

Srilankan Refugees in the Rehabilitation Centres in Kanyakumari District

K.S. Soumya and *I. Jalaja Kumari

Department of History, Holy Cross College (Autonomous), Nagercoil - 629 004.

Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli - 627012.

*Corresponding Author - Email: jalajakumari@holycrossngl.edu.in.

ABSTRACT

Refugees are people who have fled from their motherland because of war, ethnic conflict and personal danger. They are extremely displaced people with a well-founded fear of persecution in their countries on the basis of race, religion, nationality, political beliefs and unable to return to their own countries. Ceylon Tamils, from time immemorial, were the original inhabitants of Ceylon and India. Britishers also brought the Indian Tamils to Sri Lanka from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu to work in rubber, tea and coffee plantation mainly as labourers. At that time Indian Tamils has enjoyed all civil rights including voting rights. But Sinhalese formed the majority in the Ceylon Society, they feared the Tamils may overcome the Sinhalese in their own soil. In the meanwhile, the government enacted New Citizenship Act No.18 of 1948 and No.3 of 1965 designed to deny citizenships and voting right to the Indian Tamils. As a result of Citizenship Act, the Tamil Women had lost their earlier voting right. The Lankan Tamils were in better position than Sinhalese in the field of Employment and university education before and after independence. During the election of 1956, Sinhalese majority people began to complain to the then government and discriminated against the minority Tamils in their own country in the field of higher education and in the government employment sector. The question of Sinhalese as Official Language Act also made many Ceylon Tamils including women to quit the job. The serious problems mounted the pressure and created the civil war. So they created unnecessary problems to start the civil war in 1983. This paved the way for the Tamils women to migrate to India as refugees.

Introduction

Sri Lankan Tamils who came to Tamil Nadu as refugees who lost their property during the civil war in Sri Lanka. There are two types of Tamils in Sri Lanka 1. Native Tamils 2. Hill Tamils who were taken from Tamil Nadu during the British rule to develop and maintain tea plantations in the hilly areas of Sri Lanka. But when the hill Tamils dominated the Tamil origins, there arose the problem that ended with civil wars.

In Kanyakumari District there are four active refugee camps namely Perumalpuram, Pazhavilai Gnaranvilai and Kozhivilai. Perumal Puram refugee camp, to located in Agastheeswaram Taluk, it has 542 peoples, Pazhavilai has 211 people, Gnaranvilai has 125 peoples and Kozhivilai has 320 people. The Srilankan refugees are protected by the Tamil Nadu government under various schemes.

Objectives of the Study

The article entitled, Sri Lankan Refugees in the Rehabilitation Centres in Kanyakumari District with Special Reference to Women and Children, is very much helped to understand various things related to Sri Lankan Refugees in Kanyakumari District.

- To analyse the causes and the various phases of the arrival of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu, Specifically in Kanyakumari District.
- To know about the rehabilitation campus in Kanyakumari District and understand the life condition of refugees who are in the rehabilitation camps.
- To focus the miseries and the various needs of the refugees especially their demand about Indian Citizenship.
- To access the government policy as well as the voluntary organizations towards the wellbeing of the refugees.
- To examine the condition of women and children and their needs in the various aspects.

Keywords

Lankan Tamils - Citizenship Act – Sri Lankan Refugees – Native Tamils – Hill Tamils - Rehabilitation Campus - Rehabilitation Department Office.

Government administration

As for as India is concerned, the central government gets assistance for the refugees and the state government takes care of them. The state government implement the action plans for the refugee's population and submits them to central government to get the appropriate expenditure. However in terms of the interests of the Sri Lankan Tamils, not only the central government is helping but also the state government is giving its full contributions in various projects.

The Tamil Nadu government Rehabilitation Department Office is located in the fourth flore of Ezhilagam, Chennai. Commissioner of Rehabilitation Department and other officers are present here. Under the Rehabilitation Department and other officers are present here. Under the Rehabilitation Department District Collector, Assistant District Collector, (general) special District Collector for refugees etc. are responsible for the refugee's population in each district. Also the camps will be under the supervision of the local authority of the taluk, where the campus are locating.

Identity Card

Sri Lankan Tamil refugees were issued identity cards with their basic details and family photograph. Such identity cards will be issued immediately after registration at the refugee hall camp. Since, 2007, the refugees in the camps have been given personal identity cards issued by the department of Rehabilitation and District administration, and also have been registered under the Aadhaar ID card scheme of the government of India.

Censorship

In the early days, the refugee settlements functioned as protective zones. Each camp is staffed with police officers and intelligence officers. There are restrictions like returning to the location by evening. Even though the restrictions have eased over time and refugee people are moving like the people of Tamil Nadu, even today, the system of census of refugees by government officials is in practice. Census of refugee population is conducted on the first and third Sundays of every month by the camp Revenue Inspector and Intelligence Department. Even today these camps are surveillance by intelligence agencies, police etc. inside the camps.

Aids related to Education

The government of Tamil Nadu have launched number of schemes for the development of education of the refugees.

- i) Anganwadi center in the camps itself.
- ii) Free coaching
- iii) In expensive bicycle
- iv) In expensive lap top
- v) Rs. 20000 tuition assistance for first generation engineering students.
- vi) Education assistance for higher education students
- vii) Allotment of five seats each in all government backward welfare hostels.

Under these schemes 16 students from Perumal Puram and 11 students from Pazhavilai are benefited. Though opportunities for engineering education have been available with the help of the Tamil Nadu government in the subsequent times, Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are not admitted in the government medical college till date. Only few students are studying in private colleges. The Tamil Nadu government has addressed that Sri Lankan refugee students completing their school education in Tamil Nadu can also participate in the general examination for engineering colleges under general category. Following this, eligible Sri Lankan Tamil refugee students continue their engineering education by participating in the public consultation for engineering education.

Job Opportunity

No special employment opportunities, have been created by the government for the refugees. In the early days there were restrictions on leaving the camp for employment. Now they have gradually decreased. Refugees are doing the job available to them according to the location of the campus. Most of the refugees are involved especially is painting work. Some educated people worked in private companies. Refugees do not have government employments permits. Some time there are causes of denial of employment in private companies on the grounds of being a refugee even if qualified charitable organizations working in the camps provide some vocational training and support for small business.

Altra India

Altra India – This compulsory started working in refugee camps only after 2004. However the company carried out work with emphasis on the construction of toilet and permanent house in the area currently, it is implementing programs like training, credit assistance to improve livelihood.

Leprosy India

Leprosy India implementing the child Nutrition programme. It is carrying old works such as providing nutritional food for children and providing educational equipment. Multipurpose social service centers are doing their best in the camps near their premises according to their financial resources. Housing construction, toilet construction vocational training are provided to them.

Charities and Aids

In case of working among the SriLankan Tamil refugees, the work can be continued with the permission of the Rehabilitation Department of the Tamil Nadu Government. In that way, various charitable organizations are doing rehablits taken work for SriLankan tamil refugees with the permission of Tamil Nadu Governments Rehabilitation Department notable among them are,

Ezha Etheliyar Rehabilitation Corporation

Ezha Etheliyar Rehabilitation Association is a charity organization run by Sri Lankan Tamil for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. It has been working in Sri Lankan refugee camps since it's incept. Its activities include grew up structures, educational assistance, formation of self – help group and awareness regarding certifications.

Special care for women and children

The women and children from these camps were benefited by the various schemes like Marriage Assistance Scheme, Girl Child Protection Scheme, Scholarship for destitute,

Scholarship for the differently abled, Widow's Allowance, Providing free sewing machine to women who know sewing, Chief Medical Insurance Scheme, Burial Scheme.

Clothes, Utensils

One a year, the government used to provide cloths over been used to make it possible for people to pick up the clothes they need to Co-op Tax. Coupons are issued for purchase of dhoti, towel, Baniyan, mat, bed sheet, etc. for men and saree, skirt, jacket, bed sheet etc. for women at the price fixed by the government. Similarly, children are given coupons to buy their cloths. Aluminium utensils worth Rs.250 are provided by the government. Once in two years apart from these, inset of the governments social welfare schemes implemented for the people of Tamil Nadu have also been extended to Sri Lankan Tamils.

Conclusion

Thus the government as well as social organizations rendered meritorious services to the welfare of the refugees especially women and children. But these are not fully satisfy the needs of them. They need more care and measures. The women and Children from the camps are not satisfied with their adequate facilities. They need more facilities to run a healthy life. The demanded to provide Indian citizenship to them. They argued then only they can get Ration Card and Government jobs to led a healthy life. But the Indian Government not ready to provide Indian Citizenship to them because of fear and confusion. The Indian government is ready to send them back to their own mother country but they are not willing. So their life is a complex problem in the Rehabilitation camps.

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