



International
Centre for Ethnic Studies

Up-Country Tamils Charting a New Future

2nd and 3rd August, 2017

Call for Papers



For decades, Up-country Tamils have lived at the margins of Sri Lankan society and politics, while being an integral part of the economy as plantation workers. This conference will focus on the ways that Up-country Tamils continue to be marginalized, how far they have entered the mainstream and the difficulties that they have faced along the way. The present moment provides an opportune time for considering the role of Up-country Tamils, and the interactions between majority and minority, and between margin and mainstream in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Since the end of the war in May 2009, most political and academic debates and discussions about ethnic reconciliation have centered on a simplistic Sinhala-Tamil binary, ignoring other ethnic groups and the multiplicity of Tamil identities on the island.

This dialogue will bring together researchers and social activists working on/with Up-country Tamils in Sri Lanka, including historians, economists, sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and civil society leaders to approach challenges and opportunities facing this community



from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Featuring Prof. Daniel Bass, Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, Prof. Tudor Silva, Kalaimagal Thangavelu, Muthulingam Periyasamy, Dr. P. Sahadevan, Dr. M. Mayilvaganan and others, this conference will examine some of the cultural, economic, political and social challenges faced by Up-country Tamils.

Up-country Tamils have always held a precarious position in Sri Lankan society, politics and economics, and this conference will examine the vicissitudes of their relation to other communities on the island and to mainland India. Participants will analyze the complexities associated with the naming of this community, the ways that the identifiers and self-identifications have changed over time, and how they interplay with other bases of identification, such as class, caste and gender. In addition, the conference will examine the nature of their citizenship rights, and the various ways in which Up-country Tamils do not enjoy full citizenship rights in Sri Lanka. The dialogue will use the label "Up-country Tamils" as a locus for a wider discussion on what it means to be an Indian Origin Sri Lankan today.

Abstracts of about 300 words must be submitted on one or more of the following themes:

- ☒ Politics and governance
- ☒ Economics of plantation agriculture

- ☒ Land rights and environmental issues
- ☒ Migration, urbanization and paid domestic helpers
- ☒ Culture and society
 - Language and education
 - Technology/ media
 - Caste and gender
 - Art and literature

The **deadline for the submission of abstracts is 30th, April 2017**. The abstract should include names and institutional affiliations of the authors, the title of the paper, a maximum of five keywords, contact details of the author/s including postal address and email address. Selected candidates will be informed by 30th May 2017. The final paper should be submitted by 15th July, 2017 along with a power point presentation with no more than 25 slides. Please e-mail your abstract to Nadine at nadine.ices@gmail.com and visit our website for further information at <http://www.ices.lk/>.