Chapter Three:

Kurulubedde Village: Location, Historical Background and Transformation

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyze social dynamics that have been taking place in Kurulubedde in the light of theoretical and methodological perspectives presented in the early chapters. The basic point underlined in the analysis of this chapter is the influence of the state as an agent of change in Kurulubedde village since the mid twentieth century. This is in contrast with the relatively isolated experience of the village during the colonial period.

The first part of this chapter discusses administrative and topographical landscape of the village. In the next section, the chapter delineates historically the socio-economic condition and the influence of colonial administration on Kurulubedde village before independence. The third section of the chapter focuses on the state involvement in the village since the beginning of 1940s and its impact on the socio-economic dynamism of the village. Accordingly, this section is concerned with demographic, economic and other material changes in the village. Fourth section of this chapter will focus on an examination of the consequences of these changes on the villagers' life along with the discussion of how villagers have understood these changing processes of the village in a context where partisan political identification has become very important. This is followed by the conclusion of the chapter.
3.2 Location of Kurulubedde village

Kurulubedde is situated about 23 kms away from Chillaw city which is located 65 kms to the North of the capital city of the country, Colombo. Chillaw situated in the Northwestern coastal belt and controlled under the urban council is one of the major cities in the Puttalam district that the villagers of “Kurulubedde” are constantly in contact with. The road that leads further north from Chillaw city straightly goes to Puttalam, the capital of Northwestern province. There is a junction in this road three kilometers away from Chillaw, called Bogaladeniye. A road which turns left from this junction leads to the interior of the country, i.e. straight to Serumaduwe, a small town with a well-equipped district hospital, central school, police station, local government office and some other few government offices. The village “Kurulubedde” is located on this Chillaw-Serumaduwe road, about 23 km from Chillaw.

3.2.1 Administrative structure

At present, there are four hamlets in Kurulubedde village: Nelligahawile, Aluthwatte, Harumanwile and Kandulassegode. With these four hamlets, Kurulubedde village comes under several administrative structures. According to the present Sri Lankan civil administration system, each district has been divided into Divisional Secretariat Divisions (DSD). And these DSDs have been further divided into Grame Niladari Divisions (GND), the smallest civil administrative unit of the island. Each GND has been under the jurisdiction of the Grame Niladari (Village Servant). There are sixteen DSDs in Puttalam district. At present, Kurulubedde comes under the authority of Pallepitiye DSD. And, the village belongs to two GNDs, called Kurulubedde and
Nelligahawile. But, up to 1992, the village belonged to Serumaduwe DSD, one of the biggest DSDs in Puttalam district at that time. Till then, all four hamlets of Kurulubedde had been under one GND. In 1992, Pallapitiye was carved as a separate DSD for the ease of civil administration. With this establishment, the village came under two GNDs as Kurulubedde and Nelligahawile. Aluthwatte and Kandulassagode hamlets belonged to Kurulubedde GND and Nelligahawile and Harumanwile hamlets belonged to Nelligahawile GND.

Politically, Kurulubedde comes under the Serumaduwe electorate in Puttalam district. Serumaduwe is a newly created electorate in 1977. Upto 1977, the village was under the Nikewaratiye electorate which is adjoining the present Serumaduwe electorate. The village comes under the North-Western provincial council. According to the local government structure, Kurulubedde belongs to Serumaduwe local government.

3.2.2 Topographical landscape

Puttalam district belongs to two main ecological zones. The southern part of the district belongs to the intermediate zone of the country and the northern part which covers more than sixty percent of landscape of the district belongs to the dry zone. The intermediate part of the district receives an average rainfall of 1500 mm and the rainfall of the dry zone area of the district averages between 1000 to 1200 mm. The lands in intermediate zone which stretch along the southern side to western sea belt contain sandy soil. They extend in to the interior up to about one and half km from seashore before they transform into gravel-contained soil formation. This soil formation is favorable for coconut which is the major cash crop cultivation of the district. The surface soil
formation of the interior dry zone of the district contains the brownish sandy soil and sandy clay loam with gravel and laterite rock in some areas. This soil formation and dry climate have led to the growth of scabrous and thorny vegetation. Generally, Puttalam district is flat and virtually featureless.

The Pallapitiye Divisional Secretariat Division (DSD) belongs to the dry part of Puttalam district. The average daily temperature in Pallapitiye DSD averages between 28.6° to 29.1°C and the annual rainfall is 1145 mm. These climatic conditions are common to Kurulubedde village too. However, this rainfall statistic is not uniform as it is erratic and consequently unreliable because of the delay and poor diffusion of the rains during the rainy season. Puttalam district receives most of the heavy rains during the inter-monsoon season from the end of October to November. Northeast monsoon season brings some rains during December to February. But, those are not heavy rains. In the remaining periods of the year, this area receives a very scanty rainfall. From mid May to October, generally, there is very little rainfall. In July, August and September, there is dry weather in the area. And, in August and September, dry and hot wind blows very strongly. Thus, the climate of the area is characteristically dry, with the dry period remaining for more than half of the year. Accordingly, the impact of dry season on this area as well as on Kurulubedde is high.

During the dry season, even the main streams of Puttalam district shrink until they become thin lines because most of these streams start from the dry zone itself. Pallapitiye DSD is characterized by the absence of a main river with only some little streams with scarce water. Therefore, collection of water for agricultural and other
purposes is considered essential. However, a massive trans-basin irrigation system cannot be seen in Pallapitiye DSD as there is no water source for continuous water supply. Instead, a village level minor tanks (in Sinhala vave) system which had been built during the ancient times can be seen throughout the area. At present, most of these minor tanks completely depend on the annual rainfall. And, many of these minor tanks contain below five acres of water. All these minor tanks in the area remain dry for more than half of the year during the dry period. The villagers of Kurulubedde experience numerous hardships due to the scarcity of water especially from June to August. A decade before, they had to walk for more than two or three kilometers to collect water for the necessities of their day-to-day life.

Soil formation of Kurulubedde village contains brownish sandy clay loam soil, occasionally mixed with gravel. This soil formation is favorable for coconut cultivation to some extent. But, some areas of the village contain a thin soil mantle with laterite rock which is not conducive for coconut cultivation though it is favorable for the cultivation of cashew. Usually, the dry climate and water scarcity strongly affect permanent cultivation and these two factors have strongly influenced the social and economic conditions of the population of the village for a long time.

3.3 Historical background of Kurulubedde area

The area where Kurulubedde village is located has a long history that can be traced to the first Aryan civilization of Sri Lanka. Kurulubedde and the surrounding area belonged to the flourishing irrigated civilization of Rajarata Kingdom (Rajarata, literally means king’s country). During the period between 6th and 13th century when
Rajarata kingdom was free from external destabilizing influences, the territory between Daduru Oye (literally Oye means river) which marked the southern boundary of the present Puttalam district as well as Northwestern province, and Kala Oye which is situated close to the northern boundary of the district as well as province, was one of the two territories of Rajarata kingdom which had a considerable economic and political importance (Codrington, 1922: 74). During that time, a network of hundreds of minor village tanks had been built up in this area. Even now, there are large number of tanks in Puttalam district and Northwestern province. Every village in the area has several tanks. Six functioning tanks and another five small abandoned tanks can be seen even today in Kurulubedde village.

However, when Rajarata kingdom faced South Indian invasions, it was shifted to the wet zone of the country. By seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the area came under the control of the Kandyan kingdom. During that time, this area was known as Hath Korale (seven Korale), which contained almost all of the present Northwestern province. But, due to the influence of Western colonizers, Kandyan kingdom’s authority had gradually decreased on its peripheral locations like Hath Korale. By the beginning of 18th century, Kurulubedde area was just only a peripheral patchwork of Kandyan kingdom. It had a marginal influence from the capital which was located in the central hills of the island. Although it was not a completely self-governing system, the remoteness and inaccessibility from the capital allowed people of this peripheral area to maintain their own affairs without much interference from the capital of the kingdom (Perera, 1985; Pieris, 1956).
In the late 18th century, British (1796-1948) occupied Kandyan kingdom’s territory in the present Northwestern province. But, the British did not concern themselves with socio-economic affairs of most of the dry zone areas of the country during that time. This situation was common to most of the interior dry zone areas of Puttalam district. Hence, the people of the interior areas in Puttalam district were confined to isolated clusters of homesteads surrounded by forest. They were largely separate from the new social, economic and cultural affairs initiated during the British colonial regime.

However, in 1845, for the ease of revenue collection and civil administration, British carved Northwestern province as a separate administrative province under a Government Agent (GA) keeping Puttalam as the capital of the province (Peiris, 1996: 20). The province contained two Assistant Government Agent Divisions (AGAD), Puttalam, and Kurunagale under the Assistant Government Agents (AGA). In 1888, Puttalam AGAD was demarcated as two AGADs as Puttalam and Chillaw and were considered as separate districts. In 1909, these two AGADs were amalgamated and kept under one AGA. However, for some civil administrative purpose like census, Chillaw and Puttalam were considered as two districts (Census of Ceylon 1953). During that time, Kurulubedde and surrounding areas belonged to Puttalam AGAD. In the British colonial administrative system, below the AGAD, there were sub divisions which were the older Sinhalese administrative divisions of Pattus and Kōrales, etc. Those Pattus and Koraales were also known by their previous Sinhalese and Tamil names. According to this civil administration system during the British period, Kurulubedde areas belonged to Demele Hatpattu. Kurulubedde village was under the Nagawewa village Headman division, the smallest civil administrative unit during British period.
3.3.1 Traditional social and economic structure

A comparison of the analysis of traditional socio-economic structure in Kurulubedde with the changing nature of economic, societal, demographic and cultural scenarios in the village under the influence of the state will be presented in the following sections of this chapter. Accordingly, I will discuss the traditional economy and society in this area upto 1940s. The sources of this analysis are based on the memories of the old villagers of Kurulubedde of their past life, colonial administrative reports and other official documents of Puttalam district and relevant literature of traditional Sri Lankan rural society.

The dry zone villages had been organized as both single-caste villages and also sometimes as mixed-caste villages by the first decades of twentieth century. When it was a mixed caste village, each caste group lived in a separate area called gamgode (literally means a hamlet or cluster). Mostly such mixed caste villages consisted of goigama (cultivators and higher caste of Sinhala caste system), rajake or hēna (washermens), bereva (drummers), and āchāri (iron workers) castes. According to the traditional social organization, low caste people should provide services to high caste people. However, due to the collapse of traditional social and economic system in the dry zone, caste was not an occupational category during this period. Considering the Northwestern province, Leach (1961) declares the structure of the caste services as;

“Named Sinhalese castes are distinguished from one another mainly in terms of traditional service duties. These are not in any total sense occupational categories. The Washermen are only ritual washermen; the Drummers are only religious drummers; in their ordinary life Goigama, Washermen, Drummers and the rest are all alike cultivators
of the soil” (1961: 25-6). Thus, whether low caste people followed their traditional duties or not, they too cultivated paddy and chena for their subsistence.

As such, during the end of nineteenth century, Kurulubedde had remained a mixed caste village. And, it consisted of a bunch of settlements including five gamgoda, named as Nelligahawile, Halpanwile, Harumanwile, Radayaye, and Kandulassegode which were inhabited by Kandyan Sinhalese. They belonged to three castes. Among these hamlets, the inhabitants of Nelligahawile, Halpanwila, and Harumanwile belonged to goigama or cultivator caste, and they were a kindred group. The inhabitants of Radayaye hamlet belonged to hēna or washerman caste. The inhabitants of Kandulassagode belonged to bereva or drummer caste. These inhabitants were also a kindred group. Religiously, the inhabitants of all these hamlets were Buddhists. Except Radayaye hamlet, the other hamlets had settled surrounding the minor level village tanks called Nelligahawile vave, Kandulassagode vave, Halpanwila vave and Harumanwile vave. People of the Radayaye hamlet had settled down close to a little stream called Rathamal oya.

By the nineteenth century, the economy of most of the villages in the interior dry zone areas of Demele Hatpattu was restricted to a small geographical location. It was not amalgamated with the new capitalist economic activities initiated by the British. The economy was mainly under the subsistence agriculture in which productions were used for basic needs. When there was a surplus production, it was exchanged for goods which were needed for meeting other household needs like cloth, dry-fish, salt, coconut etc. There were two types of this subsistence agriculture: paddy and chena cultivation. But, later, the chena cultivation became the main economic activity as paddy cultivation
rarely succeeded, mainly due to the poor capacity of water in the minor tanks of the village.

In Sri Lanka, there are two-paddy cultivation seasons called *yale* and *mahā*. *Yale* season stretches from May to September which has been considered as a minor season because of low rainfall, and, therefore lesser harvest. Paddy lands of the village were rarely cultivated during this season. *Maha* has been considered as the principle paddy cultivation season as it lasts from November to March which is the rainy season of the area. However, due to the uncertainty of the rainfall in the area and low capacity of the village minor tanks, paddy cultivation was tentative even during this season. Further, paddy cultivation depended on the use of old and low yielding varieties of seeds (*Suduheenati, Suduhandira, Kaluhandira, Murungakayan*) which took more than four months to yield. Traditional methods of cultivation had been used. The production process was entirely based on manpower and animal power. Water buffalos were used for preparing paddy lands and threshing works. As there was enough forestland, feeding buffalos was not a problem.

The labor status which was associated with paddy cultivation during this time produced both egalitarian and inegalitarian social relations among the villagers. For instance, the traditional reciprocal labor relation which was known as *attam* was primarily based on the egalitarian principle. According to this system, if one cultivator wants more human labour for the paddy cultivation work, he asks fellow cultivators to work in his paddy lands. Then, he has to work an equivalent day for each of his partner’s field. He cannot send someone else to help his partner on behalf of himself. If he takes help from three
men for one day, he has to work one day for each of his helpers (similar works). The host was responsible for feeding his invited fellow cultivators (Spencer, 2000 [1990]: 110). Accordingly, everybody who sought other’s help in paddy cultivation becomes equals within the group of labour exchange. On the other hand, the inegalitarian practices which could be seen in paddy cultivation were based on caste and gender. According to my respondents, in the early days, *attam* system was followed within caste groups. During that time, *berava* caste people cultivated paddy lands under Kandulassagode *vave* only. The cultivated paddy lands were no more than thirty acres. Participants in *attam* came from the same caste. Women were excluded from *attam* as it was considered a male business in labour exchange. Conversely, there was exclusion of women from some activities of the paddy production such as threshing. It was believed that women should not set foot on the *kamatha* (threshing floor) because of *killa* (pollution).

However, by the 1930s and 1940s, Demele Hatpattu in Puttalam AGAD mainly survived with chena cultivation. It was the major way of food production of the area during this time. By this time, maintenance of the minor level village tank system of the area had been neglected. Thus, most of these tanks did not function properly. Therefore, they could not contain water to the full capacity. Subsequently, the rural communities who lived under the minor village tank system were affected by the uncertain dry zone climate that prevailed in the Kurulubedde area. Therefore, paddy cultivation could not be followed successfully. Instead of paddy cultivation, most of the people in this area depended on chena cultivation. It produced their foods such as *kurakkan* (kind of millet grown in chena as main crop), maize, sorghum, manioc and kinds of vegetables. *Chena*
cultivation was the main source of livelihood of Demele Hatpattu at that time. How one can envisage the life in the Kurulubedde area during the beginning of twentieth century through the Administration Report (AR) of the colonial administration. In his AR for 1904, AGA for Puttalam district has reported;

Chena cultivation is only practiced in the Kandyan portion of the district...there is no doubt that chena cultivation in the poorer portion of the Demele Hatpattu is necessary to enable the people to live...From the chenas they obtain not only dry grain, but meneri, gingerly and chilies which they barter with traveling Moorman for coconuts, dry fish and curry stuffs (Bowes, 1904: 22-23).

Compared with paddy cultivation, chena cultivation operated outside the caste boundaries and gender differences. As old villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet told me, in the past, chena cultivation was a collective and exchange work rather than individual work. It was completely based on human labour. Traditional methods of cultivation had been used. Generally, works of chena cultivation started in August. In this month, a group of people consisting around 10 to 15 people (mostly head of each household) went to the jungle and selected a suitable place for chenas. After that, they cut down the undergrowth and cleared the lands till the cleared area was sufficiently large enough for the cultivators. In September, they set fire to the dead undergrowth. After that, the cleared plots of lands were divided among the group of people roughly in triangular portions which all came all together at the center point of the cleared land. Then, the farmer built up a strong wooden fence out boundary of his plot. When the rains fall in October, subsistence oriented grains like kurakkan (kind of millet grown as main crop in chenas), meneri (another kind of millet), maize, were sown with seeds of other grains and vegetables in the burnt ground. The farmers from the neighbouring plots, neighbours (both men and women) and sometime children also joined at this stage to
help the farmer. After sowing, the farmers started keeping watch of chena at night for wild animals. This was also a group work. Each cultivator built a watch hut close to the outer-boundary of the chena for this purpose. In the daytime, women and children protected the chena, and in the night, men watched the chena. Harvesting started since January and continued until mid February. Here also, all the members of family, relatives, and friends helped the farmer.

There were several advantages of this system of collective work and structure of chena:
It was easier to clear jungle through collective labour; to fence the chena lands against wild animals; to protect the cultivation from wild animals as the chena land had to be watched in the night (the night watch hut was built close to the fence). Unlike paddy cultivation, neighbors, friends and women too had a share in the chena works. People of different castes cultivated the chena together and then only could the villagers protect their chena farming from wild animals.

3.3.2 Influence of colonial administration

Nevertheless, during colonial regime, the colonial administration opposed the chena cultivation which was the main source of livelihood of the rural communities in Demele Hatpattu. There were several reasons for this opposition. According to colonial administration, the chena cultivation destroyed forest resources and surface soil of the lands. According to them, the principal chena production, kurakkan, had little nutritional value, and caused diseases like parangi (yaws). But, the actual reason for this opposition was based on raising demands for lands for commercial cultivation and Europeans' prejudiced notion on the chena cultivation during that time. As I pointed out
in chapter one, the land policies of the colonial government since the beginning of 18th
century were directly related to the emerging capitalist commercial plantation. Hence, it
wanted to sell crown lands for commercial plantation. But, such sale was not possible in
the case of the natives encroaching upon these lands for chena cultivation. Michael
Roberts noted that,

The reaction of British officials to chena cultivation was strongly coloured by
European notions and prejudices. Since primary forests as well as lands with
secondary forests growth were subjected to the slash and burn operations of the
chena culture, one of their notable arguments was that valuable Crown timber
should be protected from such operations. Such an outlook inevitably led them
to protect Crown properties that were of potential commercial value (i.e. for its
timber). Where, as in the central highlands, such forest was in demand for cash-
crop cultivation, their policy was justified on other grounds. The exploitation of
commercially valuable timber was largely forgotten. What counted, at least till
1850’s, was the protection of such lands from the chena cultivation and other
“native encroachments” so as to enable the sale of such forest lands for cash
crop culture. Thirdly, it was widely believed for some time that kurakkan, one of
the dry grains cultivated in chenas, was of little nutritional value and that it even
contributed towards the disease known as parangi (yaws) which prevailed
widely in the dry zone. In the fourth place, many British officials convinced
themselves that chena culture was not merely prodigal form of agriculture but
also a consequence and cause of slothful behavioral norms. As a result and
fifthly, they argued that chena cultivation should be prohibited in order to
convert the practioners to the cultivation of more “permanent” and
“remunerative” crops, particularly wet paddy cultivation. The standard British
response to swidden agriculture in Ceylon, then, was to consider it as “wasteful
and demoralizing” or “destructive” or “an unmixed evil” (Roberts, 1973: 128;
italics in original).6

This kind of colonial barricades on chena cultivation negatively affected the life of the
interior dry zone villages like Kurulubedde which mainly depended on the chena
cultivation. As argued by Meyer (1983), loss of chenas in wet zone was perhaps the
major consequence of the expansion of plantation economy. The rural populace could
find casual employment in the plantation sector in the case of facing loss of livelihood
in their chena cultivation in the wet zone (quoted from Spencer, 2000 [1990]:106).
However, this economic vacuum (that created by loss of chena) could not be filled in the villages like Kurulubedde in the dry zone due to the absence of such commercial plantation there. Even up to the beginning of 1950s, initiation of commercial plantation could not be seen in Kurulubedde and neighboring areas. And, though there was initiation of diverse economic activities under the colonial economic policy in urban areas as well as areas where there commercial plantation scattered, there was very little diversification of employment opportunities available in the interior dry zone areas like Kurulubedde at the beginning of the twentieth century to absorb the population expelled from the chena cultivation. On the other hand, as I pointed out above, the failure of paddy cultivation in interior Puttalam district was a usual thing. Hence, the exclusion of people from the chena cultivation has serious implications for their life. Therefore, colonial administration had to allow limited chena cultivation in dry zone areas as a method of producing foodstuff. But, the colonial government gave the permission to clear only two acres for the chena cultivation by charging 25 cents per one acre. If somebody cleaned more than what he was allowed, he was fined Rs. 1.50 per for each additional acre. According to Whitehorn (1925), the AR of AGA for Puttalam district, in 1925, Rs. 49.50 was charged from the villagers, who cultivated chena without the permission and for over clearance of the crown land for chenas.

Along with that, the next main problem faced by the population of the interior dry zone villages like Kurulubedde in Puttalam district as well as whole Northwestern province during this time was epidemic diseases like malaria fever and \textit{parangi} (yaws). Unsatisfactory preventive and curative health measures and poor access to the area
...it is to be noticed that the existing distribution of medical men is unsatisfactory and fails to meet the requirement of the people. The men are given defined centers they are expected to visit weekly; and beyond treating ordinary cases and parangi and malaria fewer, they seem inaccessible to patients suffering from more serious ailments requiring closer attention an itinerant medical man could possibly afford under existing circumstances. The people have no alternatives, therefore, but to place their patients under vedaralas (native doctors). I strongly deprecate the absence of resident medical men, and would urge the question for consideration of government (Burrows, 1904, italics and brackets are mine).

The major inferences that can be drawn from this quotation are poor health facilities in the interior part of Puttalam district, and the inaccessibility to patients due to unsatisfactory road system. During the nineteenth century, the population of the areas where the colonial plantation economy was spread, benefited from dispensaries which were established in estates. Road network was also built in those areas for the development of commercial plantation. This road network gave way for the easy access to the people of those areas for the medical facilities from urban centers (Spencer, 2000). But this situation was not similar to the interior dry zone villages which were far away from the colonial commercial plantations.  

Hence, the AR of AGA for Puttalam district in 1909 says, “The health of the Demele Hatpattu was, as always, not satisfactory, Parangi and fever prevailed” (italics are mine). Due to this condition, in 1908, when the birth rate was 37.5, death rate was 40.7 and in 1909, when birth rate was 35.7, death rate was 39.66 in Puttalam district (AR for Puttalam in 1909). But, the prejudiced British colonial administration tried to convince that this unpleasant situation of the province was not a result of degeneration of the
economic and health condition and neglected state by government, but as a result of the staple food of the people in the dry zone. They argued that the main chena product, *kurakkan*, had little nutritional value and was responsible for the malnutrition and various diseases. For instance, AGA of Puttalam district, F. Bowes, pointed out, "I am convinced that a large proportion of the fever and sickness in the district is due to an unvaried and heating diet, of which *kurakkan* as the staple" (1904: 27).

According to the AR of AGA for Puttalam district in 1925, the outbreak of malaria epidemic in Demele Hatpattu was exceptionally severe. Due to its severity, the government had to appoint special officers to itinerant supplies of quinine in Demele Hatpattu. But in his report, AGA of Puttalam district in 1926, he provided a depressing description of the failure of provision of medicine for malaria. He reported that most of the interior areas of the district suffered badly from malaria due to the failure of efficacious treatments. Therefore, he has firmly requested a hospital be built in Serumaduwe of Demele Hatpattu (Whitehorn, 1925: 16). By 1932 also, those diseases were universal in Puttalam district, particularly in Demele Hatpattu where Kurulubedde was situated. However, requests for the development of health care facilities were not successful. Therefore, the same request was again made by AGA of Puttalam district in 1932 (Rodrigo, 1932). When malaria epidemic spread over the entire island in the early years of 1930s, one of the worst affected districts from the epidemic was Puttalam district. So, Census Report of 1946 has pointed out that,

*It may be noted that in the decade 1901-1911, as well as in the decades 1911-1921, and 1921-1931, there had been a net natural decrease of population in the district, registered death always exceeding registered births in each decades. For the first time in an inter censual period, births exceeded in the district only in 1931-1946, 20,026 births and 19,221 deaths being registered, showing an excess*
of births over deaths by 805. It should be remembered, however, that this slight natural increase is the record of the entire period, some individual years within the period registering more deaths than births. For instance, malaria took a heavy toll in 1935, when 520 more deaths than live births were recorded, while the years 1937 and 1938 and 1944 and 1945 also showed an excess of deaths over births (Census of Ceylon, 1946: 122).  

Conversely, the economic condition was also considerably damaged in Demele Hatpattu during this time. According to Whitehorn (1925: 14), the AR of AGA for Puttalam district, paddy and the chena cultivation in Demele Hatpattu of the district was considerably damaged due to the poor and late arrival of rainfall in the district. This situation severely caused the food scarcity of this area during this time.

3.3.3 Kurulubedde at independence

The above socio-economic condition and the state of neglect by the colonial government shaped Kurulubedde village by the beginning of twentieth century. Particularly, the malaria epidemic made some hamlets of Kurulubedde an uninhabited landscape. However, official records significantly do not mention the influence of malaria epidemic on the village. Therefore, the recounting has to depend on the oral versions.

Going by oral accounts, by 1930s, Nelligahawile, situated in central part of the present Kurulubedde village, Halpanwila, situated in southeast boundary of present village, was completely abandoned due to malaria epidemic. In Harumanwile, which was situated in the northern side of the village, only four families remained. These three hamlets were inhabited by goigama caste. The remained inhabitants of these three hamlets after the malaria epidemic had moved away to the surrounding goigama caste villages of
Nagawewa and Nelumwawe, situated in north and southeast side of present Kurulubedde village. And, some families went to Galkatiya, another traditional goigama caste village which was situated about ten miles east of Kurulubedde village. Radayaye which was inhabited by hēna caste was also completely abandoned. And some families of Kandulassagode also moved out of the village.¹¹

The abandonment of the other hamlets of Kurulubedde village influenced the remaining villagers of Kandulassagode and Harumanwile making their life difficult in different ways. They had to face difficulties in protecting their paddy and chena cultivation from wild animals, especially from wild elephants. As neighboring hamlets were abandoned, these two hamlets were the only small settlements that remained in Kurulubedde area surrounded by the jungle. These two hamlets were separated from each other and also from other neighboring villages, namely Nagawewa and Nelumwawe situated in southeastern and northern side, by less extensive forest. Conversely, people of these hamlets had to walk long distances to buy their necessities. If it was not so, they had had to exchange their produce with traveling Moore businessmen. But, in this exchange, the villagers were often cheated. Even in 1904, AR of AGA for Puttalam district has reported the situation of this exchange in interior villages of Puttalam district. “From the chenas they obtain not only dry grain, but meneri, gingerly and chilies which they barter with traveling Moorman for coconuts, dry fish and curry stuffs. In the exchange there is no doubt they lose considerably…”(Bowes, 1904: 22-23). Further in his annual report, AGA gave a gloomy picture of how due to the lack of road facilities, most of the villagers could not transport their produce to market places.
3.4 State activities and Kurulubedde since 1940s

However, since the mid 1930s, this situation of dry zone areas of the Puttalam district began to change significantly. This was the notable outcome of pervasive state activities in the county under the Donoughmore political reforms of 1931. Within this context, health care improvements and development of roads facilities improved the general atmosphere in the interiors of Puttalam district which was plagued by epidemic diseases in the past. For instance, since the mid 1930s, preventive and curative health measures and DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane; the popular mosquito-killer chemical) application in rural areas of Puttalam district were enhanced. In 1940, the government built up two rural dispensaries in Serumaduwe and Pallapitiye with an itinerant medical officer who came twice a week. With these improvements, the government paid a good deal of attention to distribute state lands in the interior dry areas of Puttalam district under the LDO of 1935. And post-independent successor governments not only maintained these facilities, but also enhanced them. These growing state involvements resulted in significant changes in Kurulubedde village.

State land distribution has been one of the most important state activities in Kurulubedde since 1940s. In the first place, as a response to the request of the villagers of Kandulassagode hamlet in Kurulubedde, the government intervened to resettle these villagers in a more secure place in the village itself. According to the Land Registry of Provincial Land Commissioner Department (PLCD) of Northwestern province, in 1942, under the LDO No.19 of 1935, fourteen families from Kandulassagode hamlet were settled down in both side of the Chillaw-Serumaduwe road of Kurulubedde. During this time, this road was only a cart track infrequently used. Each of these settlers was given
two acres of high lands from the place called Millagahakale. Earlier, this area was the center of old Nelligahawile hamlet. With this land distribution, Kandulassagode hamlet was abandoned and the inhabitants moved to Nelligahawile. However, the paddy lands under Kandulassagode vawe were cultivated until 1955. Another three families from Harumanwile also had been granted land from Nelligahawile at the same time. Their land plots were to some extent close to their old settlement of Harumanwile. According to the villagers, these three families had lived with their parents in Harumanwile. After moving to Nelligahawile, four families remained in Harumanwile. At this point, these lands were distributed among the allotees as a badu (Crown Leasehold) scheme and subjected to a charge of Rs: 3.50 for each acre at the beginning and after that 50 cent as an annual fee to the state (Land Registry, PLCD of Northwestern province). In the next phase, in 1953, under the Middle Class Schemes of LDO of 1935, 102 plots of land with 1250 acres in Kurulubedde area were distributed mostly as twenty-five to fifty acres each for landless people who had sufficient income to develop these lands (Land Registry, PLCD of Northwestern province). Part of the lands of the old Radayaye, Nelligahawile and Kandulassagode hamlets and the whole area of old Halpanwila hamlet were distributed under this scheme.

With the development of health facilities in the interior part of Puttalam district and the land distribution policy of the state, Kurulubedde was significantly subjected for state sponsored inter-rural migration. In 1955, the government distributed ninety-five plots of lands to landless people and settled them in the southern and western side of present Kurulubedde village. In the past, this area belonged to a part of old Nelligahawile and Radayaya hamlets. Many of the settlers came from densely populated intermediate areas.
of Chillaw district and few came from nearby areas of Kurunagale district. They have been given five acres each for coconut cultivation and other permanent cash crop cultivation. This is the biggest hamlet of present Kurulubedde and, here, it is called as Aluthwatte.

With these land distributions, the government intervened in the development of infrastructures and other social services in the area in different ways. And it affected the village strongly. For instance, until the beginning of 1950s, Chillaw-Serumaduwe road was graveled only upto Pallapitiye which is presently situated five kilometers before Kurulubedde. As old villagers told me, from Pallapitiye to Bamunugame, there was only a small cart track until 1950s, more like a footpath. Hence, it was very difficult to use, because, it was not cleared and, therefore, covered with jungle. In 1955, when the lands were distributed in Kurulubedde village, the government had graveled seven miles from Pallapitiye to Bamunugame on Chillaw-Serumaduwe road. Between 1959 and 1960, the Department of Public Works macadamized this road. Since that time, the government maintained this road as a “C” grade road. However, until 1957, there was no public or private passenger service to Kurulubedde or closest area. After the nationalization of bus service in 1957, a bus service was started between Puttalam and Bamunugame by Puttalam government bus depot. In the same year (1957) it was extended up to Pallapitiye. However, as villagers told me, it was an erratic bus service. In the early 1960s, after Chillaw-Serumaduwe road was macadamized, Chillaw bus depot had started regular bus services between Chillaw and Serumaduwe. Since that time the government transport service has provided services to the people of the area.
These gradual penetrations of the state activities influenced Kurulubedde village in different ways. These state activities affected the huge expansion of population along with broad demographic trends. The state activities led to the improvement of relatively inelastic paddy cultivation and the establishment of market oriented permanent cash crop cultivation as well as other fluid and elastic economic activities to absorb increasing population of the village. These state activities opened a wide range of social, economic and political networks among the old villagers as well as new settlers.

3.4.1 Changes in the character of population of Kurulubedde

There were 2117 people in 412 households in Kurulubedde when the first fieldwork of this study was done in 2006. Accordingly, it can be seen that the size of population and characteristics of the population of Kurulubedde have rapidly changed and increased since mid 1950s. This was mainly due to two essential facts: the natural increase of the population, and, most essentially, the inter-rural migration after 1950s.

In the first case, it may be noted that during 1901 to 1931, there had been a net natural decrease of population in Puttalam district. There has been a very small natural increase of 805 persons during 1931 to 1946. But, after 1946, natural increase of the population has been significant (Census of Ceylon, 1953: 52; see p. 114 in this chapter). This was mainly due to the victory over malaria with the improvement of health facilities. Due to this improvement, the population of Demele Hatpattu which was reputed to be one of the most backward and unhealthy divisions of the Puttalam district was increased. This situation during this time was common to the other dry zone areas of the country which were affected by epidemic diseases in the past.
The second fact, the population growth in Kurulubedde was due to the inter-rural migration since 1950s. The reduction of the infant mortality rate and the death rate due to the expansion of health care affected the rapid increase of population in the country, especially in wet zone rural areas. During this time, the commercial plantation had consumed many of the lands in wet zone which could have been utilized for the absorption of increasing rural population. However, during this time, land was available in the dry zone for the absorption of this increasing population of wet zone. The land policy of the state since mid 1930s (LDO of 1935) encouraged this inter-rural migration and finally affected the increase of population in Kurulubedde.

This inter-rural migration has taken place in several ways. The first was the state sponsored inter-rural migration. In this regard, as I have mentioned above, ninety-five allottees were settled in southern and western side of present Kurulubedde in 1955. The second was also related to the first. After getting the lands in Aluthwatte in 1955, some new settlers accompanied their relatives to Kurulubedde. During this time, there were enough uncleared state lands in the area. These newcomers encroached the state lands and settled there. After that, the government regularized these encroached lands under its ‘Regurzelization of Encroachments’ program. On the other hand, these people got the land under the ‘Village Expansion Program.’ Through these two ways, outsiders acquired state lands and settled down in the village. Firstly, they settled in the remaining undistributed state lands in Nelligahawile. Most of these newcomers were the close relatives of Aluthwatte. After that, a considerable number of people settled in Harumanwile area since the beginning of 1960s. Upto mid 1960s, there was only four families in Harumanwile. Since mid 1950s, the inhabitants of Nelligahawile and the
settlers of Aluthwatte used some portions of lands in this area for chena cultivation. With that, this area became a permanent settlement. According to the GN records, in 1976, there were 40 households in Harumanwile. Many of them were the relatives of the settlers of Aluthwatte as well as new nuclear families from Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte. Some landless outsiders who were not relatives of Nelligahawile or Aluthwatte came and bought some encroached lands from the villagers and settled there. But settlements of Kandulassagode have started differently. After the distribution of middle class lands in Kurulubedde area, some landowners brought labourers from outside the areas. Most of those labourers were from the landless sections in their native places. Hence, after their initial works in coconut plantation, they encroached state lands which had not been distributed in Kandulassagode area and settled down there. Some of these labourers settled in Harumanwile hamlet too.

Table 3.1 Increase of households in Kurulubedde village 1942 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamlet</th>
<th>1942</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nelligahawile</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluthwatte</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandulassagode</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harumanwile</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures on Nelligahawile in 1942 and Aluthwatte in 1955 were collected from Land Registry of PLCD. Figures on Nelligahawile in 1955 were collected from the memories of old Villagers. Figures on all hamlets in 1976 were as remembered by the GN of the village that time. Therefore, there may be inaccuracy in some of these figures.

In this context, natural increase and continuous wave of internal migration since 1950s influenced the expansion of village population remarkably. This situation can be understood from the table above. As the table shows, a huge increase of households in
the village can be identified since 1955. From 1955 to 1976, however, increase of households cannot be seen only in Aluthwatte. This can be attributed to the fact that when the lands were distributed in Aluthwatte, the government laid down a condition against dividing or assigning of the holdings. The reason for this condition was the prevention of the fragmentation of lands. Hence, second generation of Aluthwatte was forced to find new lands. Thus, they settled down in Nelligahawile and Harumanwile where there were enough lands at that time. However, these strict government conditions which were against division or assignment of those lands were relaxed after 1980s. Villagers were given free hold deeds under the UNP government. This led to a considerable increase of households in Aluthwatte after 1976. Upto that point, Harumanwile hamlet showed a rapid enlargement of households. By 1976, most of the lands in Nelligahawile were filled by outsiders and newly married couples of Aluthwatte and Nelligahawile. After 1976, many newly married couples from Aluthwatte and Nelligahawile settled in Harumanwile. Most of the outsiders who came during this time also settled in Harumanwile.

Upto the beginning of 1950s, Kurulubedde was homogeneous in several ways. All villagers were Buddhists. Ethnically, they were Sinhalese. According to the official administrative documents, upto first three decades of the twentieth century, people of Demele Hatpattu were considered as Kandyan Sinhalese12 (Bowes, 1904; Rodrigo, 1933). But, due to the huge intra-rural migration, characteristics of the population of the village have changed considerably. These social characteristics of the population of Kurulubedde in 2006 are illustrated in the following table.
Table 3.2 Social Characteristics of the population of Kurulubedde in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamlet</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelligahawile</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>18.14</td>
<td>50.78</td>
<td>49.22</td>
<td>59.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluthwatte</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>40.29</td>
<td>48.53</td>
<td>51.47</td>
<td>63.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandulassagode</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>47.59</td>
<td>52.41</td>
<td>82.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harumanwile</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>34.72</td>
<td>48.44</td>
<td>51.56</td>
<td>70.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>1034</td>
<td>1083</td>
<td>1410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>48.82</td>
<td>51.16</td>
<td>66.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GN’s Reports 2006, and Authors survey 2006

In 2006, the average size of households in Kurulubedde was 5.13 persons. There are several reasons for this relatively small size of households. First, most newly married couples established separate households which resulted in only a small proportion of married couples living with their parents. There was less number of households in the village with two or more married couples living under the same roof. The next reason for this relatively small size of households in the village is the change of average marriage-age of young generation of the village. Many men and women who married before four decades entered family life at an early age. Discussion with some old villagers suggested that women had married within the age group of thirteen to sixteen during that time (see p. 168 in this chapter). For the men, usual marriage age was early twenties or before. But, after that, the average age of marriage of both men and women has gradually increased. At present, many men in the village enter marriage in their late twenties or early thirties and women at mid or late twenties. This situation is not
particular only to Kurulubedde. Gradual increase of the average age of marriage was the trend elsewhere in the island in the past decades. This was due to several reasons, mainly due to the development of education facilities and changes of the economy. Unlike in the past, the present young generation in the village is involved in the education process. After that they either take up salaried employment or go abroad. Many young girls who cannot continue with higher education used to find employment in the free trade zone in Katunayake or go abroad (These facts are discussed under the economic activities of the village). Due to this situation, unlike in the past, many young people in the village enter married life lately. Another crucial fact that has contributed to this situation is the National Family Planning Program inaugurated by the state in the mid 1960s which not only gained wide acceptance, but also was expanded and implemented all over the island since the beginning of 1970s. In 1990, Northwestern Provincial Council started Maternal, Children Well-care and Family Planning clinic (MCFP) in Nelligahawile hamlet of Kurulubedde village. This program influenced the decline of family size even in rural areas with families choosing to have few children. At present, 66.60 % of Buddhists and 33.16% of Catholics are living in Kurulubedde village. This catholic population was one of the main outcomes of the intra-rural migration which started in 1955. Due to state land grants, in 1955, twenty-nine Catholic families came to Aluthwatte. Most of these Catholic families came from the densely populated and religiously catholic oriented western coastal belt of Puttalam district. Later, a number of landless relatives of those Catholics families too came and settled in Kurulubedde. For instance, one of the settlers who got the lands from Kurulubedde in 1955 accompanied his two married sisters and one younger brother to Kurulubedde.
These three families have settled down in Nelligahawile hamlet after getting lands under the village expansion program. In this way, after 1960s, many Catholic people have settled down in Nelligahawile and Harumanwile. At present, 40% of Nelligahawile villagers are Catholics. This hamlet represents the highest Catholic population at present.

Compared to religion, ethnic homogeneity in the village is significantly less. In 1955, four Moor and one Tamil family were selected as allotees to Aluthwatte. The Moors left their lands within two years. However, the Tamil family remained. After that, another Tamil family that came as labourers for middle class lands in Kurulubedde settled down in Kandulassagode hamlet encroaching state lands. Another two Tamil persons came to the village with their Sinhalese wives in mid 1970s. They bought lands from some old villagers of Nelligahawile and settled down there. Interestingly, the second generations of these families gradually merged with the Sinhalese in the village. They do not have any relationship with mainstream Tamil population in the country. The Moor person who is living in Harumanwile came there due to his marriage with a Sinhala woman.

With this flow of population from outside, caste composition of the village has also changed significantly. After the abandonment of some hamlets, only four goigama caste families remained in Harumanwile. Kandulassagode hamlet was inhabited by Drummer caste only. But since 1955, this situation changed considerably. In that year (1955), nineteen karāwe caste (traditionally fisherman) families, two achāri caste (traditionally blacksmiths) families and four padu caste (traditionally servant caste of goigama caste) families had been given lands from Aluthwatte. All other Sinhala allotees belonged to
the goigama caste. But, caste identity of some of them was not clear. During my stay in the village, I enquired about caste identity of Aluthwatte from one identified goigama man. He answered; “That time, different people came. Some of them said that they are same like us. But who knows, whether they were same like us or not. Different people from different places came and settled down here.”

After 1960s, another six karāwe caste families settled in Nelligahawile hamlet. All of them were the relatives of karāwe caste people of Aluthwatte. After 1970s, one āchāri caste family and few karāwe caste families acquired state lands in Harumanwile and settled there. During this time, a number of people came and settled mostly in Harumanwile hamlet. But their caste identity was not clear. At present, it is too difficult to classify the population of Kurulubedde village along the line of caste, because of inter-caste marriages that have taken place during the past decades.

3.4.2 Changes in economic activities in the village

As pointed out above, until the beginning of 1940s, there were no diversified economic activities in Kurulubedde area. The economy of Kurulubedde area predominantly remained that of peasant subsistence agriculture of paddy and chena cultivation, but most essentially under the chena cultivation. However, after the beginning of 1940s, this situation has changed dramatically due to the pervasive state policies, and several other interrelated reasons. Accordingly, instead of subsistence agricultural activities, cash crop cultivation started in the village since the beginning of 1942s when the lands were granted to old Kurulubedde villagers. Next, the coconut cultivation started in large scale in Kurulubedde village and surrounding vicinity when the state distributed middle
class lands in 1953. Two years later, in 1955, again state distributed lands to landless people for cash crop cultivation. However, potential lands that could have been utilized by the growing population in the village for their agricultural activities gradually reduced. In that context, different new economic activities emerged in the village. These new economic activities minimized the significance of agrarian economic activities in the village. This changing nature of economic activities in the village has to be understood under the condition of electoral democracy and with the interests of post colonial ruling class of the country just after the independence.

Since mid 1930s, the influence of Marxist political parties was becoming stronger in Sri Lanka, particularly in urban areas. Therefore, As I pointed out in chapter two, the economic policies of immediate independent Sri Lanka was based on the class interest of ruling political leadership by that time that aimed to prevent the strength of Marxist political parties. In that context, through different land distribution programs, the ruling class (represented by propertied classes that comprised local planters, those who had commercial and mining interests and the conservative middle class) aimed the confinement of the increasing rural population to the rural sector as a propertied agricultural community. These rural communities were fostered with different agricultural distributions that created dependant relationship between the state and this rural agrarian population. When the potential lands were not enough to absorb growing population in the village level, the state focused attention to develop alternative economic activities at the village level that prevented the influx of growing rural population to urban areas. Therefore, there was a sharp emergence of non-agricultural employments among those who lived in rural areas.
In this context, varieties of economic activities emerged in Kurulubedde during the past decades, particularly since the beginning of 1970s to absorb those increasing village populations. Interestingly, most of these economic activities of the village have been directly formed or helped more or less by the state. Development of road facilities, passenger services and other infrastructure facilities has contributed to simultaneous development of different economic activities of the village.

At present, diversified economic activities can be seen in the village. And, these have not been limited to a small geographical location like the economic situation that existed in 1940s. And it is not a subsistence-oriented agricultural economy further. Contemporary population cannot be identified as the only agrarian community. While the paddy cultivation remained at subsistence level, the chena cultivation has gradually disappeared. Instead, permanent cash crop, especially coconut and cashew cultivation has become one of the main sources of income generation in the village. Except these, there are a variety of other economic activities in Kurulubedde village at present, such as cattle rearing, bricks making, self-employed commercial activities, different salaried employers, etc.

However, I encountered a problem here to categorize the population of the village according to the above economic activities. The reason for this is that many of households are following different economic activities simultaneously. For instance, economic activities of a householder in Nelligahawile hamlet can be shown; when I was in the village, he was one of my neighbours. He owns one acre of paddy land and one and half acres of highlands cultivated mainly with cashew, lemon and some coconut
trees. He has two milking cows. He owns small grinding mills too. But, he works there only in the evening. And, on the *ad hoc* basis, he engages in brick production with his family members. In this way, many villagers are following more economic activities than one. In this context, the analysis of the economic activities in the village cannot be confined only to agrarian activities. Accordingly, it is pertinent to discuss different economic activities of the village as a whole, rather than to categorize the population of the village according to the economic activities they are following.

A: *Refurbishment of paddy cultivation*

Though paddy farming was the dominant social idiom of the rural agricultural economy of the country since long, it was very limited in Kurulubedde upto the end of 1950s. However, achieving self-sufficiency in food, particularly rice, has been one of the major objectives of ambitious nationalist political ideology of the successive governments of Sri Lanka since independence. This situation affected the refurbishment of paddy cultivation in the village.

Most of the paddy lands in the present Kurulubedde village were distributed among the villagers after 1960. Up to that time, except Kandulassagode *vave* of Kandulassagode hamlet and another two small tanks in Harumanwile hamlet, all other minor tanks of the village that are presently used for watering paddy lands had been abandoned. The *bereva* caste villagers cultivated less than thirty acres of paddy land under the Kandulassagode *vave*, when they were in Kandulassagode. Even after the *berava* caste people settled down in Nelligahawile, they continued to cultivate their paddy lands in Kandulassagode. Some of them sold their paddy lands to the middle class landowners...
who came to the area when Middle Class Schemes started in Kurulubedde and neighbouring area in 1953. In the end of 1940s, some settlers of Nelligahawile cleared and cultivated paddy lands under a small tank (Halgolle vawe) situated in Nelligahawile hamlet. Goigama villagers of Harumanwile hamlet cultivated less than seven acres of paddy lands. But, as these minor tanks could not contain full capacity of water, it was not easy for the continuation of paddy cultivation in both cultivation seasons.

After 1958, the Rural Development Society (RDS) of Kurulubedde requested government officials to renovate the minor tanks in the village. Later, the villagers met the MP of the area and requested him to intervene to restore the abandoned tanks in the village and to distribute paddy lands under these tanks among the villagers. These requests succeed in 1959. The Agrarian Service Department renovated three abandoned tanks in the village, namely, Harumanwile vawe, Linkote vawe and Halgolle vawe. After the renovation, in 1960, the paddy lands under these tanks were distributed among the villagers who did not have paddy lands in Nelligahawile and new settlers of Aluthwatte. However, most of them were selected from surrounding vicinity of those tanks. Thirteen acres of the paddy lands under the Harumanwile vawe were distributed among the villagers of Aluthwatte, one acre for each. Five acres of the paddy lands under Linkote vawe were distributed among the five settlers of Nelligahawile. During this time, villagers of Nelligahawile cultivated less than four acres of paddy lands under Halgolle vawe. After the renovation of this tank, their paddy lands were regularized and another two acres were distributed among the villagers of Nelligahawile. In 1963, another eight acres of paddy lands which were not under a tank but wetted by a small stream called Rathmal oye were also distributed among the villagers of Aluthwatte one acre for each.
In 1963, the Agrarian Service Department renovated another abandoned minor tank called Thimbiri vave which is presently situated in Harumanwile hamlet. By 1963, less than seven acres of paddy lands were cultivated under this tank mainly by goigama caste people of Harumanwile hamlet. The government regularized these paddy lands after renovation that permitted the cultivation of few more acres. Afterward, six acres of paddy lands were distributed among the villagers of Harumanwile and Aluthwatte. In 1965, the dam of Kandulassagode vave was raised to hold more water. At that point, outside middle class landowners owned most of the paddy lands under this tank. Gradually, the villagers of Kurulubedde and some persons of nearby villages bought these paddy lands. These improvements in the minor village tanks and distribution of the paddy lands among the villagers increased the quantity of the cultivatable paddy lands, and they were able to cultivate paddy regularly at least for one cultivation season.

The table below shows the paddy land holdings in the village at present.

**Table 3.3 Quantity of paddy Land in Kurulubedde**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Medium of watering</th>
<th>Cultivable lands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathimaloye yaye*</td>
<td>Raining water</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelligahawile yaye</td>
<td>Minor village tanks</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harumanwile yaye</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thimbirivave yaye</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linkote vave yaye</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halgolle vave yaye</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandulassagode yaye</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total paddy lands</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Yaye means paddy field scattered in specific location

Source: Agricultural Land Registry, Agrarian Service Center, Kurulubedde

Only eighty-eight villagers own these paddy lands. Approximately one fifth of the households of the village are getting benefits from the paddy cultivation. According to
the size of ownership, twenty villagers (22.73%) have the possession of less than one acre of paddy lands. While forty-three villagers (48.86%) are in possession of one acre of paddy land, nineteen villagers (21.59%) own more than one but less than two acres. Only six villagers (6.82%) have more than two acres of paddy land mostly under Kandulassagode vave. Four of them are absent paddy landowners. They have owned thirteen acres of paddy lands cultivated by seven tenants from Aluthwatte.

All the village tanks are rain-fed. Except Kandulassagode vave, the capacity of other tanks is less than ten acres. Hence, in maha season which has more rain from the North-Eastern Monsoon, most of the paddy lands can be cultivated. But in yale season, most of the paddy lands in the village cannot be cultivated because this area does not receive much rainfall from South-Western Monsoon. Therefore, paddy cultivation in the village is successful mostly in maha season. In some yale seasons, all the paddy lands of the village cannot be cultivated. This situation can be illustrated in the cultivation statistics of the village during 2002/3 to 2005 cultivation season.

Table 3.4 Paddy Cultivation Statistics of Kurulubedde in 2002/3 to 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>112.2</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>103.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistic Division, Divisional Secretariat, Pallapitiye, Agrarian Service Center, Kurulubedde

Upto mid 1960s, paddy cultivation was based on old varieties, traditional techniques, animal power and manpower. But according to my respondents, by that time, the traditional reciprocal labour relation, attam, had gradually disappeared. Due to the small size of paddy lands, not much labour was needed. And, from mid 1950s, there has been
a sizeable wage labour force in the village. Since 1960s, paddy cultivation of the village influenced the spread of 'Green Revolution.' From this point, high yielding seeds which require chemical fertilizers and insecticides spread. An Agrarian Service Center was established in the village in 1974 with a permanent Agricultural Service Officer. Improvement of agrarian consultancies and provision of subsidized fertilizer program by the state increased the utilization of chemical fertilizers.

Compared to the past, at present, the extent of mechanization of the paddy cultivation in the village is very high. During the harvesting seasons, there are some opportunities for wage labour employments. But, mostly family members themselves used to engage with paddy production process. Also, the paddy cultivation has increasingly depended on the inputs coming from outside such as high yielding seeds, chemical fertilizers and insecticides. However, since the beginning of 1960s itself, paddy cultivation has been a non-extendable area of village economy due to the limitation of paddy lands. And, at present, as the paddy holdings are rather minute, no marketable surplus is generally produced and the paddy produced within the village is basically consumed within the households themselves.

B: Initiation of permanent cash crops

Although coconut cultivation entered Chillaw and other intermediate parts of the Puttalam district during the end of nineteenth century, Kurulubedde village and many other areas of Demele Hatpattu were not touched by the coconut cultivation until 1940s. As highlighted above, initiation of the coconut cultivation as a permanent cash crop in Kurulubedde has taken place only after 1940s. This initiation was a direct result of the
state land distribution. On the other hand, this was, to some extent, the reflection of colonial administration’s opposition to natives’ chena cultivation, as it destroyed the prosperity of the soil and produced unhealthy foods. Consequently, when land was distributed to the people of Kurulubedde in 1942 under the LDO 1935, the conditions had been imposed to prevent subsistence agricultural activities (particularly chena cultivation) and to initiate permanent cash crop cultivation in those lands. The fifth condition which was imposed when state land was distributed to the inhabitants of Nelligahawile mentioned that,

Three fourths of the holdings shall be regularly maintained in cultivation, but no crops other than coconuts, citrus and other permanent crops shall be grown in the holdings. For the purpose of this condition, chena cultivation shall not be deemed to be regular cultivation (Land Registry, PLCD of Northwestern province).

Due to this compulsory condition, the people of Nelligahawile had to cultivate permanent cash crops in their lands. Otherwise, their lands would be taken over by the government. Although it was not mentioned in the Land Registry of PLCD of Northwestern province, one of the oldest villagers told me that they had been given coconut sprouts and young lemon plants to cultivate in their lands.

Although conditions were imposed upon the people to cultivate cash crops and villagers were supported to do so, the permanent cash crop cultivation, mainly coconut, did not get established in Kurulubedde significantly till 1950s. However, since the beginning of 1950s, permanent cash crop cultivation, especially coconut got established in the village. When the lands were distributed in Aluthwatte in 1955, each allotee had been given coconut sprouts to plant in their lands. In addition, the government gave 1300 pounds of coconut fertilizers to each allotees of Aluthwatte twice a year. This
distribution of fertilizer continued for five years (Land Registry, PLCD of Northwestern province). After that, according to the Land Registry of PLCD of Northwestern province, in 1962/3, the government has distributed ten coconut sprouts for each household among the *badu* (Crown leasehold) holders of Nelligahawile. At the same time, each holder was given ten rupees though the purpose of this financial aid was not mentioned. And again in 1970/1, the government distributed twenty coconut sprouts each among the villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet to establish the coconut cultivation. Even in this phase of 1970/1, twenty rupees was given along with those coconut sprouts. However as before, the purpose of this financial support was not mentioned in the land registry. According to the memories of old villagers with whom I discussed, this financial aid was given to them for buying coconut fertilizers. With this help from the state, the coconut cultivation has been established as one of the major permanent cash crops in the village. However, the coconut cultivation in Aluthwatte was established more firmly and systematically than the other hamlets of the village. This was due to the direct state motivation, and this state support for the coconut cultivation in Aluthwatte was stronger when compared to the other hamlets of the village.

The next major permanent cash crop in present Kurulubedde is cashew. It is the main cash crop in Harumanwile hamlet. In Aluthwatte, cashew has been cultivated as an additional cash crop between the lines of coconut trees. In Nelligahawile and Kandulassagode also cashew has been cultivated though not systematically. But these four hamlets gain a considerable income from cashew during cashew season. The dry climate of Kurulubedde area is very favorable for the cashew cultivation as it needs only a smaller quantity of water supply. Hence, as a common domestic tree, cashew can
be seen in the Kurulubedde area very commonly. But, as a cash crop, the cashew cultivation was encouraged and started in this area since mid 1960s when Sri Lanka Cashew Corporation (SLCC) was established under SLFP government in 1963.

In this context, in 1967, sixty improved high yielding cashew sprouts per one acre and fertilizers for the initial stage of cashew cultivation had been distributed among the villagers of Aluthwatte and Nelligahawile free of charge. Cashew cultivation was further established in the village when Kurulubedde Agrarian Service Center was established in 1974 with a resident Agricultural Extension Officer under the Agrarian Service Department to provide consultancy for the agricultural activities. Even in 2007, the state has intervened in the village to encourage the cashew cultivation. When I was in Kurulubedde in 2007, SLCC started a subsidiary aiding program for motivating the cashew cultivation in the village. Under this program, SLCC planed to give a loan of Rs. 6000.00 for initial preparation of land, 80 improved cashew sprouts and 160 kg chemical fertilizers for one acre. The table below shows the extent of cash crop cultivation in present Kurulubedde.

Table 3.5 Distribution of Cash Crop Cultivation in Kurulubedde in acres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamlet</th>
<th>Coconut</th>
<th>Coconut &amp; Cashew</th>
<th>Cashew</th>
<th>Cashew &amp; Mango</th>
<th>Mango</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nelligahawile</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>102.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aluthwatte</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harumanwile</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>310.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandulassagode</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There are 100 acres of coconut in Nelligahawile and 246 acres of coconut in Kandulassagode hamlet under the Middle Class lands. These 346 acres of coconut lands were not included in this table.

Source: Agricultural Land Registry, Agrarian Service Center, Kurulubedde
Except coconut and cashew cultivation, as pointed out in above table, the next main cash crop in the village is mango. It has been mostly cultivated with cashew rather than as a separate cultivation. In mid 1970s, villagers were motivated by ASC of Kurulubedde to cultivate mango in their home gardens as it was compatible with the dry climate of the area. But as a cash crop, the villagers cannot gain a considerable income from mangoes due to the lack of a good market for mangoes during harvesting time. Except these cash crops, orange and lemon have been cultivated in most of the gardens. As in the case of mangoes, people face problems in selling these too during harvesting.

In addition to the above permanent cash crops, market oriented vegetable cultivation has started and has been existing in the village since mid 1950s. Till then, various vegetables and grains were cultivated in chenas of the village though mostly for home consumption. Since mid 1950s, the people of Aluthwatte have practiced cultivation of vegetables in their lands during the interim period of the growth of coconuts. With the development of road network during this time, good-marketing arrangements were created for vegetable production. As old villagers of Aluthwatte told me, outside businessmen had come by lorries twice a week to collect vegetables and other grains from the area. Some people from Aluthwatte also had started to collect vegetables from the village and bring them down to Colombo for business purpose. During that period, vegetable cultivation was very profitable and the villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet were also attracted to cultivate vegetables.

However, with the growth of permanent cash crops, vegetable cultivation gradually diminished. Nevertheless, some villagers, mostly from Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte...
hamlets, cultivate vegetables in paddy lands when water is not enough to cultivate paddy. And, some highlands which were close to village tanks and Rathmaloye (a stream situated in western boundary of the village) have been utilized to cultivate vegetables. The table No. 3.6 shows the extent and varieties of vegetables which were cultivated in Kurulubedde during the last three harvest seasons of 2003/4 to 2004/5.

**Table 3.6 Vegetables Cultivation in Kurulubedde - 2003/4 to 2004/5 (per acre)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Season</th>
<th>Peanut</th>
<th>Manioc</th>
<th>Sweet potato</th>
<th>Green chilies</th>
<th>Okra</th>
<th>Tomato</th>
<th>Ash plantain</th>
<th>Pumpkin</th>
<th>Pepper</th>
<th>Brinjal</th>
<th>Maize</th>
<th>Pulses</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004/5 maha</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 yale</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/4 maha</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistic Division, Divisional Secretariat, Pallapitiye, Reports of ARPA; Agrarian Service Center, Kurulubedde*

According to the table, it is clear that vegetable cultivation has not been practiced in a large scale. At present, most of the vegetable produce is sold to retail traders in Kurulubedde village itself or in nearby areas. Sometimes, vegetables are sent to some distant markets like Chillaw.

**C: Diary farming**

More than 60% of the households in the village were engaged in dairy farming during my stay in the village. Although there has been at least one cattle in each house since long, dairy farming was not a source of income generation for the villagers until mid 1970s. Since mid 1970s, some businessmen started to collect milk from the village and
transported to Chillaw. However, dairy farming in the village started methodically in 1976 with the inspiration of the then SLFP government’s policies which aimed to encourage economic activities in the rural areas for improving available resources. Consequently, in 1976, the villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet organized Cooperative Society of Milk Farmers (CSMF) of Kurulubedde under the guidance of Cooperative Development Commissioner of Chillaw. Agricultural Productivity Committee (APC) of Kurulubedde encouraged them to start milk farming. CSMF began to collect milk not only from Kurulubedde, but also from other nearby villages. Firstly, CSMF supplied milk to a private farm in Chillaw. After that, CSMF supplied milk to the branch of Sri Lankan Milk Board in Chillaw. According to the records of CSMF, in 1979, it had 650 members and collected more than 800 litres of milk per a day not only from Kurulubedde, but also from neighboring villages. With the help from Rural development Department and some other state bodies, CSMF has made arrangements to provide cattle feed, medicine, and credit facilities to its members to purchase high-milking cows. In 1985, Divisional Veterinary Service Center (DVSC) was established in Kurulubedde with a permanent veterinary surgeon under the Rural Development Ministry. It provides scientific and technical consultancies to the dairy farmers in the area.

However, CSMF gradually degenerated due to the arrival of some private companies for collecting milk in the area. The newly appointed government, in 1977, changed the import-substitution economic policy which was followed since mid 1950s, and instead, introduced the liberal economic policy to the country. With this policy change, competitive companies entered the market to buy milk from the village since mid
1980s. And, some individual villagers also started to collect milk from the village. In 1994, Nestle Sri Lanka Ltd (the local apparatus of a multi-national dairy products company) established a regional milk-collecting center in Kurulubedde village with cooling facilities. By 2007, most of the villagers supplied their milk to this center. CSMF also provides its milk to this center. In 2006, there were another two small private milk-collectors in the village. One of them supplied his collecting milk to NSL and the next one supplied milk to a mobile milk collecting vehicle that belonged to Cooperative Society of Milk Farmers in the Coconut Triangle of Kuliyapitiya.

Other main reason for the decline of CSMF was party political influence which will be discussed in next chapters in detail. Due to political influence, most of the village parted from CSMF. Now it has less than thirty members.

Most of the cattle keeping households in the village do it in a small scale. Most households have one to three milking cows. Only few households were found to possess more than three milking cows. And most dairy farmers have native cows. Therefore, they are getting less milk. Several villagers possess high-milking cows. While less than twenty households are doing dairy farming as a livelihood, most of the villagers are doing it as an additional income generation.

D: Brick making

The way brick making began in Kurulubedde is not similar to other economic activities in the village. It is said that the brick making was started as an economic activity in 1975 from Harumanwile hamlet. In that year, a settler who came from a distant village of Western province settled in Harumanwile and started brick making as a self-
employment activity. He had experience in brick making in his home village. During that time, he was the only brick maker of the village. Due to several factors, brick making became an attractive and profitable economic activity. The clay loam soil in most parts of Harumanwile area provided free raw material for brick making. And, there was enough firewood in the area for brick kiln, also free of charge. The dry weather of the area was also helpful for brick production. During this time, due to the huge increase of population, most of the state lands were distributed, and as a result, chena and vegetable cultivation declined sharply. In consequence, villagers had to find alternative economic activities. At this point, brick production seemed to be a luring attraction. Since 1977, the then UNP government started building one million houses for homeless people. On the other hand, the state policy of relaxation of labour migration to the Middle East countries also opened a big market for building materials. Many people of the rural areas who earned a considerable income from Middle East started to build houses. Due to this situation, since 1977, there was a profitable market for the brick production. Therefore, many villagers joined brick making and it became a major economic activity in Kurulubedde. Gradually, Kurulubedde became very famous for brick production in surrounding areas.

In 1988, the government held its ten days annual celebration of one million housing development program called Gamudawe in Serumaduwe. During that period, there was a huge market for bricks in this area. Hence, a lot of villagers engaged in brick making. Since this time, brick making has been one of the major economic activities that have absorbed a considerable share of daily labour force of the village.
According to village servants’ reports, at 2006, there were forty-seven brick kiln in the village; twenty-three in Harumanwile, nine in Nelligahawile, thirteen in Aluthwatte and two in Kandulassagode. However, there were more brick-makers in the village than those reported numbers because a number of villagers engaged in brick-making on ad-hoc basis. Most of them were not counted in village servants’ reports. When I was in Kurulubedde, I noticed two or three bricks near graveled roads which lead to the interior of the village which mean the availability of bricks for sale in brick-kiln of those roads. When I was walking on the inner roads, I saw at least one or two trucks and other carrier vehicles coming from distant areas and entering the village seeking bricks.

In the beginning, mostly poor villagers engaged in brick making. They used family labour for brick production. But, with its profitability, the villagers who have other incomes also entered brick production. They hired labourers for brick making. As I identified, among the reported brick-makers, while twenty-four brick makers were using family labour, thirteen brick makers used family labour and hired labourers for the brick production. Ten brick makers used only hired labourers for the brick production. And, at present, for some brick-makers, the main raw material clay is freely available in their own home gardens. But some brick-makers buy clay from outside. During my stay, for one cubic load of clay, they paid Rs: 300.00. And, unlike in the beginning, now it is difficult to find firewood for brick kiln. Therefore, now some brick makers have to buy firewood also. They were paying Rs: 11000.00 for one lorry load of firewood.

Upto 2003, there was no direct government engagement in brick production in the village. At that point, the government intervened to give low interest loans to the brick
makers of the village. Again in January 2007, under the coordination of Small Enterprise Development Division (SEDD) of Ministry of Youth Affairs, Wayamba Development Bank (WDB), a state-controlled regional development bank for Northwestern province, has given a loan of Rs: 50,000.00 each on 8% annual interest for ten brick-makers from Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte. This loan program has been implemented under the SLFP led PA Government’s rural development program named ‘game nagume’ (literally, rising of village).

E: Employment patterns

Until 1950, the opportunities for any kind of salaried employments were very rare. From that point, diverse employment patterns emerged in Kurulubedde. During the past decades, these employment patterns have been diversified. Relatively well-connected and well-developed transport facilities, increasing population, influence of the development of education facilities, increasing relationship with outside world have affected the diversified salaried employment patterns of the village.

I. Public sector employments

According to the rural people in Sri Lanka, the most secure and, therefore the most prestigious employments are the public sector employment opportunities. Even young generation would like to get job opportunities in public sector. Good example can be pointed out in this regard from Kurulubedde. One weekend during my first stay in the village, I was talking with a degree holder from Aluthwatte who was graduated in previous year. When I was in Kurulubedde, he was working in a private company in sub-urban Colombo as a training manager that gave him good salary even during the
training period. When I was talking with him, he told me that he had applied for several public sector appointments, and when ever he got the chance he would join public sector though he would be paid less compared to the salary he was being given. That day, I went this youth's home to meet his mother as she was the secretary of farmers’ organization of Kandulassagode. When I was talking with his mother, she told me that she asked her son to find a job in public sector.

This notion on public sector employments has emerged in rural areas due to several reasons. Before independence, public sector employees in the villages were very rare. Sometimes, the only salaried government officers in the village were village headmen. Generally, there were no eligible people in the interior villages for government jobs because of their low education levels. Therefore, the public sector jobholders enjoyed much prestige among the villagers. If there were some public sector employees in the rural areas, they mostly came from elite families. Their standard of life was higher than the other villagers. On the other hand, public sector job holders benefited with retirement fund and some other privileges (annual traveling warrant etc.). Due to these reasons, acquisition of a public sector job was considered as an honour. However, with the expansion of the state sector in the country, the public sector employment opportunities also increased. The expansion of free education in the country gave chances to the rural people to obtain secure and prestigious public sector jobs. As I have pointed out in chapter two, since 1950s, public sector became the major avenue for the provision of jobs to the educated youths produced by free education system. In particular, the degree holders who were subject to the medium of instruction change from English to vernacular language since the beginning of 1960s had access to most of
these public sector jobs. However, with the shrinking of public sector, it was difficult to absorb these increasing vernacular language-oriented degree holders to public sector. Nevertheless, despite the depleting prospects to do so, and the increasing burden on the economy, the successive governments continued to recruit these degree holders to the public sector. In the absence of government initiative to recruit those degree holders to public sector, those unemployed degree holders used to start huge demonstrations, hunger strike etc. asking for public sector job opportunities. In this context, recruitment of degree holders to the public sector has become one of the main election pledges of competing political parties during the recent election campaigns.16

As I was told by old villagers, except some minor level administrative officers (called Korale Mahatmaya and village headman), there were not any public sector or private sector jobholders in this area before 1950s. In particular, upto 1957, there were no any public sector jobholders in Kurulubedde village itself. In that year (1957), two persons of Aluthwatte got teaching appointments to the government primary school of Kurulubedde. Since mid 1960s, due to the development of the level of education in the village, the eligibility of getting public sector jobs further enhanced. Thus, gaining a public sector job was competitive. But, most of the educated villagers of Kurulubedde who have acquired public sector appointments elsewhere no longer reside in the village.

Many of the public sector jobholders have come from firstly, Aluthwatte and secondly Nelligahawile. This situation can be seen clearly from table No. 3.7. There are some reasons for this. In brief, these two hamlets have been more economically stable than the other hamlets. Therefore, the villagers of these two hamlets could afford the
continuation of education for their children. Hence, there has been a generation with educational qualifications that needed government jobs. Conversely, these two hamlets have maintained a close relationship with the politicians of governing parties which has been the major qualification for acquiring a government job at the village level during the past years. Due to these reasons, many of the public sector jobholders have come from these two hamlets. In the beginning of 2006, there were twenty-eight public sector jobholders in the village.

Table 3.7 Public sector salaried employees in Kurulubedde in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Nelligahawile</th>
<th>Aluthwatte</th>
<th>Harumanwile</th>
<th>Kandulassegode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDO*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARPAO**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural officer</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police constable</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army solder</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drivers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchman</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Samurdhi Development Officer ** Agricultural Research and Production Assistant Source: Author’s Survey 2006

II. Private sector salaried employments

Until 1950s, there was very little opportunity for private sector job opportunities in Kurulubedde area. Even after 1950s, it was very rare to find employment opportunities in the private sector within the village except for wage labourers. Till the end of 1970s, very few men were employed as drivers. But, they worked outside of the village. Since the end of 1970s, some young women of the village got salaried jobs from garment factories in urban areas, particularly in Free Trade Zone in Katunayake which was
situated 60 kilometers away from the village. This Free Trade Zone was started under the new industrialization policy of UNP government in 1977.

By 2006, there were two garment factories in Pallapitiye and Bamunugame, the neighbouring villages of Kurulubedde (respectively five and two kilometers away from Kurulubedde). These two garment factories were started under the policy of the UNP government in 1988-94 to start industries in rural areas to solve the rural unemployment problem. Several young women of the village were employed in these two factories.

III. Labour Employments

Upto the beginning of 1950s, there was no opportunity for wage labour in Kurulubedde village. Since the beginning of 1950s, a considerable sphere for wage labour has opened up. This was a major impact of the state land distribution policy, particularly middle class land distribution in Kurulubedde area. When the government distributed middle class lands for the coconut cultivation in Kurulubedde area in 1953, a new labour employment avenue has been opened from those middle class lands. The villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet and other nearby villages were able to hire their labour in this avenue. However, this labour capacity was not enough for the labour requirements of these middle class lands. Hence, the owners of these lands brought labourers from other areas. After that, the new settlers of Aluthwatte hired their labour for these lands. A settler of the first generation of Aluthwatte told me, “we were given lands close to the middle class scheme (maddyama panthika idam), because the government thought that we would be able to find labour-works in those lands. I did not go there to work. But some people from Aluthwatte worked there.” However, when coconut was grown in
their lands, Aluthwatte people stopped hiring their labour in the middle class lands. As a result, the new settlers of Harumanwile were able to find work in the middle class land.

Like tea or rubber plantation, the coconut cultivation needs a lot of human labour in its initial stages for land clearance, digging hole for coconut sprouts and planting coconuts sprouts. After that, unlike tea and rubber, it needs little human labour to take care of the coconut plantation. Therefore, with the rapid population increase, the villagers had to find wage labour work from outside of the village. In this context, another new labour employment avenue opened up in the beginning of 1970s. There was seasonal migration as hired labour for paddy sowing and harvesting to the adjoining Anuradapura district which is one of the great paddy cultivation districts of the country. This phenomenon has developed since the beginning of 1970s, and male and female villagers mostly from Nelligahawile and Harumanwile were involved in this seasonal labour migration. Expansion of road network and cheap public transportation eased this internal labour migration as an alternative income generation for the villagers.

This seasonal migration pattern gradually disappeared by the end of 1970s due to several emerging phenomena. The first one, as I already mentioned, was the brick production. With the expansion of brick production in the village, a considerable number of daily wagemakers, both male and female, were able to find work within the village itself through brick production. The next emerging phenomenon for daily wage labour was the firewood-cutting business. Since the end of 1970s, there were high demands for firewood from the areas where there were a number of tile factories (situated forty kilometers away from Kurulubedde).
In 1979, a retail trader in Aluthwatte got a permit to transport firewood. Consequently, he hired few villagers to cut, load and deliver firewood. After that, due to its profitability, another three persons, two from Nelligahawile, and one from Kandulassagode, started the firewood cutting business. And, they employed several young people from Kandulassagode and Harumanwile who had studied only up to the primary level to cut firewood. Even in 2006, the firewood cutting has provided labour opportunities for less educated youths, mostly from Kandulassagode and Harumanwile.

IV. Foreign labour employments

Labour employment patterns in the village came to a new juncture after 1977. With the government’s policy of relaxation of controls on traveling abroad as skilled and unskilled labourers, a considerable number of villagers got the opportunity to go abroad. In 2006, thirty-five villagers, seven from Nelligahawile, eight from Harumanwile, sixteen from Aluthwatte and four from Kandulassagode had secured jobs in foreign countries. Many of them are females. Here, there was a very interesting variation among the foreign labour employment seeking villagers.

Many of the poor villagers were seeking to go to Middle East countries as housemaids and drivers or kind of labourers through foreign employment agencies. During my stay, generally they paid seventy five thousand of Sri Lankan rupees to these agencies for this purpose. But, the women of more economically stable families did not prefer to go to Middle East countries. Rather, their dream was Cyprus or Italy. During my stay, one woman from Aluthwatte paid three hundred and fifty thousand Sri Lankan rupees for this purpose. She and her husband have borrowed hundred thousand rupees from a
moneylender from outside the village. The other section which seeks to go abroad was young generation, mostly young men. Their dream was also to go to Cyprus or Italy. But, this is a rather difficult task as there is no established scheme for male labour migration to these countries. Therefore, they have to pay more than three lacks or some times around five lacks of Sri Lankan rupees for this purpose.

F: Self-employed commercial activities

Upto the beginning of 1950s, there was no retail shop in the village. The nearest retail shop was in Bamunugame which was located about two kilometers east from the village. According to the memories of my old respondents, that retail shop was started in mid 1940s. Until that time, the villagers obtained retail necessities from the traveling Moore businessmen. Otherwise, they had to walk more than ten miles to reach a market place. But in 1956, a new settler started a retail shop in Aluthwatte. At the same year, another retail shop was started in Nelligahawile hamlet. A man from sub-urban area of Chillaw owned it. In 1960, the retail trader of Aluthwatte started a bakery. After that, with the expansion of population, several other retail shops and some tea shops were started in the village.

Since 1980s, a number of self-employed commercial activities have started in the village. There was an expansion of commercial economic activities with the supply of electricity to the village in 1988. However, most of these economic activities belong to two hamlets, Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte. These two hamlets are more close to Chillaw-Serumaduwe road and therefore are greatly benefited from electricity. The table No. 3.8 shows this situation clearly.
Table 3.8 Self-employed commercial activities in Kurulubedde in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Nelligahawile</th>
<th>Aluthwatte</th>
<th>Harumanwile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail shop</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice mills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio repairing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding shop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grill-making</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grinding mills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Survey 2007

The important thing to notice here is that most of these self-employed commercial activities have been facilitated by the state in different ways. One of the two welding shops in Aluthwatte has been granted a hundred thousand Sri Lankan rupee loan by WDB. Samurdhi Development Bank (SDB) of Pallapitiye has facilitated two tailoring shops in Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte (under the Samurdhi program, SDB has been established in each DSDs to lead the Samurdhi recipients for savings). The owner of Nelligahawile tailoring shop has obtained a loan of fifty thousand rupees from SDB in 2003. Another hundred thousands rupee loan from SDB was approved for a tailoring shop at Aluthwatte in 2006 when I was in the village. The grill-maker who ran his workshop at Aluthwatte received vocational training from a workshop conducted by National Youth Service Center (NYSC). He has taken a loan of fifty thousand rupees under the ‘Micro Loan Program for Self Employers’ of Bank of Ceylon (one of the main state controlled banks of the country) on eight percent annual interest. Two carpentry shops in Aluthwatte and one from Nelligahawile have been facilitated with
loans by the state sponsored WDB and People’s Bank (another state controlled bank) to buy multi-purpose woodwork machines. The person who runs a radio-repair shop in Kurulubedde junction has followed one-year training program conducted by NYSC. Many of these self-employed commercial activities have depended on the state.

3.4.3 Improvement of social infrastructure and village life

As it was argued at the beginning of this thesis, the distributive state welfare program has been the principle factor of societal level improvements of the rural sector of the country. From the beginning of these welfare policies, most welfare measures aimed at societal level improvement of education, healthcare, and infrastructure development as well as individual improvement. The improvement of infrastructure facilities, community level social economic support and the sense of general well-being among the villagers indicate all-pervasive impact of the state welfarism of rural Sri Lanka. Kurulubedde is a good example of how rural communities (both individual and community level) benefited from the distributive state welfarism.

Compared to the situation in 1940s, Kurulubedde village has significantly been served with infrastructures and social services. After the macadamizing Chillaw-Serumaduwe road in 1959-60, it was maintained as “C” grade road by Department of Public Works. This road was widened and improved under the Gamudawe program, when the government held that celebration in Serumaduwe in 1988. In 2000, the government started to carpet this road step by step under the Asian Development Bank’s financial aids. At present, many roads that lead to the interior of the village also are graveled and improved annually by the local government of Serumaduwe.
Until 1979, only the government bus service operated in the village. In 1979, as a result of economic liberalization policy of UNP government, the private sector was allowed to participate in passenger transport. Accordingly, several private bus owners started services between Chillaw and Serumaduwe. By 2006, both government and private buses run on Chillaw-Serumaduwe road at every thirty minutes. There are also five air-conditioned private busses from Serumaduwe to Colombo. These road and transport improvements have opened wide social access to the village.

A: Housing and sanitary facilities

The government has intervened to provide housing facilities to Kurulubedde village since the beginning of 1950s. In 1951, the villagers of Nelligahawile hamlet had been given financial subsidiary for the construction of houses. According to the Land Registry of PLCD in Puttalam, during 1951 to 1954, each house of Nelligahawile hamlet had been given free financial assistance of Rs: 800.00 for the construction of a house. Again in 1960, each householder of Nelligahawile had been given Rs: 600.00 for permanent roofing. Similarly, in 1955, each settler of Aluthwatte had been given financial aids for the construction of houses (Land Registry, PLCD).

In 1988, there was a dramatic change of the housing development not only in Kurulubedde village but also in the entire Puttalam district when the government held its Gamudēwe celebrations in Serumaduwe. At that moment, most of the temporary houses with mud walls, mud floor and temporary roofs were given a loan (Rs: 7000.00) by National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) for the construction of permanent houses. Particularly, construction of the houses facing Chillaw-Serumaduwe
road had to be completed before the beginning of Gamudawwe celebrations. Except those housing aids, villagers benefited from different other low-interest housing loan programs given by state banks and other state-funded programs like Janasaviya and Samurdhi to the low-income families. According to village servants’ reports as well as my observations, 66.04% of houses of the village have been constructed with brick walls, cemented floor and tile or asbestos roof.

Due to dry climate of Puttalam district and scarcity of well-fed water resources, drinking water has been a major problem in Kurulubedde for a long time. During the drought period of the year, mostly in August and September, all the small tanks and other waterways dry up, compelling the villagers to walk a long distance to collect water daily. Since 1950s, successive governments have implemented several programs to solve water problem. When new settlers came to Aluthwatte in 1955, Rs: 200.00 were given to each settler for constructing a personal deep well. Considering the request of Rural Development Society of Kurulubedde, village council of Serumadiwe constructed three public wells in Nelligahawile in the beginning of 1960s. In 1967, each household of Nelligahawile was given Rs: 400.00 by the government to build a personal well because scarcity of drinking water was the main problem among the villagers (Land Registry, PLCD).

Very recently, in 2000, National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) implemented a special program with the help of Asian Development Bank (ADB) to provide safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities throughout Puttalam district. According to this program, community based water supply organizations were
initiated in the village level and they were funded by ADB for constructing water supply and sanitary facilities in their own villages. Kurulubedde village was highly benefited by this program. In 2002, one such community based water supply organization was set up to facilitate drinking water and sanitation conditions in Aluthwatte and part of Kandulassagode hamlet. Under this project, the pipe born water system was implemented and sixteen Rain Water Tanks were suggested along with 32 lavatories. Nelligahawile and Harumanwile hamlets were covered under another such organization and 33 private wells, 35 rainwater tanks and 5 common wells were suggested. One part of Kandulassagode hamlet was served by one such community based water supply organization of the neighboring village, Nagawewa.

B: Health and education facilities

The improvement of road network has facilitated Kurulubedde villagers with easy access to healthcare facilities for the past decades. At present, the nearest center for medical treatment for Kurulubedde villagers is Pallapitiye rural dispensary which is located about five kilometers west of the village. But, most of the villagers go to Serumaduwe district hospital which is located about fifteen kilometers east of the village or Chillaw base hospital because of its many advanced facilities. Kurulubedde village itself has been recently facilitated with the community level medical facilities. In 1990, Northwestern Provincial Council started a Maternal, Children Well-care and Family Planning clinic (MCFP) in Nelligahawile hamlet. This clinic was conducted by a community health officer called ‘Mid-wife.' In 2005, this clinic was shifted to the community hall of Aluthwatte, which is easily accessible to many people. In 2007, this clinic was held twice a month and a Medical Officer of Health (MOH) from
Serumaduwe district hospital visited it once a month. In addition, the community health officer (Mid-wife) used to visit the village once a week. According to the MCFP clinic’s reports and community health officer’s oral explanation, there was not any infant or maternal death in the village for the last fifteen years.

There was no school in Kurulubedde until government vernacular school was started in Aluthwatte in 1957. Till then, there were two primary schools in Pallapitiye and Bamunugame. The first was started in 1907 and the second was started in 1933 as government vernacular schools. If somebody wished to continue education further, he/she had to go to Serumaduwe or Chillaw. However, it was not easy as there were no transport facilities. By 2006, Kurulubedde School had classes upto grade ten with one hundred and twenty one male and one hundred and fourteen female students and sixteen teachers. Almost all the children of the village attend primary school of the village or near by government central schools in Bamunugame, Serumaduwe and Pallapitiye. Some parents send their children to even Chillaw, located about twenty-three kilometers west of the village. Many of them sit for General Certificate Examination (Grade Ten). There were thirteen-graduates in the village in 2007. But, these graduates of Kurulubedde who have acquired jobs elsewhere no longer reside in the village.

By 2007, there were two nursery-schools in Aluthwatte and Nelligahawile. Ministry of Welfare and Women’s Affairs of Northwestern provincial council started the nursery-school of Aluthwatte in 1990. It is situated near Kurulubedde School. In 2007, it had twenty-three students. The next nursery-school is situated in Nelligahawile hamlet.

Christian Children Fund (CCF), an international non-government organization, was
funding this nursery-school. It has twenty-five students. In general, population of the village is almost entirely literate. Only a few older people are unable to read or write.

Apart from the above-mentioned improvements, Kurulubedde village has benefited in different ways by the government. At the end of 1960s, a branch of Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society has opened in Aluthwatte. In 1971, a sub-post office was established and since the last part of 1980s it has a telephone facility. In 1974, an Agrarian Crevice Center was established with a branch of Bank of Ceylon. But in the beginning of 1980s, this bank branch was removed and established in Serumaduwe.

Up to the end of 1980s, there was no electricity in most of the interior part of Puttalam district. In 1988, most of the villages that were situated on Chillaw-Serumaduwe road and other main roads were provided with electricity when the government held “Gamudăwe” celebration in Serumaduwe. At this juncture, electricity reached Kurulubedde village. Due to the Gamudăwe celebration one of the leading state banks of the country (People’s Bank) provided a special subsidiary interest-free loan of Rs: 4000.00 to the villagers that were paid-back within three years. Under this program, most of the houses that were in the vicinity of Chillaw-Serumaduwe road got electricity. After that, electricity line was extended to the interior of the village, mostly as election pledges. However, at present, only 17.33% of houses of the village have electricity.

Until 1977, all the villagers had benefited from free rice ration. In that year, the government canceled this food subsidy program and introduced food stamp system. Although food stamps had been given according to the income level of the families, the GS who worked in the area during the initiation of food stamps told me that more than
90% of the villagers had been given food stamps (at that time, GS was the authorized officer of issuing food stamps in GS divisions) (until 1992, Gramesevake or in short GS was the name for Grame Niladari). When the UNP government started *Janasaviya* poverty alleviation program, Kurulubedde had been selected to be in the first round of the program. In 1994, the newly appointed PA government canceled the *Janasaviya* program and introduced *Samurdhi* food subsidiary program. In 2006, out of 412 of all households of the village, 226 (54.85%) households were receiving *Samurdhi* subsidiary.

3.4.4 Village level organization

There has been and still is a vast range of village organizations in Kurulubedde village. Creation of many of these organizations at the rural level has a close association with successive post colonial governments’ development policies. The idea of people’s participation in decision making and finally in development process became an important tenet of democratic political process. This situation particularly could be seen after the popular victory of MEP government in 1956. As I pointed out so far, electoral base of MEP in 1956 basically came from rural sector. In such context, MEP government initiated and rearranged different organizations with the objective of developing the agricultural conditions, socio-cultural status of the village level and so on. Many of these organizations have vertical links with the government administration not only for direction and guidance but also for financial assistance. Further, this situation affected the creation of dependence of these organizations on the government and to the emergence of politically biased leadership and direction since.\(^{18}\)
The first village level organization in Kurulubedde village was Rural Development Society (RDS) which was formed in 1957 under the guidance of Rural Development Department. Since then, it had functioned efficiently for several years. For instance, renovation of minor tanks in the village and distribution of paddy lands under those tanks were the result of the requests made by RDS. But, due to the competition for office bearers and some financial problems and emergence of different other rural level organizations, RDS of Kurulubedde did not function smoothly since 1965. There have been some attempts to commence RDS, but those too failed after a short period of initiation. For instance, in 2004, a new RDS in Kurulubedde was formed. However, it functioned only for three months. Like that way, several other rural organizations which were formed during the past decades have faced a similar fate. However, there are several prevailing organizations in the village.

As I pointed out above, Cooperative Society of Milk Farmers (CSMF) of Kurulubedde was formed in 1976 under the guidance of Cooperative Development Commissioner of Chillaw. When CSMF was at its peak at the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s, it had more than 650 members not only from Kurulubedde but also from surrounding villages. During that time, it had three milk collecting centers. However, it has weakened badly due to several reasons including influence of party politics and misuse of its financial resources which we will discuss in the next chapters. In 2007, its members were less than thirty. It has Rs: 150,000.00 in savings accounts.

There were two women’s societies in the village. One is in Aluthwatte and the other in Nelligahawile. Both of these women societies were started in 1991 under the guidance
of Welfare and Women Affairs Ministry of Northwestern provincial council. The objectives for the creation of this society were to assist women in the village in different ways; to start small enterprises, to settle loans obtained from other sources etc. Due to government change in 1994, these woman societies did not function for several years. In 2002, women society of Aluthwatte started again. In 2006, it had 35 members with Rs: 84000.00 in savings accounts. It provides credit to its members up to Rs: 7000.00. Each Tuesday evening in the second week of every month it gathers in Kurulubedde School. But during my stay, the Nelligahawile women society was not functioning.

There are two Samurdhi Development Societies (SDS); Nelligahawile and Aluthwatte. This society was started in each GN division after the initiation of poverty alleviation program, ‘Samurdhi, of People’s Alliance government in 1994. The SDS gathers once a month to discuss the improvements and obstacles of Samurdhi holders under the guidance of Samurdhi Development Officer (SDO). In this meeting, SDS provides short-term credits to its members, discusses the community development programs and other relevant development activities in the village, leads its members for compulsory *shramadāna* work (voluntary community working campaign) etc.

Society for the Aged of Kurulubedde is a newly initiated organization under the patronage of the state. It was formed in the beginning of 2006 under the Welfare and Women Affairs Ministry of Northwestern provincial council. The objectives of this society were to issue a special identity card, spectacles and other facilities to its members. It has twenty-two male and eight female members. The people who were above 55 can get the membership of this society.
There were three active farmers’ organizations in the village: Nelligahawile, Harumanwile and Kandulassagode farmers’ organizations. These farmers’ organizations have been formed under Agrarian Service Department under the consultancy of Agricultural Research and Production Assistant (ARPA) of the village. The function of these organizations is concerned with the problems related to irrigation, issues pertaining to paddy cultivation under village tanks, minor level construction of village level minor tanks and other relevant issues of farmers.

3.5 Changing nature of social life of the village

In his recent lecture on the analysis of emergent form of postcolonial capitalism in India under condition of electoral democracy, notable Indian political scientist Partha Chatterjee has pointed out that “the spread of governmental technologies in India in the last three decades, as a result of the deepening reach of the developmental state under conditions of electoral democracy, has meant that the state is no longer an external entity to the peasant community. Governmental agencies distributing education, health services, food roadways, water, electricity, agricultural technology, emergency relief and dozens of other welfare services have penetrated deep into the interior of everyday peasant life…” (2008: 2). Therefore, Chatterjee pointed out the necessity of new conceptual work to analyze the role of the peasantry in India within the context of emergent forms of postcolonial capitalism under the conditions of electoral democracy. Simultaneously, notable Indian sociologists also pointed out the necessity of a new theoretical framework for understanding contemporary rural society and changing peasant life of India. For instance in his two recent articles, Gupta (2008; 2005) pointed out that how agrarian-based peasant economy of Indian rural society has changed. He
particularly emphasized the sharp rise in non-agricultural employment among the Indian peasantry within the context of inability of rural agrarian economy to absorb the rural population that created new aspirations among the villagers.

When we consider the situation in Sri Lanka, we have so far observed that the deep penetration of the state in the everyday life of the masses within the electoral democracy created new social and economic atmosphere in the village level. This situation drastically changed the typical features of rural society. Kurulubedde gives classic example in this regard. It is obvious that significant changes have taken place in Kurulubedde village during the past decades, and the state policies and activities have played a major role for these changes. The present picture of the village can be described as follows: Kurulubedde is not a village with economic activities which is limited to a small geographical location based on subsistence agriculture. Performance of diversified economic activities by the village has changed the image of the village and villagers. The chena cultivation has sharply disappeared and cash crop cultivation has been established. The paddy cultivation has remained further, but even at the present, under the subsistence level only. The villagers have engaged with new economic activities. Expansion of roads facilities, improvement of transport, initiation of new schools etc have opened new avenues for upward social mobility. Demographic composition of the village has changed. Traditional social relations have been replaced by new dimensions of social relations. The village has opened to the outer world.

An onlooker who knows the past and present of the village and surrounding areas can understand these changes when he or she observes the daily routine of the village. For
instance, when I was in the village, I was lodged in Nelligahawile hamlet near one of the main bus halts in the village. Every morning I woke up around four-thirty with the noise of the first bus from Serumaduwe to Chillaw. Around five thirty, a bus which was owned by a private garment factory located forty kilometers away from the village would come to pick up the young girls who were working in that factory. Since six o’clock, I saw school children and some villagers in the same bus stop waiting for the buses to go both to Serumaduwe and Chillaw for different purposes such as attending schools or some government offices or hospitals etc. Since seven o’clock, school children who attend Kurulubedde government school start on foot or by bicycle. At the same time, I noticed villagers carrying milk cans going to the milk collecting centers. Some people go for working places such as brick-kilns and so on. From nine thirty, different delivery vans come with local and imported goods. At the same time, some trucks or lorries come to the village searching for bricks. And, some businessmen come to collect coconut. During cashew season, vehicles come to the village to gather cashew. Around ten a clock, the postman and newspaperman come to the village.

From three o’clock, school children come back. Some school children go for tuition classes to Chillaw or Serumaduwe, and come back by six o’clock. People who go to government offices or hospitals or any other purposes come back in the evening. Around ten thirty in the night, the last bus which starts at nine thirty from Chillaw passes my lodge. Villagers who go to Colombo or other distant areas in the morning come back by this bus. This is the ordinary routine of Kurulubedde village and it may change on some days. For instance, on Monday mornings, villagers who are working in Colombo and other distant places leave the village and come back only in the weekend.
This brief narration on day to day life of Kurulubedde gives wide picture on the changes of physical atmosphere of the village and social economic life of the villagers.

3.5.1 Emergence of new social identities

It is necessary to see the pervasive role of the state on the transformation of life of the villagers through the eyes of the villagers themselves, as it gives villagers’ own expression on the changes. One old woman who belongs to drummer caste and came to Kandulassagode hamlet as *diga* (virilocal) marriage around 1937, recalls life conditions of isolated cluster of Kurulubedde village,

This is not the village where I was born. It is far away, more than fifteen miles. I came here in 1937 after my marriage. Then my age was only thirteen. I was accompanied to Bamunugame (located about two kilometers east of Kurulubedde), by bullock-cart. That time, there was only one small shop in Bamunugame. From there, there was a cart track to Pallapitiye, but heavily covered with jungle. It was just like a footpath. In Kandulassagode, there were around twelve or thirteen houses. It was too difficult to live there. Elephants destroyed our *chenas*... Paddy cultivation was rare due to water problem. When we came here, Nelligahawile, Halpanwila, and Radayaye had been abandoned because of malaria. Very few houses were in Harumanwile... People didn’t have any medicine for these diseases. We had to go to Chillaw or Puttalam to take the medicine, but mostly by foot or cart. At that time, we went to Arachchikattuwe *pola* (fair) (located about fifteen miles north of Kurulubedde) carrying goods on head. We started journey day before the fair. We slept there and next day sold our goods and in the evening we came to the house with curry stuffs and other things...those days *tambi* (moore) businessmen came to exchange cloth and other things. They were very cunning (*kapati*)...

When I met this old woman named Sittamma, she was eighty-three years old. She was one of the oldest women in the village. According to her and other old villagers, in the past, when people had malaria or any other illness, they got the medicine from *vederāla* (native doctors) only. At that time, there was a *vederāla* in Kandulassagode. But mostly, as I was told by Sittamma, when people, not only in Kurulubedde but also in other
surrounding areas had some illness, they would make a vow to one of the provincial deities in the area called Kalu devatha. People promised this deity to fulfill their votive offerings after recovering from the illness. There was a shrine for this deity in Nelligahawile hamlet. Even now, this shrine can be seen in the center of Nelligahawile hamlet. According to Sittamma, when the mothers of the area got ready to deliver, they used to make a vow to this deity for protection of their babies and for longevity for the babies. The picture of Kurulubedde village which is memorized by Sittamma and other old villagers is very similar to the picture given by GA of Northwestern province in 1904 (see p. 116 in this chapter). Very simply, Kurulubedde was an isolated interior dry zone village.

When I discussed with the Sittamma, I asked her, ‘do you like the things which you have now?’ Her short and direct answer was ‘yes.’ I have pointed out above using her own account how difficult it was to cultivate chena due to wild elephants, frequent absent of paddy cultivation due to water scarcity of Nelligahawile wawe at that time. Although her remembrance was blurred due to her old age, she told me that they were given land and rice from D.S. Senanayake government. She told me that she had delivered her first and second child at home with the help of her mother-in-law. But, for her third child, she was admitted to Serumuduwe hospital (in 1945).

This is her perception of the changes that have taken place in the village. At the time of my encounter with her, she was in her elder son’s house. She was waiting for one of her grandson’s son from nursery school which was situated next to the next house from her elder son’s house. After the discussion with her, I talked with her younger son.
Sirivardene, a retired security officer of Puttalam bus depot. He told me that both his parents did not know even how to sign. However, his father knew how to read. Almost all of the contemporaries of his parents in Nelligahawile could barely sign. They had put their fingerprint as the signature. But, except Sirivardene’s elder brother, all other siblings of his family including himself studied up to grade ten from Kurulubedde primary school. One of his elder brothers passed his ordinary level exam from Kurulubedde School and had gone to Chillaw for advanced level education. After that he had got a technical assistant appointment from the Ministry of Local Administration. Sirivardene also passed his ordinary level exam from Kurulubedde School and got a government appointment in Puttalam bus depot in 1980. Sirivardene’s elder brother’s younger son entered a university and obtained a degree recently.

This is one example. Since the last stage of colonial regime, the state entered to empower the neglected rural areas. Construction of schools, development of roads and transport services opened new avenues for the people who were so far excluded from upward social mobility. Until 1950s, many of the villagers in the area were relatively illiterate. But their second generation got more opportunities for education, and they were eligible for acquiring public sector employments which were prestigious among the rural people, but were not familiar to them until that time. Educational achievements of the third generation of the village were more advanced.

The benevolent distributive policies of the state have affected the formation of a new social identity of the people of the village. What I have explained through the description of Sittamma and Sirivardene is clear evidence regarding this situation. The
next example regarding this is the new comers to the village. When I was talking with a seventy-eight years old man from Aluthwatte, named Adikari, he told me his experience in his native place and Kurulubedde. This man belongs to the first generation that came to Kurulubedde in 1955. His native place was located about twenty-six kilometers west of Kurulubedde village. And, it belongs to the densely populated intermediate area of Puttalam district. He told me,

When I came here, I was twenty seven year old. In my village, I did not have my own land. Most of the people who came here were landless in their villages. Including me, another two came here from my village. Like me, they were also landless. Therefore, we were rather stubborn that time. Then, headman of the village asked us “do you like to go to Kurulubedde? If so; government gives you five acres.” That time we have not known, at least, where this Kurulubedde was located. However, we agreed, because we had nothing to do in our areas as everywhere big coconut estates belonged to the big landowners. However, we came here although we were fond of our village. Government gave us five acres. But, when we came here, we had nothing except the land.

Adikari further told me how the government helped them. He explained, even when they came to Kurulubedde, the area was covered with jungle. Although the government distributed 1250 acres of lands in 1953 for coconut cultivation, most of those lands had not been even cleared. As he explained, they were the people, who cleared the jungle and cultivated coconut in those middle-class lands. In the meantime he explained how they were facilitated to cultivate coconut in their lands, to develop their personal necessities like construction of houses and other things. He told me, “there were lots of hardships at that time. Gradually, lots of things came. Now, we have electricity. Recently we got pipe-born water. Now, life is not so bad compared to the past.”

In the early 1960s, Adikari had encroached into another two acres adjoining his homeland and cultivated vegetables. Then, he accompanied one of his landless relatives
to Kurulubedde and led him to encroach state land in Harumanwile hamlet. This was the case for a considerable number of people, who migrated to Kurulubedde in 1960s and 70s, in search of land and hoped that they would be able to claim legitimacy to the land which they had encroached. Like old villagers did earlier, their initial cultivation was grain and vegetables, which were generally grown in the area. Then, state gave them titles for those lands and helped them to cultivate permanent cash crops like coconut, cashew, lemon etc. The state distributive mechanism thereby gave them legitimate identity in the village as landed villagers rather than encroachers.

As we have seen so far, until mid 1950s, villagers of Kurulubedde belonged to two castes only, goigama caste (high caste according to Sinhala caste system and cultivators by occupation) and berewa caste (one of the lower castes of Sinhala caste system and drummers by occupation). After mid 1950s, many of the landless people came and settled in the village. And, they belonged to different social categories, particularly different castes. The distributive mechanism of the state gave great opportunities to build up new social identities overcoming their caste identity. At 2006, except two old drummer caste villagers in Nelligahawile hamlet who were performing their traditional occupation, there were not any other caste-based occupants in Kurulubedde.

According to the traditional caste system, a strong social distance had to be maintained between the low caste and the high caste. Generally, goigama caste, the highest caste of Sinhala caste system attempted to keep a social distance between themselves and low castes. The people of goigama caste did not sit, eat, and drink together with low caste people, except on some particular occasion like in chena cultivation. These caste
customs were followed when low caste people went to the high caste houses. For instance, according to Robinson (1975), there were three levels of low castes in the Kandyan Sinhalese village, which she studied: higher low caste, the berevāyā (drummer caste), and rodiyā (beggars and the lowest rank of Sinhala caste system). In the goigama houses, the higher low castes were allowed to sit on low stools in contrast to the chairs which were used by the goigama. The berevāyā were given mats to sit. But, the lowest caste of rodiyā was never allowed to enter compounds of the villagers. According to Rayan (1993), there was some permissible eating, not in the houses, but during ceremonies in which several caste members took part. But, the caste customs were strongly followed in marriage. Inter-caste marriage was not considered as proper marriages. A marriage, according to the Sinhala caste system, is an alliance of inter-households corporation and preferably entered into with kin (nāyo). If a high caste person were to marry a low caste, the caste level of the particular high caste person was to be considered as lower than the rest of the high caste villagers (Robinson, 1975). Hence, inter-caste marriage has become a critical issue.

When we consider the situation in post colonial India, we can see that number of constitutionally institutionalized mechanisms including different reservation quotas in government services, educational development programs, special economic measures etc. have been taken not only to protect the interests but also to promote the welfare of the different backward caste and tribes. While these mechanisms may be designated as the policy of protective discrimination, those measures seems to be the most viable within the framework of a democratic polity (Oommen, 1984: 118). However, in post colonial Sri Lanka, except few legal enactments, one cannot see that constitutionally
institutionalized mechanisms have been considerably taken to mitigate the caste boundaries and discriminations in economy and society. But, as we have seen so far, pervasive influence of the state has considerably led to transcend caste boundaries and discriminations not only in Kurulubedde village but also all over the country since 1940s at different levels.

As I have explained in the beginning of this chapter, until 1955, the inhabitants of Kurulubedde belonged to two castes. Except three goigama households, other houses in Nelligahawile hamlets belonged to the drummer caste. And, there were four goigama families in Harumanwile. After this point, caste composition as well as caste customs of the village changed considerably. When I asked about the caste customs in early days from Sittamma, she said,

Those days, there were few goigama families in Kurulubedde. But there were neighboring goigama caste villages. They did not come to our houses. They did not accept foods from us. Those days, it was extremely rare to hear any marriage between our people and goigama caste. But gradually, everything has changed, mostly after people came Aluthwatte and Nelligahawile. One of my daughters married a goigama caste man who came to Nelligahawile. One of my grand sons also married from goigama caste.

I asked the same thing from one padu caste man of Aluthwatte. He is one of the first settlers of Aluthwatte. He said, “in my home village, caste customs were very strong. We could not enter a goigama caste house. Most of the lands were owned by goigama caste. We were landless, and, therefore, we had to depend on them. That was the reason why I came here. We got five acres of highlands. So, there was no need to depend on anyone further.” The principle criteria for selecting allottees for the state land distribution were landlessness and poverty. Therefore, like above-mentioned man, many low caste landless people were among the allottees who got the land under the state land
distribution policy. In this context, the state policy of land distribution gave the benefits for landless low caste social strata and empowered them. The state policy of land distribution gave these people legitimate identity among others. As one goigama old man of Aluthwatte told me,

Different people came here with us gaining lands from the government. We had not known who they were. At that time, we were young and hence we did not care for anything. However, some people tried to keep distance from others. However, gradually, those things changed. We worked together. Our children went to school and learned together. On the other hand, why do we consider those things? We all were landless in our native villages. All the people who came here were in the same position.

The next crucial factor that contributed to the break down of caste boundaries was free education system of the country. People from all parts of the country benefited from free education, and it increased the possibility for upward social mobility. Further, it initiated new social and economic relations where caste boundaries were not important. When I talked with one goigama caste villager in Nelligahawile regarding this situation, he told me, “now, caste is not a problem. Everything has changed.” Then his wife answered, “How do we care about those things. Most of the youth of those families were educated. They used to come to our home with our children because they are schoolmates. Our sons used to visit their homes and have foods from those houses. We also go to their homes for day-today affairs.” Parents of both this man and woman belonged to the first generation of Aluthwatte. And now, they are living in Nelligahawile hamlet. Two elder sons of this family are graduates and the younger son is an undergraduate student during my stay in the village. His second son helped me to settle down in the village. I enquired about this situation from him. He said, “We don’t care for caste now. Many youths of those families are our school friends. We used to go
to their houses and have foods. They are also same. Now it is not a problem. World has changed.” The state investment in free education has given important opportunities for the marginalized social strata to mobilize social status of low castes. Most significantly, this state investment has become an important policy instrument for reducing social inequalities among rural masses.

Accordingly, the relationship between different caste groups in the village has significantly changed. When I was in the village during my first fieldwork, a berava caste neighbor youth of above-mentioned family built up a new house. There was a traditional religious ceremony for house-warming. I was among the invitees as I had known this youth from the beginning of my stay in Kurulubedde. I saw goigama and bereva and other caste people were sitting, eating and drinking together. Throughout my stay in the village, I observed this situation. I felt that nobody wanted to talk caste in the open ground. Villagers used to say that they do not believe on caste differences. According to my calculation, there were at least forty inter-caste marriages in the village.22 Many of these marriages have taken place since 1970s. And many of these marriages have taken place in the village itself. These marriages have established a network of kin ties within different caste groups in the village. Some inter-caste marriages have taken place due to the changes in the economic activities of the villagers. Many young girls and boys who cannot continue higher education used to find employment in the garment factories in urban areas. From those places, they find their marriage partner and come to the village and settle. Their parents do not have anything to do with them other than accepting such relationships.
However, though there were expressions of equality and fraternity and there are cross-caste marriages, it does not mean that caste discrepancies have completely disappeared in the village. Even at present, many goigama caste villagers persist with caste-based attitudes regarding marriage. In this regards, I observed one incident. One evening I went to the nearby house for a bath. The house owner was a goigama caste man working outside of the village. When I went there, house owner’s younger brother was talking with his brother’s wife. As I have known, he resided in Aluthwatte. After he left, wife of the house owner came and told me, “he is my husband’s younger brother. But, we don’t have much connection with him because he married a low caste woman. We used to go to his house on some occasions only.” As I got to know from her, that man had come to invite his brother to an alms giving ceremony a week after, in his house. Later, I got to know that on the alms-giving day, all his siblings and other relatives had participated in it. However, this incident highlights that though inter caste marriage in the village did take place, high caste villagers do try to avoid such relations. And, it was clear that if some one from the high caste had such relations, others would try to bypass the relationship with him.

However, there was an enthusiasm among the villagers to talk about the caste of others in the village about which I have interesting experiences. During my stay in the village, two drummer caste youths helped me. One of them was graduated two years before when I went to the village. Some times I used to walk in the village with one of them. One day in the mid of my stay in the village, I went to meet one old villager in Nelligahawile hamlet. He is a goigama villager and an ayurvedic physician by occupation. He was also one of the founder members of local branch of SLFP in
Kurulubedde. I went to meet him to get some clarification on election voters list of Kurulubedde as he had participated several years as an election list scrutinizer in Nelligahawile polling station during the election. I was accompanied by the youth who had a degree. Both of us were talking with this man in the visiting room of his house and we had tea with him. After a few minutes, my friend left the place as he had some other works. After his leaving, this old ayurvedic physician told me, “you know, he is from a low caste. In the past, we did not allow them to come inside our home. Now everything has changed. They are educated youth. We have to think of that.” Although caste discrepancies were not talked in the open, high caste villagers did hold on such views.

When we started discussing election voters list, he pointed out some names of the list and said, “you see. These people are low caste people. But, they have changed their surname. Now, except us who have known them, people like you can’t identify them as low caste people.” This is a very important point in the changes of caste based society and traditional attitudes of the villagers. Generally, according to the caste based Sinhalese society of Sri Lanka, people’s name and surname represented their caste. According to the traditional Sinhalese naming system, every person has two parts of their names; the surname and personal name. The surname, a ge or gedera name, which referred to his lineage or locality to be followed by a personal name. The ge or gedera name often (but not always) stated something related to caste-occupation and the personal name was obtained from a bundle of names which was specific to each caste group. Various prefixes were employed in front of these generic personal names to differentiate one person from another. For instance, Chandradipathiyalage Podi
Ganitha was one of the drummer caste names of an old villager in Nelligahawile hamlet. Here, Chandradipathi is a specific surname for drummer caste which refers to the specific functions of drummer caste, and yalage gives an idea that this person is coming from the drummer caste. Ganitha is one of the specific personal names of the drummer caste. Podi (small) is a prefix that differentiates this particular Ganitha from other Ganithas like Kiri Ganitha (Kiri means milk), Heen Ganitha (Heen means small), Podi Ganitha (again Podi means small) etc.²³

However, with the expansion of education and changes in economic activities, low caste people used to give new names for their sons and daughters instead of their caste specific names. In Kurulubedde, younger generation does not bear any caste specific name now. However, there was another obstacle here to disguise the caste identity. Although these people were able to change their caste specific names, they could not change caste specific surnames without official permission. It was a complicated process. On the other hand, people had to pay some amount of money to the government for these changes. In 1950s, it was a considerable amount. Then, in 1957, the MEP government led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike made arrangements to simplify the legal procedure pertaining to changing of names and surnames. And, the MEP government reduced the financial charges (Rs. 22 to Rs. 5) to enable the same (Perera, 1985: 77). A lot of low caste people of the country took this opportunity to change their surnames which reflected their low caste identity. My above-mentioned informer (the ayurvedic physician) mentioned several families of the village who had changed their surname. After that, he said, “now, all things have changed. You can’t identify those people according to their names or surnames.”
3.5.2 State, politics and villagers within the changes

As I pointed out in chapter two, the concept of welfare state and distributive mechanism fashioned the democratic political transformation of the country which started in 1931. As the country went for electoral political structure, politicians and later political parties had to sustain expectation of voters. Therefore, as I pointed out in chapter two, after independence, political parties and politicians continued with the idea that the masses were poor and they needed the assistance from the state and government to uplift their living standard. In this context, the pursuit of development policies and the definition of development goals came in sharp contrast with the short term political objectives of the contending parties to win or retain power by offering the immediate necessities of the masses. One will recall the remarks of the first finance minister of independent Sri Lanka in 1947/48 in this context (see, chap. two, p. 84). And, in such a context, distributive welfare measures of the state came under the supervision of elected political leaders and those politicians became the defenders of distributive mechanism. Although there was general recognition of the need to move away from these policies, each party was reluctant to assume the responsibility for an unpopular decision which would place its opponents at an advantage and endanger the former’s return to power. For, the state has been organized within an electoral democracy since several decades thereby strengthening the popular belief that the state is responsible for issues of poverty, social hope, field of social practices, etc.

Even at present, this belief is embedded in the people of the village in several ways. For instance, within the first month after getting married, most newly married couples used to apply for the Samurdhi subsidiary, although they are well enough to maintain their
life without such aids. There were some villagers who were receiving government subsidies (particularly Samurdhi subsidies) although they really did not need such help.

There are two good examples which I observed from Kurulubedde. When I was talking with the Samurdhi Development Officer (SDO) of Nelligahawile in her office during the middle of my first fieldwork, one young man came to meet SDO. He was from Nelligahawile hamlet itself. I have known him very well because he was the driver of my neighbour’s lorry that transported firewood. He had settled on one acre of highland that belonged to his father and drew all the income from cashew cultivation in the land. As I knew, this young man was earning from mural works too. He has married in the previous month from a neighboring village. That day, he had come to meet the SDO to handover his application for Samurdhi subsidiary program. After finishing his work, I also walked back to my lodging with him. As he was friendly with me, I asked him why he needed Samurdhi as he was already receiving a sufficient income. He told me that even if he gets income from his land, it is owned by his father and his other sources of income were not stable. Further, he told me, “Now we are new family. I am not having a permanent income. According to government rule, Samurdhi is for such people. Therefore, I applied it.” When I went to Kurulubedde for the second field work, he was enrolled in the Samurdhi program.

The second example in this regard is another household from Harumanwile hamlet. When I was in Kurulubedde, this household consisted of seventy years old parents and their thirty-five year old unmarried son. They were living in their old house (with cadjan-roof and mud-wall). The elder son of this family was a police constable. This household owned six acres of highlands. Those six acres of highlands have been
cultivated with coconut and cashew and it was one of the prosperous lands in the village. In every three months, they were getting a very good income from coconut harvest. Although these six acres were divided among two sons, as I personally know, the income of coconut was handled by the father of the family. This family owned half acres of paddy land in the neighbouring village. They had three milking cows also. The younger son of this household owns a small tractor also which was used to plough paddy lands during the ploughing seasons. This younger son has constructed a modern house in his part of the land (with brick walls, cemented floor and tiled-roof), although he lived with his parents. Ironically, the old couple was getting Samurdhi subsidiary. Without any obstacle, the old couple could claim Samurdhi, as they did not own those properties. One villager told me that they were living in their old house, as the old couple want to convince officials that they do not have enough income.

Expectation and dependence of getting benefits from the state is not confined to Samurdhi program. There are several such examples in Kurulubedde which I intend to discuss in the next chapters. But, the vital point here is not only the villagers’ attitudes on the legitimacy of the state to follow those distributive mechanisms and their dependence on state distributions, but also the way in which they are manipulating the legal conditions and regulations to obtain those benefits. There are number of other examples that delineate how villagers have skilled in such a way to acquire different benefits from the state or government agencies.

At the same time, as the above-mentioned changes were taking place, another corresponding phenomenon took place in the village, namely the villagers’ political
identification with the distributive mechanism of the state. As I pointed out earlier, the introduction of universal voting rights, electoral political system and distributive welfare distribution happened simultaneously. And, this simultaneous introduction allowed for the creation of interdependent relationships between masses and the larger political system. Therefore, this state activities like land distribution was identified by the masses as personal acts on the part of politicians and corresponding political dynamics to redeem the masses through elimination of their poverty and suffering. As I pointed out, since the beginning of the benevolent state policies in 1931, the allocation and disposal of various state resources passed into the hands of elected politicians. Then, through the different distributive mechanisms, political leaders established their popularity in the rural areas. This situation created patronage disbursement of state resources and clientalist politics and it allowed the politicians to gain electoral advantage in the country. This situation is interestingly relevant to Kurulubedde village. For instance, when I asked one old man from Nelligahawile on the political situation of the area in early days, he answered, “we vote UNP, because D.S. Senanayake gave us land and rice.”

As I pointed out earlier, D.S. Senanayake, the first premier of independent Sri Lanka and the founder leader of U.N.P, was the minister of Agriculture and Land under the State Council during 1931 to 1947. Under his ministry, the land distribution for the landless people was started in 1935. However, as the above quotation shows, it is clear that those land distributions and food subsidies which bear the insignia of the state, also have been an insignia of party politics as well as personal politics.
This is not the only one such example regarding this situation. Due to above situation, it is not surprising that the villagers identify all the state activities in the village according to the political interest insignia or symbolic political standing. “The UNP government led by Dudly Senanayake distributed lands to the people from Aluthwatte; Bandaranaike’s SLFP government in 1957 built up Kurulubedde School; Agrarian Service Center was a work of SLFP government in 1974; The UNP government established Kurulubedde Divisional Veterinary Service Center in 1985; Electricity was given under the UNP government in 1988” are some typical responses. This political identification of the villagers on the state activities in the village reveals significant relationship among the state, politics and the masses. Politics has become the determining factor for rewarding state benefits to the villagers within the context of rapidly exhausting potential for the continuation of distributive welfare mechanism.

In this backdrop, as far as Kurulubedde is concerned, it can be said that politics has become a dominant and determining factor for the distribution of state resources among individuals. Without facing many obligations, villagers can claim for general state distribution like Samurdhi. Although there are some official obligations, villagers know how to handle such things. Two examples which I gave above on Samurdhi distribution are good examples regarding this. However, in the context of rapidly exhausting potential for the continuation of such distribution, political background becomes more important even for claiming Samurdhi and other limited benefits. There were many such examples in Kurulubedde. During my second fieldwork, I found that all the brick makers who had received loans from WDB in 2006 were the relatives and friends of the SLFP party organizer of the village. Villagers also told me that a considerable number
of public sector jobholders in the village had acquired those jobs due to their political allegiance. For instance, according to the table No. 3.7 on public sector salaried employers in Kurulubedde, two teachers from Aluthwatte, and the clerk who was working in Kurulubedde Agrarian Service Center, got their jobs in 1982 due to their political loyalty to the UNP MP of the area. As shown in the table, another one got a teaching appointment in 1989 in the very same way. The watchman of Kurulubedde Agrarian Service Center also got his job in 1983 because of his political loyalty to the MP of the area. In the same way, the watchman of Kurulubedde Veterinary Service Center got his job when it was started in 1985. Postman, SDO, ARPA, and driver of Kurulubedde Agrarian Service Center have acquired their jobs after 1994, due to their political loyalty to the SLFP MP of the area. On the other hand, as villagers told, a number of villagers could not get public sector jobs and some other benefits from the state because of their contradictory stance on party politics. Interestingly, when I talked to a BCom degree holder in the village who had applied for a post in the Department of Cooperative Affairs of Northwestern province, he told me that he does not have any prospects of getting it as he does not have political support from the ruling party. However, this was not a recent phenomenon. One of the villagers of Aluthwatte told me that when paddy lands were distributed under Harumanwile yaye in the beginning of 1960s, politics had become the dominant factor for selecting allottees. I will discuss this situation in the next chapters.

3.6 Concluding remarks

The foregoing analysis underlines how the shift of policies of the state from colonial administrator to benevolent distributor has affected the changes in Kurulubedde village.
As such, the picture of Kurulubedde village before 1940s can be summed up as: an isolated and neglected interior dry zone village which was inhabited by a small face-to-face community. They lived in a subsistence agricultural economy which was limited to a small geographical location. The village suffered from the negligence of colonial administration, poor economic condition, malaria and other epidemics, lack of health facilities, lack of road and transport facilities, unpredictable dry zone climate, and wild animals etc. The inhabitants were ethnically and religiously homogenous. They were a community, bound by kinship ties and caste norms.

This whole picture of the village rapidly changed from the beginning of 1940s. It is obvious that during the past decades, benevolent state policies and activities have played a significant role for the development of social infrastructure such as healthcare facilities, communication facilities, and so on in Kurulubedde. This made Kurulubedde area attractive for human settlements. This situation eliminated the relative isolation between the village and the outside world, and increased frequent contact with the outside world. The state policy of distribution of high lands has had different effects on the village. The state sponsored land distribution to deal with landlessness and poverty expanded the village boundaries, expanded the population of the village rapidly enhancing cultural boundaries and initiated market oriented cash crop production instead of subsistence oriented slash and burn cultivation. This situation affected the disappearance of traditional forms of the agricultural structure in the village. The arrival of exogenous settlers, development of the road network, education facilities have changed the caste boundaries and attitudes of the villagers. Due to these changes new identity has grown among the villagers.
However, the distribution of middle class lands for capitalist farmers hindered the expansion of the village boundaries as its population grew. And, it affected the expansion of agricultural economy further. Therefore, alternative economic activities emerged within the village as well as outside of the village to seek their livelihood. Interestingly, it can be seen that the state facilitated many of the alternative economic activities that emerged in the village in different ways; such state patronage included, non-payable financial supports, subsidized credit facilities from state banks, technical assistance, training facilities for self-employers and so on. Even in the face of increasing challenges to limit the state’s role in redistributive functions, the state still retained its hold on the people’s expectations as well as daily lives of the villagers through different redistributive measures and initiating new social services. One of the best examples in this regard is the establishment of Society for the Aged of Kurulubedde in the beginning of 2006 with direct state patronage. In brief, the benevolent distributive influence of the state has left its dominant impression throughout the changes of Kurulubedde village.

The focal point of my argument in this chapter was that state policies helped the villagers and created new socio-economic identities. Also, it created dependence of the villagers on the state and political parties. A process of the mentality of clientalism on political structure in the village developed. Accordingly, it could be clearly seen that since lands were granted to the drummer caste villagers in 1942, a link was established between the villagers and the politician’s personal account. Later, it could be seen that politics has become a significant factor in the village within this changing process; Particularly, when the benevolent distributive mechanism of the state declined, limited
state resources channeled to the village came to be handled according to the political affiliation of the villagers. Accordingly, the political access has been the main way to gain socio-economic advantages in the village. The next thing in this regard is the exclusion of villagers from socio-economic benefits of the state according to political identification. But, as I argued in the first chapter, this process has happened in the village within a politically institutionalized manner. In the forthcoming chapters I will comprehensively discuss the development of political affiliation and its effects on the distributive mechanism in the village within the context of growing resource-scarce society.
Chronicle history of Puttalam district began with early Aryan civilization of Sri Lanka when Sinhala monarchy started with prince Vijaya who came from Eastern India in about 543 B.C. The prince Vijaya landed at Tammanawew which was situated in northern costal belt of Puttalam district. He established a kingdom with the base of Northern dry zone areas which is later widely known as Rajarata kingdom (also referred as Pihitirata). Until 13th century, Rajarata Kingdom remained. According to the historical sources, Kurulubedde area had belonged to the Rajarata kingdom since its initiation. One of ten giants of King Duttu Gamunu of Rajarata kingdom (161-137 B.C), named as Teraputtabaya had lived in Pallepitiye which is presently situated about five kilometers west from Kurulubedde village. Vast array of archeological evidence is scattered in the surrounding areas of Kurulubedde claiming its history during Rajarata kingdom.

As pointed out by Scott, typical Southeast Asian Kingdoms’ authority on its puerperal areas weakened steadily with increasing distance from the capital city to those areas. See, Scott, James C. (1972) “Patron-Client Politics and Political Change in Southeast Asia,” in American Political Science Review, 66 (1): 91-113


The structure of chena cultivation which I explained here was particular for generally flat and virtually featureless geographical locations of dry zone areas. For more details of this system see, Gunasinghe, Newton (1985) Peasant Agrarian Systems and Structural Transformation in Sri Lanka, in Capital and Peasant Production, ed. Charles Abeyesekera. Colombo: Social Scientists Association. Pp 195-229

This was the common notion of most of the colonial officers in that time. They considered chena’s productions as evil foods. “And the grain sown in chenas is evil food, heating the blood, and bringing fever and the foulest of all diseases, parangi” (Wolf, 1913 [2003]: 8).

Pay attention to this quotation of one of the colonial administrators in the end of nineteenth century on chena cultivation, “Chena cultivation prevents civilized habits and enterprise; it is unwholesome and unhealthy; it is incompatible with paddy or other more remunerative cultivation because the working times clash; it destroys forest resources, and the rotation of the soil prevents any permanent improvement of the land” (Rhys-Davids, 1871: 93, quoted from Perera, 1985: 22).
Leonard Woolf, AGA of Hambantota, a dry zone district in southern part of the island, in his fictional description, *Village in the Jungle* (1913), revealed; "the villagers owned no jungle themselves; it belonged to the Crown, and no one might fell a tree or clear a chena in it without a permit from the Government. It was through these permits the headmen had his hold upon the villagers. Application for one had to be made through him; it was he who reported if a clearing had been made without one, or if a man, having been given one, cleared more jungle than it allowed him to clear. ..." (Woolf, [1913] 2003: 21).

Under the British administration in 19th century, except the areas in which commercial plantation economy spread, colonial state activities of providing focused mainly two dry zone areas: Jaffna peninsula and Batticaloa area. These two areas were relatively free from malaria. There were several reasons for this. During the Dutch period, Catholic Missionaries developed good education, healthcare facilities in these two areas. British strengthened this legacy of these two areas. But, the rest of the dry zone was to be in a state of neglect. See, Peiris, G.H. (1996) *Development and Changes in Sri Lanka, Geographical Perspectives*, New Delhi: Macmillan Press, pp. 140-41

Unsatisfactory economic and health conditions in the beginning of the twentieth century had affected Puttalam district. Unfavorable economic and health conditions damaged human life of the district. This situation could be clearly understood with the birth and death statistics in the district. In early twentieth century, the death statistics increased considerably compared to birth statistics in Puttalam district.

**Table 3.9 Death and Birth in Puttalam District in 1900 to 1904**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Birth</th>
<th>Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1033</td>
<td>983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>1013</td>
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<td>1902</td>
<td>973</td>
<td>1166</td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1132</td>
<td>1012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Administration Reports of AGA on the Puttalam and Chillaw District for 1904, Colombo: Ceylon Government Press

In the early years of 1930s, malaria epidemic spread all over the island. A population of nearly 500,000 was affected. The epidemic claimed the lives of about 125,000 people. One of the severely damaged provinces from the epidemic was Northwestern province. For more details see: Seneviratne, K.N. (1980) "Health, Politics and Social Changes in Sri Lanka," *The Round Table*, No. 280, p. 393; Silva, K.M. (1973b) "The History and Politics of the Transfer of Power," in *History of Ceylon*, P, 501
This situation was not particular to Kurulubedde. During the early decades of
twentieth century, many malaria affected villages in the dry zone areas were
abandoned as all the inhabitants died or left those villages. Administrative reports
of GA and AGA showed this situation clearly. For instance, see Woolf, 1983
[1962]: 215

Demarcation between Kandyan Sinhalese and low country Sinhalese started as a
political demarcation since 16th century, particularly when Kandyan kingdom
was established during the Portuguese time (the central highlands which
remained an appurtenant of the Sinhalese Kingdom Kotte up to last decades of
16th century became the venue of an independent Sinhalese Kingdom with
Kandy as its capital. From that time, until the annexation of the Kandyan
kingdom by the British almost two centuries later, most parts of the low lands of
Sri Lanka remained successively under Portuguese and Dutch, confining the
domain of the Kandyan kings to an extent of territory in the interior, the size and
configuration of which varied periodically). From that time, Sinhelese, who
were under the Kandyan throne were considered as up-country or Kandyan
Sinhalese and who were under colonial rulers were considered as low country
Sinhalese. When the census enumerations conducted during British period, the
Sinhalese population was regarded as consisting of these two groups. Even after
the independence, this dichotomy has tended to be considered in census report
although it had lost its significance gradually. For instance, enumeration of
Sinhalese population in Census of 1953 was conducted under this dichotomy.
However, after 1960s, this dichotomy has tended to be discarded in official data.
Perspectives, New Delhi: Macmillan Press, pp. 16-21, and Ivan, Victor (1990)
Social Background of Modern Sri Lankan Insurgents, pp. 100-101

Contraceptive prevalence rate for married women, age of 15-49, increased from
32.0 per cent in 1975 to 55.0 per cent in 1982, and then to 62.0 per cent in 1987.
By 1993, the rate rose further to 66.0 per cent. For detail see, Kiribanda, B.M
of Economic Change in Sri Lanka, ed. W.D. Lakshman. Colombo: Sri Lanka
Association of Economists

Paddy farming has been treated as the foundation or the base of the rural
economy, the pivot around which the economic and cultural life of the village
revolves. Although it has been true that there were a number of non-paddy
economic activities engaged by people of the rural areas from ancient time, it
was considered that the basis of the rural economy remained with paddy
cultivation. The social beliefs, customs of the village have been closely
integrated with the system of paddy cultivation. Generally, the paddy cultivation
in dry zone villages depended on the amount of water, which village tanks held
in the concerned cultivating season. Almost all paddy lands in dry zone were
irrigated from the tanks. When village tanks did not have enough water, paddy
cultivation failed. But, most of the villagers used to identify their occupation as paddy cultivators. Woolf, in his fictional description, "Village in the Jungle" (1913), revealed; ‘If you asked them what their occupation was, they would have replied 'the cultivation of rice'; but in reality they only cultivated rice about once in ten years" ((Woolf, [1913] 2003: 8).

There were not official records regarding these paddy land distribution in Kurulubedde. I got information on paddy land distribution from office holders of RDS from 1957 to 1964 and first generation paddy land holders in the village.

For instance, in the year 2000, the then PA government recruited 16,000 degree holders to public sector. Again in 2005, another 40,000 degree holders were recruited to the public sector. On both occasions, these degree holders were not appointed to particular posts. Also, they were not kept on a proper salary scale. For instance, when the PA government recruited 40,000 degree holders in 2005, these recruited degree holders were required to undergo a six-month compulsory training period that mainly targeted the improvement of their computer skills and English language. During this training period, these recruits were given only a monthly allowance (Rs. 6000 per month). After this training period, these degree holders were attached to the government institutions although those institutions did not have particular vacancies or subject areas for those new recruits. Ironically, many degree holders who were working in private sector and earning well gave up their jobs and entered the public sector.

In this context, I would like to point out one interesting remark regarding the call center employees of urban India that sharply contrasts with the university education in post colonial Sri Lanka and the reality of economic liberalization which was introduced in Sri Lanka after 1977 (see chap: three; p. 86). These call centers have become the most recent development in post-reform urban India.

"The most important services, however, is the training given to graduates of state institutions of higher education that creates a large pool of technically adept, English-speaking workers available for hire. Although many new stories about the growth of call centers mention this pool of labor, almost none of the reports, especially in the foreign press, comment on the fact that this is the remarkable result of a conscious Nehruvian import-substituting, socialist, autarchic model of development. ...current situation is the direct result of at least two generations of state-sponsored investment in scientific and technical education. These workers are not, for the most part, graduates of private universities; their university educations are obtained almost free of charge in public institutions; probably the cheapest education of such high quality to be found anywhere in the world. The success of the call centers hinges on the availability of this labor force, which can supply labor power of superior quality at a tenth of the price that would be paid in the USA or the UK. Of course, the 300,000 ... collage graduates hired by call centers in the last two years benefit
the Indian state by helping to increase the tax base and boosting domestic
spending and, thus tax collection. More importantly, these call centers absorb
the most politically problematic sector of the workforce, the educated
unemployed” (Sharma and Gupta, 2006: 3-4).

Government has appointed these officers in rural areas keeping less than five
hundreds families under them. Main responsibility of this officer is to take care
of pregnant women in rural areas (to give advice on pregnancy, better foods,
vaccination of new-born children etc).

Regarding the details on the vertical links between the village organizations and
government administration for direction and guidance, see, Jansen, E.A. (1984)
‘Incorporation and the Relationship between Local Level Officials and
Peasants,’ in Incorporation and Rural Development, ed. H. Herringa et al. The
Netherlands: Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation.

In the beginning of every April, there is a customary and traditional festival at
this shrine. In 2006, around fifty villagers gathered and did their customary
celebration at this shrine.

General Certificate Examination of Ordinary Level (GCE O/L). According to
the Sri Lankan education system, students must pass this examination to go on
to 10+2 education (Advanced Level) and this is the pre qualification for low
level public sector employments like bus conductors, police constables, army
solders etc.

When I went to Serukale for my second fieldwork in February 2007, Sirivardene
had died of heart attack. His mother, Sittamma was also not in good health. She
was the oldest villager I met in the village. On my last date of second fieldwork,
I attended her funeral.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cross castes</th>
<th>Aluthwatte</th>
<th>Nelligaha -wile</th>
<th>Harumn -wile</th>
<th>Kandulasseg -ode</th>
<th>Cumulative total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goigama + Drummer</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goigama + Durawe</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goigama + Achari</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>01</td>
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<td>04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goigama + Gigereymaker</td>
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<td>Karawe + Durewa</td>
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<td>Karawe + Drummer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karawe + Achari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s survey, 2006
In the initial level, my identification on the inter-caste marriages was based on electoral list of the village. After that, I confirmed my identification during my stay in the village, and identified several other such marriages which I could not recognize from the electoral list.

For more details regarding these caste specific names system among the Sinhalese, see, Newton Gunasinghe (1990) *Changing Socio-Economic Relations in the Kandyan Countryside*, Colombo: Social Scientists’ Association, Pp 110-12

When government follows mass recruitment of degree holders to the public sector as in 2000 and 2005 (see end note No. 17 in this chapter), party political identity is not considered. But, political identity and political recommendation become a decisive factor when appointments are done on individual basis.