. The letter requested a dialogue with voluntary agencies and refugee representatives. India’s National Human Rights Commission urged the Indian government in December 1994 to allow NGOs into camps.

International and national agencies continued to make representations to both Indian and Tamil Nadu governments. But a response came only in 1997. In a circular dated 6 January 1997, the Tamil Nadu government stated as follows:

“...the involvement of voluntary organisations in the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu was totally banned in view of the then prevailing security environment.......the Commissioner of Rehabilitation has suggested for reviewing this order, considering the role to be played by the non-governmental organisations in refugee relief. The Government of India who were consulted in the matter have communicated ......that they do not have any objection in permitting recognised non-governmental organisations which are clear from security angle to undertake activities such as providing vocational training, counselling, reading room and recreation facilities to the Sri Lankan refugees....”.
The government, however, imposed certain conditions on NGOs wishing to work within refugee camps:

a) No non-governmental agency will be allowed to work directly in refugee camps or provide relief assistance directly to Sri Lankan refugees.

b) Designated Government Agencies such as the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board etc may utilise the manpower of selected non-governmental organisations for undertaking permitted relief activities. However, the Designated Government Agencies shall not accept any financial assistance or assistance in kind from the non-governmental organisations without the prior permission of the Government of India. Funds required for the approved activities may, however, be provided by the State Government.

c) No offer of assistance in cash or kind from any international organisation or from domestic organisations which receive assistance from overseas organisations should be accepted.

In another circular dated 23 January 1998, the Tamil Nadu government confirmed the Indian policy of not allowing UNHCR access to refugee camps. "The UNHCR has no specific role to play in the matters concerning the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu excepting that the UNHCR representatives were assigned the task of screening refugees to find out whether they were being repatriated to Sri Lanka forcibly, when the repatriation of Sri Lankan Tamils started in 1987 and 1992". Unfortunately, there seems concern in India that allowing UNHCR into camps may result in the government losing control over refugees and funds that may flow into the country, jeopardizing security measures. The second circular confirmed that 'NGOs independent of UNHCR may be permitted to work inside refugee camps, limiting this role to social service aspects only'.

8.0 NGO assistance

The NGOs, mainly OFERR, working with the refugees provide a wide variety of assistance and have set up efficient service and monitoring systems.

8.1 Education

Before 1991, refugee children were not expected to pay school fees. School admissions were banned following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. When admissions were restored in June 1993, schools began charging fees for refugee students. Currently school fees of students are paid by NGOs. School text books are also supplied by NGOs. Although the government issues travel passes to students, sometimes there is a delay in issuing the passes. NGOs provide financial assistance to students in the interim periods and to students in areas where public transport is not available. NGOs also conduct classes in camps for very young pre-school children.
8.2 Vocational training

NGOs provide a wide variety of technical and vocational training to refugees, which has helped them to obtain employment requiring skill. The training will also be helpful when refugees return to Sri Lanka. Training is provided in gem cutting and polishing, radio and television repairs and assembly, tailoring, computer skills, typewriting and office management skills, driving vehicles, carpentry and masonry and poultry and goat farming. Where necessary, NGOs also provide financial assistance to cover fees and travel costs for refugees to attend training courses provided by local institutions.

8.3 Generating income

NGOs are involved in projects to help refugees to generate income to supplement the financial assistance provided by the government. Tailoring projects in special centres established by NGOs and in refugee camps have helped to generate income. High quality clothes are made for sale. Those made within camps satisfy part of the needs of the camp. Some clothes are sold in towns but entry into local markets is difficult because of the prevailing competition. NGOs have held exhibitions of clothing produced by refugees in several areas in Tamil Nadu in order to promote sales.

Within camps, NGOs have assisted refugees, particularly widows, invalids and the disabled, to set up small tailoring units, carpentry units and shops. Implements for earthwork, carpentry, masonry and painting buildings are also provided. The camp committee is responsible for the implements and may allow the refugees to use them for their work outside the camp at a nominal charge.

8.4 Recreation

NGOs have encouraged recreational activities in camps and have provided equipment for indoor and outdoor sport. Five hundred refugees are considered as a unit and sport equipment provided every three months to such a unit. In order to encourage community work in camps, NGOs provide additional sports equipment as incentive. NGOs also provide newspapers and periodicals to all the refugee camps and have assisted in the construction of small reading rooms within the camps. NGOs also provide 2/3 of the cost of repairing televisions in the camps.

8.5 Health, sanitation and medical service

Health services provided by the government are inadequate and in remote areas access to medical services is difficult. Local doctors living in and around the camps are general practitioners who provide services for fees. These doctors treat acute illness affecting the local population and are not equipped to deal with chronic illnesses of the refugee population. The NGOs have developed a health service for refugees. Because refugees are scattered in several districts in Tamil Nadu, a scheme of barefoot doctors was introduced in 1990 and
further strengthened in 1991 and 1992 in the light of the fact that local doctors could no longer provide medical services to camp refugees following restrictions introduced. The medical programmes of OFERR are supervised by doctors or semi-qualified personnel at regional level.

Refugees with experience in nutrition, nursing and public health issues have been selected and provided with training in immunization, first aid, mother and child care, sanitation and other related subjects, to become certified health workers. Initially, the training consists of three days a month over a period of nine months. After an examination at the end of three months’ training, the final examination is held at the end of nine months. A certificate is awarded to those who are successful at the final examination. Currently there are over 160 health workers, each of whom is expected to attend to a population of 500 refugees. There are also over 30 senior health workers for supervision.

The health worker’s duties involve identifying health needs and arranging the provision of simple medication and aftercare. OFERR maintains a central medical unit in Madras. A medical team consisting of doctors, nurses and paramedics from the medical unit makes periodical visits to the camps to attend to medical needs. Medicines are provided to the health workers through the OFERR’s regional offices. Medical clinics are also held at regional offices.

Health workers facilitate anti-natal care and child health and are involved in health education in camps. Health workers monitor the health of children under five years in the camps and maintain records. Children are regularly weighed and progress is recorded on a “Child Health and Weight Record Card”. Details of nutritional deficiencies and immunization for small pox, cholera and typhoid and other diseases are also recorded on the card.

Refugees who need medical treatment in hospitals are provided with financial assistance to travel to hospitals, food during treatment and cost of medicines. Application for assistance may be made through the NGO District Volunteers and District Social Workers, providing details of the illness and treatment. Assistance is also offered by NGOs in obtaining equipment such as spectacles and hearing aids. NGOs have encouraged doctors from abroad to serve in refugee camps for brief periods. These doctors, in addition to treating patients and offering advice, have also been involved in training health workers.

Counselling is an important aspect of services provided by NGOs with the assistance of the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary. Many refugees suffer from psychological disorders resulting from violence they have witnessed in Sri Lanka, the trauma caused by flight to a different country and the inability to adjust to new surroundings. Counselling programmes were begun in 1993.
8.6 Nutrition

NGOs have developed nutrition programmes for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children. According to doctors, caloric deficiency during pregnancy is remedied by supplying 165,000 kilocalories which is around 25% of the caloric need during the course of the whole pregnancy, (ie. 660,000 kilocalories) taking into consideration rice supplied at a subsidized rate and the normal intake of food.

The supplementary food is provided to pregnant women over a period of eight months. Earlier, Australian milk powder was provided as supplementary food. But after it was noted that the people finished the powder in a few days, it was replaced with locally available food. Children between the ages four months and one year are provided a powdered mixture of Bengal gram and ragi (millet). Children between the ages of one year and two years, pregnant women and lactating mothers are given a powdered mixture of Bengal gram, wheat and ragi.

9 Observations

In its March 1997 report entitled Conflict and displacement in Sri Lanka, the US Committee for Refugees recognized that the Indian government generously granted fleeing Sri Lankan Tamils refuge in India despite not being a signatory to the UN Convention on Refugees. The refugees in camps appreciate the measures taken by the Indian and Tamil Nadu governments to offer them sanctuary and allocate resources. The tension between refugees and the local population in Tamil Nadu created by the killings of Rajiv Gandhi and the EPRLF leaders has faded and the relationship has improved. There is a realization that the vast majority of the refugees are law-abiding and had no hand in these or other violent incidents. The Indian government’s concern over national security is understandable. Although there are many problems, there are three issues that need the immediate attention of the Indian government.

1. Shelter and sanitation are a major problem. Refugees say that if there were a proper roof over their heads, facing other problems would become easier. The Tamil Nadu government recognized this when it allocated a large amount of funds for the repair of the shelters. It would greatly ease the problems of the refugees, if the governments would look at the problem relating to shelter and sanitary facilities again, allocate more funds and consider allowing local NGOs to become involved in improving the shelters.

2. The level of payment to the refugees was determined several years ago and since then the cost-of-living has risen manifold. It would also assist the refugees if the government were to review the amounts taking into consideration the current cost-of-living.
Refugees express the desire to return to Sri Lanka and many believe that India holds the key to a lasting solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan refugee problem in India and in the rest of the world is likely to continue, unless peace is restored in Sri Lanka. Refugees continue to arrive from Sri Lanka. Peace would end the current flow and enable the refugees in India to return. It would be in India’s interest to take the lead in finding a lasting solution to the Sri Lankan conflict.
Repatriation of Plantation Tamils

Beginning in the 1920s, cash-crop plantations were established in Sri Lanka during the British colonial rule. Because of difficulties in obtaining local labour, large number of Tamils were brought to Sri Lanka from south India by the British to work on coffee and later tea and rubber plantations. The plantation estates have remained locked in sub-standard housing and working conditions often without basic facilities such as health, education and water supply. Descendants of the immigrant labour live in barrack-like “Line rooms” with two or three generations of a family, cooking, eating and sleeping in one dingy room. The living and working conditions remained marginal after independence from the British in 1948.

The situation of the Plantation Tamils became worse when over a million of them were made stateless in 1948 by the Citizenship Act by the first government of independent Sri Lanka. Their franchise rights were also removed in 1949 by an amendment to the election laws. After long drawn negotiations, India and Sri Lanka signed two agreements in 1964 (Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964 or Srimavo-Shastri Pact) and 1974 (Srimavo-Indira Pact) to repatriate 600,000 Tamil people of Indian origin to India. The agreements envisaged granting of Sri Lankan citizenship to 375,000 Plantation Tamils. The agreements had been concluded without consultation with the people or their representatives. The people, mostly employed in the tea and rubber plantations in Sri Lanka for several generations, were required, under the agreements to apply for either citizenship.

Repatriation of those who applied for Indian citizenship began in 1968 and was suspended in 1983 following increasing violence in Sri Lanka and fighting between the Sri Lankan Navy and the LTTE in the Palk Strait. By then, over 460,000 people had been repatriated to India and 260,000 granted Sri Lankan citizenship. Under two laws introduced in 1986 and 1988, the remaining stateless Tamil people were granted Sri Lankan citizenship. But some 84,000 people and their natural increase who were granted Indian citizenship still remain in Sri Lanka and most of them do not wish to go to India.

The repatriates who arrived in India were held in Mandapam transit camp in Ramanathapuram District for brief periods before being sent to various rehabilitation centres in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. The Indian Ministry of Work, Housing, Supply and Rehabilitation and the Tamil Nadu Ministry of Social Services were in charge of rehabilitation of the repatriates. Repatriate families were offered employment on tea, rubber or chincona plantations. Some families were employed in State farm corporations and spinning mills. Others were settled in land colonization schemes. Many repatriate families were granted agricultural and business loans or assistance through bank schemes. Housing loans were also granted to repatriate families. Upto 1980, some 330,000 people belonging to 80,000 families were assisted by the government.
The repatriates faced enormous psychological and physical problems on arrival in India. Many of them had arrived without the all important “Family Card” issued by Indian authorities in Sri Lanka to repatriates without which it was impossible to obtain assistance. Others had come without obtaining their money due to them in their employment in Sri Lanka. There were also difficulties in dealing with government officers in India and facing often a hostile local population.

In Tamil Nadu, many repatriates were offered employment in government-run tea plantations, now under the Tamil Nadu Tea Plantations Corporation Ltd (Tantea). More than 2,500 people were settled on the plantations, mostly in the Nilgiris District. In recent years, unprofitable chincona plantations have been converted to tea plantations at Naduvattam in Nilgiris District and Valparai in Coimbatore District where employment was offered.

A large number of repatriates were offered employment in rubber plantations in Kerala and Karnataka. Despite initial problems over integration with the local population, the repatriates in Kerala and Karnataka plantations are said to be better off compared to those who chose agriculture in colonization schemes initiated by the Tamil Nadu government.

In Andhra Pradesh, repatriates were employed in spinning mills under a cooperative scheme. But many of them were unable to acclimatize, the lack of knowledge of the local Telugu language and the climate being the main reasons. Low wages and resentment arising from competition for employment with the local population also drove them out. They returned to Tamil Nadu with request for employment from the state government. Others, however continued to work in the Andhra Pradesh spinning mills and over a period of time living and working conditions and the wage structure improved. The rehabilitation process was a success, but the mills have incurred heavy losses due to mismanagement and competition.

The Tamil Nadu Transport Corporation employed repatriates as drivers, mechanics and clerks. This category of people is well settled with adequate income to maintain their families and provide education to the children besides acquiring housing facilities. The Tamil Nadu government established several State Farm Corporations to provide employment to repatriates. These failed due to inadequate planning and infrastructure problems. The lands selected for the project were unsuitable for crop or tree farming, located mostly in arid zones without water supply for irrigation. The government closed the farms, as they were not viable. The repatriates who were employed on the farms struggled for a long time with government agencies for assistance. They were eventually granted either compensation or other forms of assistance.

The government also provided three acres of agricultural land to each repatriate family selected for colonization schemes, in different parts of the state. These colonization schemes are in arid regions of the state where water supply is a major problem. The government provided financial assistance to excavate wells, buy farm animals and build houses. Only a few colonies have survived, others having lost their struggle against the vagaries of nature. Life in the few colonies is extremely difficult. The people are not solely dependent on agriculture, many having found employment in the neighbourhood. Cow and goat rearing ensured sustenance to a large number of families. Friction with the local population has disappeared over the years and the repatriates are largely integrated.
A majority of the repatriates chose to apply for business loans. Each family was initially provided Rs 3,000 loan to begin small-scale businesses. The beneficiary could apply for a further loan of Rs 2,000 if he/she could establish that his business has been successful. Without adequate experience or training, very few people were able to carry out successful businesses with the capital provided by the government. Many people utilized the loans for food or urgent domestic purposes. The repatriates also found that they buildings to carry out the business were not available and where available, rents were high. Many of those who were able to continue, found that credit facilities were not available to expand their businesses. Some also encountered difficulty in recovering loans extended to business customers. From a general view, the business loan scheme of the government has not been successful, only a negligible number of people having attained success.

There is a high concentration of repatriates in hilly Nilgiris District, compared to the other districts of Tamil Nadu. Many people sent to various parts in the plains under rehabilitation schemes left their districts and went to the Nilgris to find employment on tea and vegetable gardens. The climate in Nilgiris is similar to that of the Hill Country in Sri Lanka and the people were experienced in working on plantations. Further, the wages paid for manual work in the tea and vegetable gardens were higher compared to wages in the plains.

Though housing loans were denied to those who decided to leave the rehabilitation schemes initiated by the government, the repatriates who subsequently went to the Nilgiris managed to build houses with their own resources. In a few cases, the government provided them land for houses under poverty alleviation programmes unconnected to repatriate rehabilitation schemes.

Tea prices have steadily risen in the last few years. This has enabled the repatriates who purchased land with their own savings and planted tea, to make substantial incomes. As a result several hundred families settled in the rural areas in Nilgiris District have a better living standard than those settled in agricultural colonies.

The government no longer provides concessions to Sri Lankan repatriates but they are eligible to benefits under development schemes initiated by both the Tamil Nadu and Indian governments. In the Nilgiris and other areas where repatriates concentration is high, repatriates have contested local council elections and many have been elected to Panchayats (the village-level assembly of five). The repatriates have long realized the importance of integration with the local population for improvement in their socio-economic conditions. With the old order giving way to the new generations, the repatriate population has become Indianised and a part of Indian society.
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA
AND
THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
RELATING TO THE REPATRIATION OF SRI LANKAN REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

The Government of the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka hereinafter referred to as GSL) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees hereinafter referred to as UNHCR,

Confirming the already existing excellent relations between GSL and UNHCR,

Resolved to cooperate in order to facilitate the return of Sri Lankan refugees,

Recalling Conclusion No. 18 (XXXI) and No. 40 (XXXVI) adopted by the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme, in particular UNHCR's legitimate concern for the consequences of return,

Considering the need to define general operational modalities governing UNHCR's involvement in the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan nationals,

Considering also the need to consent on principles regarding the assistance to as well as security and protection of returnees,

Noting that UNHCR's Mandate in Sri Lanka is limited to returnees but that the principles established for assistance and protection of returnees will apply also to displaced persons wherever they live together with returnees,

Have agreed on the following provisions:

1. GSL is responsible for the overall management of the reception centres including provision of food and shelter. The Government recognises that UNHCR, under the mandate given to it by the international community, has a legitimate interest in the consequences of the return from Tamil Nadu.
2. UNHCR will provide emergency relief assistance which is limited to emergency needs and UNHCR's inputs are not deemed to be a substitute to the assistance already provided by GSL, but rather aims at complementing this assistance which, because of budgetary constraints or because returnees are going back to uncleared areas, are not covered.

3. UNHCR will, in addition to its Field Offices in Madhu and Pesalai, open two new Field Offices in Vavuniya and Trincomalee. UNHCR will continue, within the agreed procedures, to enjoy free access to reception centres and uncleared areas where it implements a programme or where repatriants return.

4. Subject to availability of funds and security, UNHCR will continue its Open Relief Centres and Sub-Centres in Mannar District until 31 December 1994 at which time the programme will be reassessed.

5. Returnees are free to leave the reception centres if they wish to do so. Returnees should however not be forced to return home if they do not believe this can be done safely.

6. UNHCR will assist returnees to return to uncleared areas if they so wish. Returnees who choose to do so should all be fully informed of the conditions prevailing in these areas.

7. A. A security or other auxiliary forces will not carry out interventions in reception centres without prior consultation with the civil administration and UNHCR.

B. Such interventions will be carried out under the command of a national Army Officer of senior rank (not less than Major) and whenever necessary in the presence of UNHCR.

C. Any person who might be arrested as a result of such interventions will be signed for individually by the Commanding Officer.

D. GSL acknowledges that UNHCR's legitimate interest in the consequences of return also concerns the need to follow-up and request information on those arrested.
8. Both parties express their satisfaction with the existing excellent relationship and recognizes the need to continue the positive dialogue between the UNHCR Representative and GSL.

For the United Nations
High Commissioner for Refugees

For the Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Hasim Utkan
UNHCR Representative in Sri Lanka

P. Dayaratne
Minister of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation & Social Welfare, Government of Sri Lanka

Colombo, 1 February 1993
Government of Tamil Nadu  

Refugee Card

Name of head of family: .............................................................................................................

(Photograph of the head of family is affixed on this side and others' on the other side)

Identity number: .................................................. Admission number: ..............................

Sri Lanka National Identity Card number/Passport number: ....................................................

Whether citizen of Sri Lanka or stateless: ..................................................................................

Age/Date of birth: ........................................................................................................................

Date and place of arrival (in India): ............................................................................................

Mode of arrival: ...........................................................................................................................

Last address in Sri Lanka: .........................................................................................................

Occupation: .................................................................................................................................

Religion/Caste: .............................................................................................................................

Educational qualification: .............................................................................................................

Names and addresses of relatives in India: ................................................................................

Value of assets brought: ..............................................................................................................

Details of family

Name     Date of birth/Age     Male/Female     Relationship to head of family
Annex 4

Ration Card

1. Serial number ........................................................................................................................................
2. Name of refugee ....................................................................................................................................
3. Refugee card number ...........................................................................................................................
4. Details of family members

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5. Quantity of essential commodities eligible (in kilograms)

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6. Signature of refugee ............................................................................................................................

7. Signature of issuing authority .............................................................................................................

Details of issue each year ..........................................................................................................................
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Total 133 17092 24569 21984 8655 8320 63528

Source: Organisation for Eelam Refugees Rehabilitation (OFERR)
Annex 10

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