

Plantation Community

Mrs. P. Logeswary – Sri Lanka

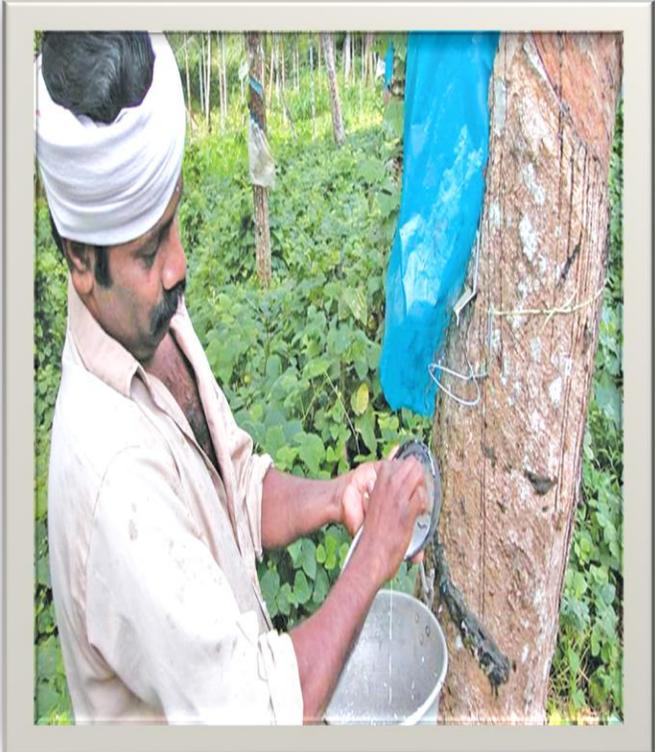
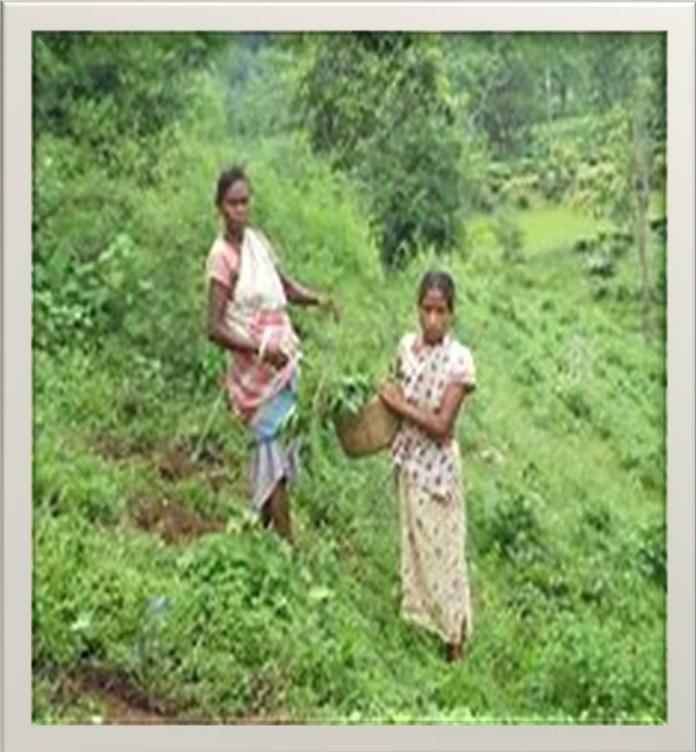
“Poverty is not an accident, Like slavery and apartheid, it is man made and can be removed by the action of the human beings”

Mandela

This quote from Mandela is applicable to village and estate community.



Plantation marginalized community Discriminated by Work and Decent (DWD).



Present Situation

- ▶ The Current Plantation Population is 4.4%
- ▶ 56% of the plantation people live in the line rooms in line houses which have been built during the British colonial period.
- ▶ The Plantation Work Force is 4.4 % and in that more than 50% are Women.
- ▶ Plantation poverty level is 2 or 3 times higher than that of the urban sector, which means that in the plantation sector 9 out of 100 are living below official poverty line.
- ▶ Poor Health care system or limited access to health services in the Plantations
- ▶ Estate population contributes to the national economy 24% (Foreign Revenue)
- ▶ The Female workers have to struggle with hygiene related issues during menstruation, maternity and child care.
- ▶ Since 2010 the EPF and ETF remittance have not been credited to the plantation community. So, they are facing difficult to get those benefits. We also have filed case for nearly 12000 members.
- ▶ Conducted the Citizenship campaigns and nearly around 300000 plantation family people got the citizenship



Major challenges faced by - Plantation Community in the Sri Lankan context

- ▶ Globalization, privatization and Neo - Liberal economic policies adopted by the governments - plantation workers/community lost their livelihood resources and also Wage issues.
- ▶ Lack of land and land grabbing
- ▶ Living condition of the plantation community is very poor, Existing fuddle patriarchal system cause to multiple burdens of the women
- ▶ Occupational Health hazards and lack of health facilities
- ▶ Usage of pesticide, weedicide and chemical fertilizer
- ▶ Climate Change, deforestation, pollution and loss of bio diversity due to depend on the environment and resource of land and territories.
- ▶ Child labour increased
- ▶ Covid -19 Pandemic and its fast-tacked extensions have not only led to the declaration of a global pandemic by the WHO, but in the meantime, highlights how breakable the health services are, and how helpless most vulnerable populations.
- ▶ Ultimately plantations are abundant, no proper management and production, government own plantations were closed

Political Crisis

- ▶ At the general election for parliament held on 5/8/2020, (according to the final general election result) Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPF) won 145 seats (2/3rd majority to form the government). Other Political parties got 80 seats.
- ▶ National Security and National product were given priority. At the economic front, The President and SLPF are introducing what they describe as a nationalist economic model.
- ▶ Abolishing the 19th amendment and bring the 20th amendment in order to pave way for the reinstatement of the executive presidential powers
- ▶ More & more corruption in this period

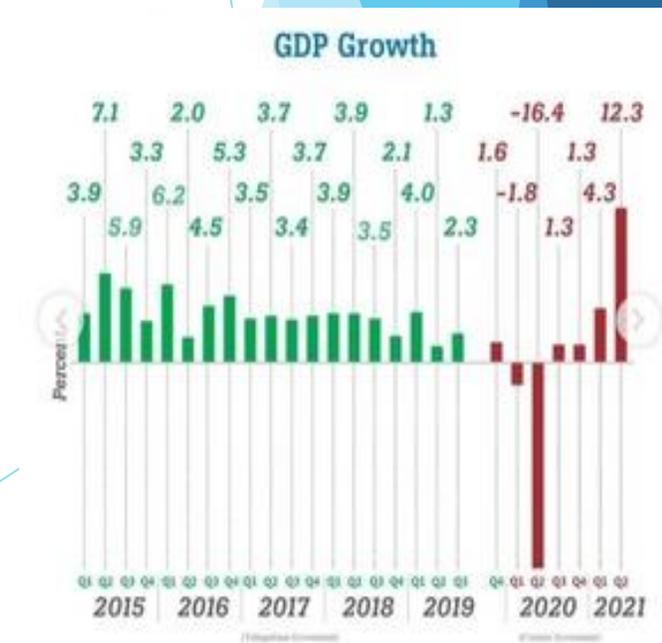
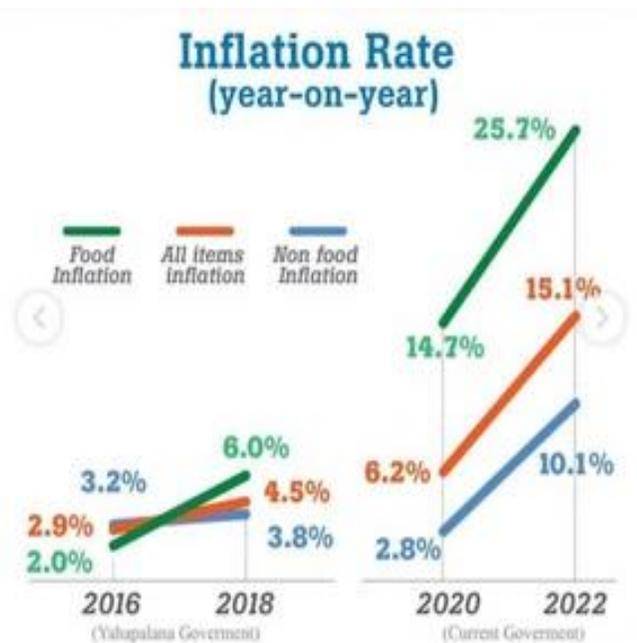
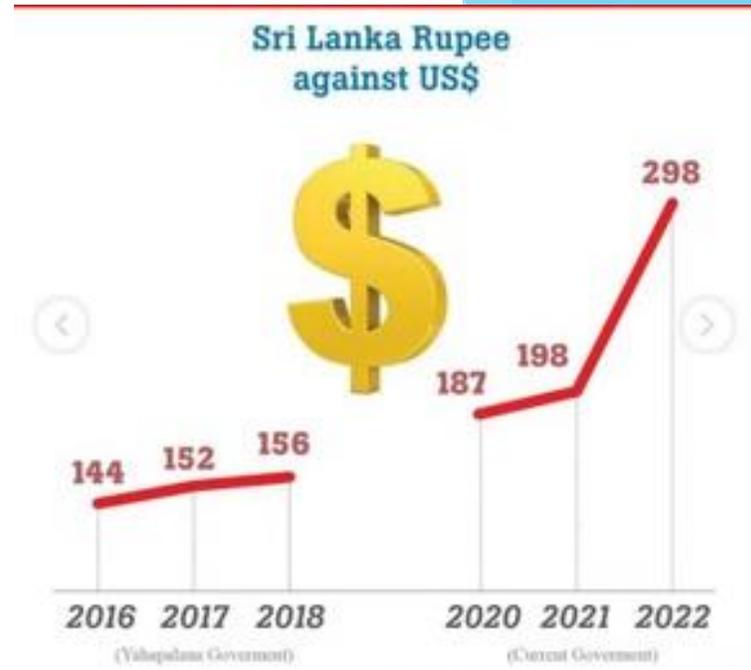
Economic Crisis

- ▶ Sri Lanka is facing the worst economic crisis in its post-independence history
- ▶ Whether they are farmers, plantation workers, fisher folks, youth, students, unorganized workers or industrial workers are suffering .
- ▶ Sri Lanka is going through a serious food crisis now. Fuel pumps are running dry, forcing people to queue-up for hours. Tensions over scarcity of supplies have led to sporadic violence. People died while queuing to buy fuel & gas in sweltering heat.
- ▶ The shortages of essential items such as fuel, food and medicines are even forcing people, particularly the daily wagers, to flee the country. Sri Lanka is facing a severe electricity power crisis too.
- ▶ Access to safe and nutritious food has become a major concern with impacts to food security. The food crisis deficiency has affected the people leading to cutting the food intake of the majority of the people drastically. About half of the population manage with one meal a day and the malnutrition rate has gone up to about 20%.
- ▶ *The most vulnerable communities across the country - some 2.4 million people already living below the poverty line who are most affected by the loss of livelihoods, food shortages, and the spiraling cost of essential items.*



- ▶ Communities affected by repeated tragedies - the long-drawn-out war, tsunami, Easter bombings and the Covid-19 pandemic- are yet again facing a blow to their efforts to rebuild their lives.
- ▶ The problem of a flailing economy customarily falls on women as economic hazards are hard-pressed into the home sphere.
- ▶ Women face the double burden of earning an income while doing unpaid care work at home.
- ▶ Women struggle to ensure the wellbeing of their children due to obstacles to education, domestic violence and inefficient and unjust systems of maintenance payments to single mothers.
- ▶ Frustrations and fears of uncertainty, hunger and the lack of basic comforts often translate into violence directed at women and children
- ▶ The limited existing services to address such violence are further arrested due to the pandemic and now the economic crisis.
- ▶ According to medical personals says 140 medicines not available or lacking
- ▶ During the pandemic period there were unwanted pregnancies, young pregnancies, and early pregnancies among the plantation community because they had limited access to the health services and were unable to buy the temporary contraceptives.
- ▶ During the lock down period around 36% of the women and girls faced domestic or gender violence during the lockdown period.

Item	Price in 2020	Price in 2022
Rice	125.00	350.00
Sugar	120.00	350.00
Wheat Flour	90.00	320.00
Dhal	150.00	650.00
Noodles	140.00	450.00
Bread	50.00	200.00
Thalapath Fish	720.00	1800.00
Tin fish	250.00	750.00
Milk Powder 400g	380.00	1020.00
Egg	12.00	50.00
Sprats	700.00	2200.00
Tomatoes 1kg	120.00	1500.00
Potatoes 1kg	200.00	400.00
Carrot	150.00	700.00
Soap	55.00	225.00
Petrol	132.00	420.00
Diesel	111.00	400.00
Gas	1490.00	4860.00
Coconut Oil	450.00	740.00



Resistance

- ▶ Anticipate escalating violence in the context of the spread of peaceful protests by average citizens to express democratic dissent against this unjust situation.
- ▶ The Sri Lankan economy depends on imports for essential items. However, it has depleted its foreign exchange reserves, and thus does not have enough cash to pay for imports
- ▶ Community resistance and struggles comes from the courage, resilience and resolute commitment of leaders from the Plantation their determination to continue even in the face of threats, harassments and violation of their human rights, are stories of sacrifice and a belief in their struggle for women's and people's rights.
- ▶ Influencing Policy legislation on human rights & Governance.
- ▶ Gender equality and equity.
- ▶ Advocacy and Lobby on the issues.
- ▶ Women's resistance and struggles is a result of collaborative efforts from various community organizations and movements working with various sectors in country level -Asia level- International level
- ▶ Civil society movements in the community to fight for their rights in the community level.

THANK YOU!