

IMPACT OF NEW HOUSING SCHEME ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE ESTATE WORKERS

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Abstract

The Plantation sector occupies a significant position in Sri Lanka's economy contributing almost 30% of foreign exchange to the country. The British colonial administration introduced the cultivation of tea, rubber and coconut as commercial crops in the late 1800s. Among these three export crops, tea is the most important crop and the tea industry is still the single largest agricultural export industry in Sri Lanka. British brought most of plantation labour from South India Wesumperuma (1986), Hollup (1994), Kurian (1982), Bandarage (2005). These people were given *line rooms* with poor infrastructural facilities. Each '*line*' is a long barrack building with 10-12 rooms. The '*double line*' which is back to back, can contain as many as 24 households (Hollup: 1994: p.53). However, after the nationalization in 1975 saw an upturn in welfare conditions of estate community. The intention of the government was to extend the right to every plantation worker to live in a separate individual house with possible facilities aimed at enhancing the quality of life of the workers.

Purpose of this research was to identify the impact of the new housing settlement which was carried out by the government in the plantation sector as an alternative to the contemporary line rooms to the quality of life of the workers. This study has two research methods namely, survey method and case study method. Both qualitative and quantitative data has been used. 100 house units has been selected randomly as the sample in the estate Carolina, in Ambagamuwa Divisional Secretariat Division, NuwaraEliya District, Sri Lanka.

Research findings are generally positive people happy with the visual appearance. However, the quality of life is depends on their ability to create and defend the use value space, their homes and surroundings. Due to low education level and the dependent mentality of the estate workers they were unable to reach to the satisfied level.

Keywords: Estate Workers, Quality of life, Welfare, New Housing Settlement, Dependent Mentality
