



Research Paper

A study of the historical variables that took place in *Hinidumpattu* during the British era

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ABSTRACT

Considering the involvement of the natives as an essential factor in maintaining strong British rule, the British formed a systematic administrative organization it was based on the agent system introduced by the 1833 Colebrook – Cameron reforms. According to the Colebrook – Cameron provincial reforms, *Hinidumpattu* is governed under the supervision of the assistant government agent of the Galle District. To coordinate native officers with British administration assistant agents, the division was divided into several “pattu” or “Mudliyarwasm” In this way, *Hinidumpattu* was administered under a Mudliyar. He had civil, administrative, and judicial powers and was responsible to the deputy agent for his works. It was on this basis that British rule in *Hinidumpattu* was established. The main research problem of this research is to study historical variables that took place in the *Hinidumpattu* during the British period in Sri Lanka. A mixed-method approach is used for this research. Data collection is mainly based on primary and secondary literature and content analysis methods used for data analysis. This research revealed that *Hinidumpattu* is significantly associated with the socio-economic and political influences of British ruling power.

Keywords: Colebrook – Cameron, government Agent, Galle District, *Hinidumpattu*

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1. Introduction

As there often appeared a “thinnest” rising upon Haycock Mountain, the local populace used to identify that area as “Hinduma”. Which name eventually converted to Hiniduma.

The Historical roots of ‘Hinidum Pattu’ date back to the early period of the Anuradhapura kingdom. King Vattagamini Abbaya alias Valagamba (89-77 B.C.) secretly organized his army in the southern part of Sri Lanka. Ruwankanda a place located at *Hinidumpattu* can be identified as a fortified military fort of King Valagamba. Legend has it that during the reign of King Vijayabahu I villagers such as Thambalegame and Pallegama supplied the king with the necessary weapons. The latest *Hinidumpattu* was made a distant royal province under the rule of the king. It was used

by the Kandyan kings as a strategic fortress (වනරත්න හිමි, 1994, 16-17).

Until the conquest of the Kandyan kingdom by the British, the people of *Hinidumpattu* provided the necessary services to the Kandyan courts. From the villages of Gigum Maduwa and Thambalegama, the royal court provided royal attention with dance performances and weapons. The officer on duty in Hiniduma province has participated in the selection of a suitable person for the post of Diyawadana Nilame of the Temple of the Tooth. According to that tradition, the Divisional secretaries of Tawalama and Neluwa are already voting for the post of Diyawadana Nilame (Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance part II 1931). Even though Hiniduma is a historically significant area in the British period it is unable to find any studies conducted based on Hiniduma.

Therefore, this research will be an original historical analysis of *Hinidumpattu* during the British period.

1.1. Geographical Significance

Hinidumpattu had claimed aforesaid heritages and is presently situated in the Galle District of the southern province representing lands in extent 33721 square miles. It borders Sinharaja forest and the eastern limit from the North, Morawak Korale and the eastern limit of Pasdun Korale from the east, Weligama Korale, Talpe Pattu, and Gangaboda Pattu from the South, Gangaboda Pattu, Bentota Walalawitita Korale and eastern border of Pasdun Korale from the West (The Ceylon Manual, 1910.P. 306-308).

Hinidumpattu is surrounded by Pattinigala Rock (1986) to the North, Hay Cook Hill (2167) to the west Kalubovitiyana Hill (2913) to the south Dettigala (2337) to the east, (the National Atlas of Sri Lanka, survey department 1888. P. 24-25) making it almost impossible to travel about due to extremely difficult passes. Since ancient times sailing vessels arriving at Galle harbor had used Hiniduma hill as a landmark. This area is situated between 6- 17 degrees and 6-25.5 degrees to the northern latitudes and between 80.19 to 89.25 to the East longitudes. (the National Atlas of Sri Lanka Survey Department, 1988, P. 24-25) Geographically *Hinidumpattu* lies in the west zone.

The significant feature of *Hinidumpattu* waterways is that this area has been fully nurtured by the river gingaga with its branches. According to the following way of "gingaga" the Galle district has been divided geographically into two triangle parts. The government Agent of the Galle district that the Galle district would open up with several bridges if built across gingaga which would greatly help the development of the plantation sector Administration report 1906 pi GA, SP, P.D22) One of the primary streams of ginganga begins from the hills of the Matara district bordering *Hinidumpattu* to the East and South. Bentara River begins from the Haycock mountain bordering *Hinidumpattu* top west.

There appear two main kinds of soil in *Hinidumpattu* they are classified as reddish–yellow opsonic soil and wet upland regressed soil. Reddish yellow cultured podzolic soil which is found abundantly in the region is rather suitable for the cultivation of crops owing to the ideal texture of the soil and the following of water. Tea, rubber, coconut, and cinnamon-like permanent crops are widely grown in the regions containing this soil (The National Atlas of Sri Lanka, Survey Department, 1988, P. 36-37)

Hinidumpattu region is pulled situated within the west zone. Most of the rainfall received here is given by the southwest monsoon wind *Hinidumpattu* gets higher precipitation during the May to September period when the southwest monsoon enters the island's wet zone. Northeast monsoon does not precipitate that much rain in the region due to the central mountains blocking the path towards that direction

however, the *Hinidumpattu* area receives higher precipitation due to low air pressure conditions and also to frequent tropical cyclones. The normal annual temperature of this region is about 16 centigrade.

Galle district is fully blessed with tropical evergreen natural vegetation and its physical and climatical factors have directly helped the growth of estate plantation. Western nations were keen on growing cinnamon, coffee tea rubber, and fruits in these regions and considered erring marketing facilities available. Sometimes they selected the ideal crops for different areas through vitreous experiments.

1.2. Research problem

The main research problem of this research is to study historical variables that took place in the *Hinidumpattu* during the British period in Sri Lanka.

2. Research Methodology

A mixed-method approach is used for collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative data. This process mainly depended on a desk-based review of the literature. In this context, as the first step of the data collection process, the researcher was able to gather subject-related secondary information from some text documents. However, it is important to mention here as it is difficult to find significant secondary information about this research primary sources became most prominent. Relevant contemporary documents preserved in the Sri Lankan National Archives were scrutinized, such as contemporary Hansards, contemporary newspapers, Ceylon Blue Books, Ferguson's Ceylon Directory, etc. Therefore, this research is original research based on the most reliable contemporary information. Data analysis was conducted based on the content analysis method. When any information was incomplete and seemed less reliable, contemporary records and materials were used to cross-check and extract reliable information. In the end, it was possible to arrive at certain plausible conclusions, after comparing all related details with each other.

3. Results and Discussion

As discussed above this research is mainly conducted to study the historical variables that took place of the *Hinidumpattu* during the British period in Sri Lanka. To do that relevant results and findings were discussed under the below components.

3.1. Paddy cultivation

Paddy cultivation in *Hinidumpattu* was flourishing even at the beginning of the 20th century. The government agent had mentioned in his report that the main livelihood of this area in 1920 was paddy cultivation (administration report 1920 GA, SP, PI, CII) The great income recession prevailed during 1929-1932 and had badly affected half the booming economy

of Sri Lanka. *Hinidumpattu* was not affected as much by that downfall due to the noon functioning of the plantation economy their paddy cultivation in *Hinidumpattu* was not affected. So many altheas the market prices of native rich had gone down rapidly

3.2. Chena Cultivation

Villagers in *Hinidumpattu* had paid keen attention to Chena forming as well as paddy forming owing to their commercial value of them. According to the revenue reports other grains "like gingerly, kurakkan, menri, etc (Table). grown on dry land contributed to the livelihood of these villagers.

Year	Acreage under Cultivation
1860	100
1865	61
1870	653
1875	295
1880	301

Table 1. Chena Cultivation in *Hinidumpattu* (Ceylon Blue Book, 1860 – 1880)

Due to the rules and regulations implemented on the Chena cultivation of the southern province from time to time farming of grains was further discouraged by 1904. Total acreage under this kind of forming in the Galle district for the same year was 708 acres only (Ceylon Blue Book 1940, PV, P.78)

Lanka Development Act of 1935 provided the government agent with the necessary powers enabling him to take suitable steps to restore Chena cultivation. By the year 1937, the state council also made a broad study on the agricultural sector. Mr. Philip Gunawardana, who represented the Avissawella electorate from the " Lanka Smasamajist Party" pointed out that there should be made radical reforms in the agricultural sector (Hansard 1937, P.2066) The program to restore agriculture begun in 1935 expedited the growth of paddy cultivation in Southern province up to 36,449 acres by 1948. In *Hinidumpattu* it has grown up to 1649 acres for paddy farming (Census of Agriculture 1952, P.IV, P.14) And 365 acres for Chena cultivation (Census of Agriculture 1952, PIV, P.14).

3.3. Coffee cultivation

Sri Lankan people already possessed knowledge of Europeans here. They used the young leaves of it for their curry making and flowers for offering religious occasions. Later on, the commercial interest attached to the commodity of offer expressed by the Europeans and the procedures adopted by them to fetch high profits was first witnessed by the people of southern provinces. This development is clearly illustrated by the observation of coffee cultivation in the Galle district by pattus during the period from 1860 to 1880 (Table 2).

Sri Lankan coffee plantations had reached their peak love of development by the year 1870 subsequently coffee plantations were devastated by the coffee leaf disease that

Mudaly Division	1860 Acreage	1865 Acreage	1870 Acreage	1875 Acreage	1880 Acreage
Four Gravest	-	-	-	-	-
Talpepattu	16	16	20	20	79
Wellabadapattu	-	08	07	09	20
Bentota – walallwiti korale	04	14	-	-	155
Gangabodapattu	12	07	18	-	15
Hinidumpattu	04	11	04	384	296
Total	72	24	49	413	565

Table 2. Coffee cultivation (Ceylon Blue Book, 1860–1880)

However, much attention was drawn to local agriculture due to the serenity of food items arising with the break out of World War 1 and also due to the downfall of the prices of plantation crops like rubber. This increased grain cultivated acreage up to 850, in *Hinidumpattu* in 1918 (Ceylon blue book P.Q.4-5). This number increased further up to 1400 acres by 1919 (Ceylon blue book,1915, PI, P.V.4-5) Anyhow this improvement seemed to be declining by 1935 when only 125 acres went under the grain crops in *Hinidumpattu*.

began in 1870 it gradually grew year by year. Planters in the upcountry are very much concerned about the inevitable debacle to be encountered. Although various coffee beans were introduced, they also failed those experiments carried out successfully in *Hinidumpattu* (Table 3). The *Udugama* area achieved successful results. As a result, some improvement could be seen within the Galle district after 1879 (administration Report 1879, PI, PP.115-116) Majority of the acreage that went under the coffee plantation belonged to *Hinidumpattu*.

Year	Galle District (Acreage)	Hinidumpattu (Acreage)
1880	565	296
1881	1184	780
1882	1565	650
1883	2594	1230
1884	2502	1125
1885	330	87
1886	320	84
1887	310	78
1888	270	65
1889	122	76
1890	05	03

Table 3. The majority of the acreage that went under the coffee plantation belonged to *Hinidumpattu* (Ceylon Blue Book, 1880-1890)

3.4. Tea plantation

Experiments on growing tea plants in Sri Lanka soil were readily made well before the "coffee epidemic" invaded the upcountry region. A government agent of the southern province had mentioned in his report the successful progress achieved in the tea cultivation in Morawak korale by the year 1879 (Administration report 1879, PI, GA, SP, P,115-116). Mr. Dobry Britisher carried out several types of research on some plants and crops around Hiniduma and Udugama. As a result, tea plantations began to spread in Hinidumpattu and 10 acres were under tea plantation in 1879 (Administration Report 1879, PI, GA, SP, P.115-116)

Year	Acres
1863	621
1868	525
1873	425
1878	324

Table 4. Pasture land reservations in *Hinidumpattu* (Ceylon blue book 1863 -1878)

There were 34 estates with tea plants in the Galle district including 02 in *Hinidumpattu* by 1887. The acreage under tea was 170, which grew up to 216 acres by 1890 (Ceylon blue book 1891, 576-577).

3.5. Cattle Farming

The cow had to be valued as the wealth of villagers. This animal fulfilled the necessities of agriculture. People of

Hinidumpattu, where the transportation facilities existed at the minimum used to harness bulls in the mode of "Thawalama" for the transportation of goods. Herds of cattle driven to the forests were brought back once again to the fields at the end of the harvesting period. Stray settlement proved a big nuisance to the commercial crops introduced during the British period. Then the government, as a remedy to this problem introduced certain ordinances prohibiting the entering of cattle into the plantation areas without permission. These rules and regulations did not have any influence on *Hinidumpattu* as there were not many plantations existed there. British rulers who took action to destroy cattle forming in the upcountry had one turn taken to developing data to explain the pattern of allotting pasture land reservations in *Hinidumpattu* (Table 4).

3.6. British Land Acts

Along with the introduction of commercial crops in 1886, there arose a demand for lands. Therefore, those lands that could not be claimed ownership had been proclaimed as crown land act no: 1 o 1897 was introduced. This empowered the government to take over uncultivated lands in the low country and sell them to planters for the cultivation of tea

Enforcement of the Land Act of 1897 was activated in this area too by 1911. Accordingly, some 1731 acres were taken over by the government and had earned an income of r 65948.75 by selling those lands. (Administration report 1911-12, PI GA, SP, P.D.5) There operated a scheme by the catholic church to purchase such land and distribute it among people. After the Buddhist awakening on the matter a Justifiable policy was formulated for the protection of Buddhists (Administration Report 1911-12 PI, GA, SP, P.D.7) As a result, there had arisen in this area a favorable change in the procedure of Lanka sled by the government.

Land Development Act of 1935 was introduced a new which no amendment was made to any existing act.

The main purpose of this act was to elate the contemporary plantation economy and to protect middle-class citizens from native and foreign entrepreneurs about the purchasing of lands. Moreover, the Land Development Act of 1935 fully abolished the auction sale of land. A chance to obtain a slew of land A chance to obtain lands openly given to the landless who were interested in cultivation work. Also, the abolition of the monopoly of purchasing land permitted to only one class took place middle -class people were granted 25 to 25-acre plots of land for a decided amount farmers were granted one to two-acre plots under the village extension scheme. Under this scheme, 1st stage Halwitigala colony was 50 persons and in the 2 stage, another 100 persons were given lands of the newly introduced Highland colonization scheme. The government agent of Galle had recognized this area as a highland colony flourishing with tea cultivation.

3.7. The ownership of inherited lands

Native individuals who had become the new rich by accumulating wealth were inclined towards plantation ventures. They made use of the poor economic conditions of farmers to purchase their small plots of land. As a result, the villagers of *Hinidumpattu* had to be the owners of a small portion of the land. Cultivation of this land was done according to the "change hand system" (Phattu maru). Meanwhile, another kind of landless citizen appeared due to this inherited land which had been divided among family members and become uneconomical to do any cultivation work thereupon selling to settle the mortgages disowned their Land.

This is how the inherited land owned by the Pahala Made Gamage family household at Neluwa in the Hiniduma area is divided among the family circle.

Upa appuwe who was the second of the made Gamage clan had owned almost half of Pahala-Made Gamage. He had four (4) sons by the name Baba Appu, Eliya Hinnihami, Adrian, and several daughters.

Middle-class people purchased very little land in *Hinidumpattu*, due to the main reason being the non-availability of required infrastructure facilities. The growth of estate plantations in Hiniduma from 1935 to 1948 clarifies this factory.

There was no change marked in the number of registered estates, by 1935 04 registered estates were operating in *Hinidumpattu* by 1948 (Table 5).

Estate	Owner	Acreage	Cultivated	Tea	Rubber	Coconut	Others
Hingalgoda	M.C. Abdul Raheem & bros.	711	346	192	146	08	-
Kirilla Ketiya	P.D. Ranathunga	59	38	-	36	02	-
St. annes	-	127	115	06	105	-	-
Island	-	39	38	08	12	08	09

Table 5. The ownership of inherited lands in Hinidumpattu Fergusons Directory 1948.P.67-81

P.M.G. Adiriyen sold this portion of the inheritance to Kariyawasam Godage Adiriyen residing at Mawanana for Rs 80/- on 02 June 1880. After several years the second son of that inheritance to P.M.G.Semaris of Migunatnna. This property had been again mortgaged to Don Jamis Rubassin Gunawardena residing at Lelwala. P.M.G. James mortgaged a part of his emaing land to senanayaka dasilige pintaris residing at mawanana for s 40/- on 23 July 1923. Again P.M.G Jamis had mortgaged a part of his inherited lands to Dasilig Sumanapala in 1929. That mortgage had been settled by P.M.G. Jamis in 1944, when Jamis died in his 72 year in 1945

his inheritance of land which was 1/16 part had been divided among his seven children.

This example explains how the villagers of *Hinidumpattu*, whose lands became smaller and smaller still, with the successive passing of generation to generation accompanied by economic difficulties were compelled to forsake their beloved plots of land through mortgages and freeholds.

Those who were rich enough grabbed those lands and utilized them for the plantation of economic crops.

3.8. Famous Families

One of the leaders of Uva wellassa great rebellion against British rule in 1818, by the name Mampe Vijayaraja Palihawadana, was in hiding at *Hinidumpattu* for some time. Later on, he was imprisoned as a farmer during the period in the prison at Welikada, and at the end of the term, he came back to *Hinidumpattu* to spend the rest of his life there.

His descendants who held various posts under the British used their family names as Wickramanayaka, Charles Edward Wickramanayaka, David de Silva Wickramanayaka, Wiliam de Silva Wickramanayak, etc. Lived at walauwa while Ernon Valentine Wickremanayaka, Karunarathna, and Solomon Dias Wickramanayaka Karunarathna lived in "pattuwe walauwa".

3.9. Development of roads

With the growth of coffee cultivation around 1870, minor roads were built in the southern province. The roadway built from Udugama up to Opatha in 1897 was later connected to the Akuressa – Morawaka road (administration report 1870, GA, SP, P.125). This can be considered as a step taken towards the road development in Hinidum Pattu. The plantation of rubber was considered a major export crop during the first decade of the 20th century European planters were more enthusiastic about that crop spreading rapidly across the low country. As such, Udugama to Opatha

road and from Opatha to Hulandawa road were important for the Transportation of rubber production (Ceylon Blue Book 1906, p.20-21).

However, the road development work in Hinidumpattu remained unimportant even by the first decade of the 20th century (Administration Report 1906, GA, SP, P.D23). There was not a single suitable road even for cart transport that would connect the adjacent areas with the Hiniduma by 1906. 12- Mile cart road was also not connected to any province (Administration Report 1906, GA, SP, P.D23). All the transport needs of Hinidumpattu were met through "thawalama" as the modus operandi. Government agent of Galle had mentioned numerous difficulties in his traveling due to the walking over the bridges made of single truce trunks often put across the river streams, brooks, and canals.

3.10. History of Elections in Hiniduma

During the election of representatives for the first state council held in 1937 Mr.H.W.Amarasuriya a popular planter of the province was elected for the electorate of Udugama. He was popular among the villagers and contested with Neil Hewawitharana a descent doesn't of the family clan of Anagarika Dharmapala. Following is the election result of the Udugama electorate held in 1913.

Mr.H.W. Amarasuriya	-	13501
Mr. Neil Hewawitharana	-	13435
Mr S.D. Srimana	-	2550
Mr. Simon Abeywikrama	-	1412
Majority votes	-	66

At the election held to select representatives for the second state council in 1936 H.W. Amarasuriya had contested the Galle electorate victoriously, whereas m Niel Hewavitharana was elected as M..P for Udugama electorate, defeating M.Simon Abeywikrema. At the denies of Mr. Neil Hewavitharana by-election was held when Mr. Simon Abeywirema won that seat in the council. At the election program held in 1947, the significant feature introduced was party politics. Elections based on the trust and understanding hitherto built up between the voter and the candidate had now changed and the voter was compelled to act on behalf of the political party.

At the parliamentary general election held in 1947, seven candidates contested for the Udugama electorate. Mr.D.S. Gunasekara who contested won the seat with a majority of 5464 votes.

Election Result of Udugama - 1947

D.S. Gunasegaram	U.N.P	-	8975
Nwil de Alwis	Indp	-	3497
D.E. Hettiarchchi	U.N.P	-	3148
P.L.N. Raddalgoda	Indp	-	2003
B. Kulasinha	Indp	-	738
D.P.E. Bertram de Silwa	LSSP	-	719
H.G. Hendrik de Lilva	Indp	-	425
Majority votes			5464

3.11. Education in Hinidumpattu

The British education system had little influence upon Hinidumpattu by the end of the 19th century it appeared that missionary societies having considered the difficulties that prevailed in Hinidumpattu had come forward to provide the populace with relief measures as a result, St, Anne's church was erected at Hiniduma. Catholic father by the name of St Mary's denomination selected the land for the building of the church.

Several of the leading families opted to follow the Christian faith and influenced the common lot to yellow the suit. Consequently, St. Annie's College was established for the benefit of those families who converted to the catholic religion. In 1898, a Swabasha Scholl was established in Opatha. Seventy-one students received their education that year from it with Mr. Jayawaradhana as headmaster.

The reawakening of the Buddhist cultural movement in Hinidumpattu by Anagaraika Dharmapala stirred up religious enthusiasm among the Buddhist populace Establishment of Mahabodhi College at Panangala had been the result of that awakening.

Place where the school situated	Boys	Girls	Amount granted by government Rs.
Delaware	52	32	520.48
Halwitigala	35	25	280.36
Opatha	66	44	624.72
Tawalama	91	-	444.51

Table 6. Swabasha School in Hinidumpattu by 1921 (Ceylon Blue Book 1921 P.R10)

More Swbasha school was set up in Opatha, Talangaha, and Tawalama areas by 1915. There were 53 boys and 53 girls who studied in the nixed school situated at Opatha, on which the government spent Rs .397146. The boys' school established at Tawalama provided education to 102 students

with government expenditure on it standing as Rs. 330/- (Ceylon Blue Book 1916p.rg)

Two Swabasha schools were set up at Halvitigala and Dellawa by the year 1921 following table shows the particulars of the Swabasha School in *Hinidumpattu* by 1921 (Table 6).

3.12. Population

Population and housing statistics of the years 1921 and 1931 as per their divisions by the records in *Hinidumpattu* (Table 7).

House	Population			
	1921	1931	1921	1931
Hiniduma Division	448	460	2009	2144
Habarakada	364	442	1579	1842
Opatha	251	316	1084	1344
Neluwa	347	437	1543	1747
Dellawa	271	301	1093	1298
Total	1721	1956	7308	8375

Table 7. Population in *Hinidumpattu* (Census and Statistical Report 2012)

4. Conclusions

At the beginning of the 20th century, the expansion of commercial crop cultivation in Sri Lanka marked a major change in the socio-economic and political functioning of the country. The Dutch rule in the coastal areas led to the emergence of a commercial economy associated with commercial cropping from a self-sufficient saturated agrarian economy inherent in Sri Lanka. As the British became the rulers of the coastal provinces, they liberated that monopolistic economic policy. After the island became a British colony, a capitalist economy emerged under the agent rule introduced in 1833. The social economic and political transformation brought about by the British rule in *Hinidumpattu* which has various obstacles and road difficulties is signification.

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