Ambivalent Attachments: Shifting Notions of Home among Displaced Sri Lankan Tamils

Doctoral thesis by

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Declaration

I do hereby solemnly declare that this submission is my own original work, undertaken independently and without any illegitimate assistance. To the furthest extent of my knowledge and conviction, it contains no material previously published by any other person in its current or similar form, neither has it been accepted as or part of a dissertation for the award of any other degree or qualification within the university or any other institution of higher learning. Where reference is made to previous academic work, due acknowledgement of the respective authors is made both in the text and in bibliography of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I endeavored to maintain my study as adherent as possible to the “Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice” (Leitlinien guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis) cited under §9 of the Promotionsordnung des Promotionsstudiengangs “International Development Studies”, to the best of my ability.

Errors and omissions in this document remain my personal responsibility.

Diotima Chattoraj
Bochum, Germany 2016
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The topic

Sri Lanka, known as the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean', was once famous for its natural scenic beauty (Tambiah 1986: 1). However, in recent years, the name of the island has become associated more with 'civil strife, ethnic violence, youth uprising, and communal discord' as described by Vijayapalan in her book (2014: 1). Kanapathipillai (2003: 89), in her article 'July 1983: The Survivor's' experience', rightly states that the riots of 1983¹ “have left the entire Tamil population of the country insecure and uncertain of their future”. She further states that the riots brought to the forefront the painful fact that Tamils “were identified as Tamils and not as Sri Lankans” (ibid.: 89).

Though the end of the war, as Gerharz (2014: 1) opined, brought “a great deal of hope that sustainable peace would pave the way for development and prosperity”, it also smashed the hopes for an autonomous Tamil state. New problems have arisen and the ethnic amity needed for the economic revival of the country, according to Vijayapalan (2014: 1), has become elusive. The people in the North, according to media reports², continue to face several inhuman problems, like abductions, heavy militarization, even after so many years have passed since the war has ended.

The Oakland Institute³ based in USA reported that the conflict killed around 200,000, displaced more than a million people both internally and externally, destroyed infrastructure across the

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¹ Sri Lanka earned its independence from Britain in 1948. Since then, the island has been involved in ethnic strife between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, however, the 1983 riots were unprecedented in their scale of violence and brutality. This conflict stemmed from Tamil demands to form a separate state in the Northern and Eastern provinces of the country. The Tamil separatist movement gained strength after the passage of the 1972 constitution, which consolidated the political power of the Sinhalese majority and alienated many Tamils. The separatist movement gave rise to the formation of a number of organizations intent on using violence to achieve political objectives. Of these, the LTTE, formed by Prabhakaran, experienced the most rapid growth in size and military strength. These organizations had periodic clashes with the Sinhalese government, and also carried out terrorist actions against civilians. Beginning on July 23, 1983, there was an intermittent insurgency against the Government by the LTTE (also known as the Tamil Tigers), an independent militant organization. After a 26-years long military campaign, finally the Sri Lankan military defeated the LTTE in May 2009 bringing an end to the civil war. Unfortunately, in May 2009, the war ended with the military victory of the Government causing large scale destruction of movable and immovable properties, innumerable civilian casualties, thousands of internally and externally displaced persons, long-term military engagement, political terrorism, communal violence and declining economic conditions (detailed in chapter 2).


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country and took a heavy toll on the lives and livelihoods of the population of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Since the official end of the war, the Sri Lankan Government resettled most of the internally displaced persons (IDPs)\(^4\) and refugees\(^5\) either to their original 'homes' or to some other places within the country. At present, a large number of the displaced persons have returned to their homes whereas many have integrated to the place of their displacement and have settled down. Yet, an estimated 40,000 people are still counted as IDPs who are living either at the welfare centers\(^6\) or with relatives and friends in the North-Eastern provinces of the country. They are waiting to return to their homes. All of them were displaced before April 2008, and most have not been able to return because the state continues to occupy their lands.

The concept of home, which is the main focus of this thesis, has been explored by a number of scholars from a wide variety of angles, thus developing contrasting meanings of the said concept. In empirical research and theoretical concepts, according to Mallett (2004: 65), 'home is variously described as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender,' and migration. Blunt and Dowling (2006) complement these findings and establish the geographical explanation of home with the relational notions of a physical 'place' and a sense of 'belonging'. In addition, Thiranagama (2011) shows contrasting meanings of home and belonging among Northern Sri Lankan Muslim IDPs of

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\(^4\) Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are defined in the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as: “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border”. [http://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html](http://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html), accessed on October 1, 2017.

\(^5\) The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees has adopted the following definition of a refugee (in Article 1.A.2): “Any person who: owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.

\(^6\) In Sri Lanka, 'welfare centers' are public or private premises that house the IDPs. The term has been used regardless of the duration of displacement. Data gathered from UNHCR by the end of 2012 shows that there are several welfare centers in the Northern districts of Sri Lanka housing around 5785 IDPs. I conducted interviews in three such welfare centers located in Jaffna, namely, Gobindpur, Kakhoya and Manyat welfare centers. The number of members vary in each of the welfare centers from around 150-160 families. All of them are housed since 1990 and are not allowed to return to their original homes as they are currently occupied by the military.
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different generations, gender, caste, and class based on their priorities in life. However, the works of
these authors fall short when having a closer look on the different conceptualization of home and
belonging among the Sri Lankan Tamil IDPs who have either returned or integrated or are waiting to
return to their homes. This thesis, in a way, is an extension of the previous studies on this topic
(Thiranagama 2011) as it focuses on the contrasting meaning of homes and the different kinds of
attachment that displaced persons have to their original (past) as well as present homes even after
losing all material and immaterial belongings.

With the collected data from Sri Lanka and India, both being my major destination countries, I show,
that though a large number of the displaced persons have returned to their original homes, still they find
it extremely difficult to survive as they have to start from the very scratch as everything has been
destroyed due to the war. They not only had to rebuild their 'homes', but also had to adapt to the new
environment, which they had left several decades ago. Moreover, returning after a prolonged time is
traumatizing as economic, social, cultural and political conditions at home have completely changed
from the past. They are in continuous fear as to when again they might be asked to move out from their
homes. Yet, different categories of people\(^7\) feel different kinds of attachment towards their home that I
document in chapter five. As Brun (2000) has shown in her research on Sri Lankan Northern Muslim
IDPs and their hosts that the integration brings the feeling of living in someone else's place, which
holds true for the older generations who have integrated at their present locales in either Colombo or
Chennai. In contrast, the young ones, born after displacement, believe their original homes to be a
'strange' and 'a threatening place', as has been shown by Kibreab while talking about the Eritrean
refugees returning to home (2002: 55). To them, their 'original home' is now associated with challenges
and insecurity.

With the aim of having a comparative picture about the articulation of home and belonging among the
Sri Lankan Tamil Displaced persons, residing both in Sri Lanka and India, I applied a multi-sited
approach\(^8\) and visited both the countries in early 2013. This thesis uses a qualitative approach and is

\(^7\) I have categorized people based on their age, gender, class and caste.

\(^8\) Discussed in Chapter 3.
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based on several formal, informal, and semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions and participant observations along with reviewing the available literature and reports. The methodology chapter will provide a more detailed description on how I designed and conducted this research.

1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

Since the end of cold war, an increasing number of people became refugees and IDPs as they were forced to leave their homes because of armed conflicts, ethnic cleansing, internal strife, and systematic violations of human rights. They suffer from conditions of insecurity, destitution, and are acutely in need of protection and sources of survival. Nonetheless, as referred by Mooney (2005: 9), the last couple of decades witnessed the issue of IDPs, which has become a growing problem these days, being placed on the international agenda and recognized as a legitimate matter of international concern. Awareness regarding this global crisis along with the plight of affected populations has also grown since then. Therefore, a normative framework has been developed for addressing this problem and its use is being widely promoted at the national, regional and international levels (Mooney 2005: 9). The United Nations have also developed a set of guiding principles on internal displacement which states that IDPs have the same rights and obligations with the 'locals'\(^9\). They should not be discriminated against 'in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms on the ground that they are internally displaced' (Guiding Principle, Principle 1)\(^10\).

According to UNHCR Global Trends report (2016)\(^11\), by end of 2016, there are 65.6 million uprooted victims of conflict and persecution worldwide. More than 22.5 million of them are refugees while another 40.3 million are IDPs. The reason behind this is that the refugees are taken into less consideration in other states resulting in the increase of the number of IDPs.

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9 The term 'locals' is used to designate people who are registered as residents within a local administrative region, that is, mainly a district and a province as in Sri Lanka.


1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

Displacement in the Sri Lankan context

The Sri Lankan civil war began due to the 'religious and ethnic divides' between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. As soon as the country gained independence in 1948 from the British, the Sinhalese asserted their own identity, making Sinhalese the official language, establishing Buddhism as the official religion, and disenfranchising Tamil migrants who had moved to Sri Lanka from India under British rule to work on tea plantations. This created resentment among the Tamils that led to steady tensions between the two ethnic groups. As a result several anti-Tamil riots cropped up, the bloodiest among being the July 1983 riot fought between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)\(^{12}\) which ended with the military defeat of the LTTE in May 2009. This civil war, according to Thiranagama, involved “...destruction of physical and human infrastructures, the permanent displacement of thousands of people, the pitting of majority against the minorities, and the rise of insurrectionary groups who have turned heroes to oppressors” (2011: 2).

Displacement in the island is mostly linked to the ethnic tensions that escalated into violent riots in 1956, 1958, 1971, 1977, and 1981. However, the 1983 civil war led to major displacements both internally and externally. As per the statement of International Crisis Group\(^{13}\), both sides, throughout, violated international humanitarian law. Evidences say that the military forces violated the law by attacking 'the civilians, hospitals, and humanitarian operations, and that the LTTE violated the law by killing, wounding, or otherwise endangering civilians, including by shooting them and preventing them from leaving the conflict zone even when injured and dying'. During the war, about 900,000 Tamils left the island seeking asylum worldwide like Asia, Europe, Canada, Australia and other places (UNHCR)\(^{14}\). After June 1990, around 210,000 people escaped to Tamil Nadu, the Southernmost state of India, which lies 22 miles away from the island and shares close historic and cultural ties. 70,000 of

\(^{12}\) The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, also called the Tamil Tigers, was formed in 1975 by Vellupillai Prabhakaran. This group was considered to be the supreme amongst all other Tamil militant groups. It was formed with the aim of seeking an autonomous region for the Tamils in the North-Eastern part of the island through armed struggle.


1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

them sought refuge in the refugees camps and the rest stayed with their friends and families (Vijayapalan 2014). In addition, more than 300,000 civilians were displaced internally several times. Eventually, they were housed in camps run by the military. However, those camps, according to International Crisis Group, were 'overcrowded and suffered from severe deficiencies of sanitation, medical care, and food'\(^\text{15}\).

The civil war and its aftermath have been the subject of continuous academic scholarship since 1980s. It has produced a number of significant academic studies on conflict, migration, violence, trauma, nationalism, ethnic, religious, and identity formation. Several studies have been undertaken on migration in the country and a considerable amount of literature is available on the three different kinds of migration. Namely, labor migration (Sriskandarajah 2002; Ismail 1999; Abu-Habib 1998; Brochmann 1993; Eelens and Speckmann 1990; Rodrigo and Jayatissa 1989), international migration (Kearney and Miller 1987; Athukorala 1990) and internal migration (Weiss 2011; Badurdeen 2010; Muggah 2008; Skinner 2005; William 2005; Brun 2001; Shanmugaratnam 2001; Schrijvers 1999). To begin with the IDPs, for instance, William (2005) in his article on 'Sri Lanka: a profile of vulnerability', describes the flow of Tamils from their homes in the Sinhala dominated parts of the country and migration to the North and East in search of a more secure and settled existence because of the ethnic conflict. Even though the majority of them are Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese living in the North-East have also been forced to leave due to threats against them (William 2005: 261). Most of the IDPs have spent nearly two decades of their lives as displaced living in extremely difficult, stressful and inhuman conditions. Many children and youth have not experienced life other than a life of displacement.

William continues his article by discussing about the consequences of displacement that has caused communities and families to become separated and widely dispersed within the country and overseas. Due to the war, the Tamils became victims of “psychological debility, physical illness, war related injuries and nurturing a culture of dependency” (William 2005: 266). Not only men and women, but also children and elderly ones suffered a lot. The author estimated that 50% or more of the victims are children and they are the “most vulnerable, most powerless and most innocent…” (ibid.: 266). Education suffered the most. Displacement has deprived them to enjoy a life with family in a settled existence. Another disgraceful

1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

consequence of the war was the recruitment of children as LTTE cadres due to lack of basic facilities and livelihood opportunities. Women also faced serious security risks. In the North-Eastern provinces, farming and fishing suffered terribly due to the war, which resulted in unemployment of most of the fishermen and farmers living in that part of the country. This left thousands of fishermen and farmers and their families virtually destitute. They were also victimized by being the main targets of arrest and harassment by the security forces. This 'disempowering' of men in the context of displacement is a factor that very clearly leads to a deep sense of frustration and tension that is then played out in various manifestations such as alcoholism, aggression and violence, primarily towards their wives and children.

From a broad overview of the situation of IDPs in Sri Lanka, I move on to talk about the Muslim IDPs who were forcefully displaced from the North in 1990. Their plight has also been documented by several social scientists (Imtiyaz and Iqbal 2011; Shukla 2009; De Alwis 2004; Brun 2001).

Around 75,000-80,000 Northern Muslims, mainly from Mannar, Jaffna, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, and Mullaitivu districts, were forced to flee their homes in October 1990 when LTTE cadres went from village to village, announcing that Muslims had 48 hours to leave their homes or face reprisals. Many of them fled with only their clothes and a little money, leaving behind as much as Rs.5,000 million ($46 million) worth of property and valuables (Shukla 2009). In spite of the fact that the LTTE did not officially release any logical reasons for this mass expulsion, one reason given by the LTTE, according to Jeyaraj, "was suspicion of a possible conspiracy. The LTTE intelligence known for its excessive paranoia suspected a great conspiracy in the case of the Muslims. It was suspected that the security-intelligence apparatus could be using Muslim businessmen traveling frequently to Colombo as agents to engage in sabotage or act as spies. Pre-emptive action was required it was felt” (Imtiyaz and Iqbal 2011: 3-4). They had to flee for their lives and take up refuge at the camps in the Northwestern provinces of Puttalam District. Other camps were established in Medawachiya, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Colombo, Negombo, Panadura, and a few other places (Imtiyaz and Iqbal 2011: 5). Initially, there were 113 refugee camps extending from Kalpitiya to Puthukudiyiruppu along the Puttalam Colombo Road (ibid.: 6). Though most of them were


17 Puttalam is situated in the North-Western province of the country which is mainly dominated by Muslim population (95%). Because of Muslim dominated area, Jaffna Muslims also chose to seek refuge in Puttalam.
1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

hardly adequate to live in, still they managed to survive. With their arrival, Puttalam district experienced a sharp change in political and social economy with an increase in Muslim population.

During the 1990s, the Muslim IDPs were welcomed heartily by the local Muslims but as time went on their relationship became strained. The displaced Muslims were looked at with rancor. Petty disputes between them became common. IDPs often came into conflict with the locals to obtain the same rights to livelihoods, education and social security (Thiranagama 2011; Brun 2003). Moreover, as stated by Brun, they are denied fundamental rights in Puttalam as they are 'guests' there, while the North cannot provide any help to them as they are not in their territory (2003: 386). One of the major problems that they are facing in Puttalam is their unresolved status as it is unclear to which place do they belong and what rights they are entitled to. This has caused considerable tensions between the IDPs and the locals.

Nevertheless, according to Shukla (2009), more than half of the displaced have managed to purchase lands in Puttalam. There has been some hope of a durable solution of local integration for these land-owners since 2007, when the World Bank approved a $32 million housing project for the construction of over 7,500 permanent houses for those Puttalam IDPs who have deeds indicating their ownership of land (Shukla 2009). The task of reintegrating uprooted populations, reconstructing war torn socio-economic structures and reconciling conflict ridden societies has become one of the most crucial issues in development worldwide (Kibreab 2002). Also, substantial work has been done for the IDPs from the Eastern provinces of Trincomalee and Batticaloa (Goodhand 2010; Skinner 2005; Ruwanpura and Humhries 2004; Montani 1999; Thiruchandran 1998). The people in Trincomalee have been deeply affected by the violent conflict and great numbers have been forced to flee their homes and villages like the Northerners. In Trincomalee not only the Tamils are displaced, but also the Sinhalese and the

18 Anuradhapura is a major city in Sri Lanka. It is the capital city of the North-Central province of the country. Many well to do Muslim families preferred this place as they have close ties as many of their relatives also resided in Anuradhapura. Most of the Muslims were business-men and Anuradhapura is a good base for doing business.

19 Trincomalee is situated on the North-East coast of Sri Lanka within the Eastern province and has “experienced a complex process of mixing and violent unmixing of people” (Skinner 2005: 4). It is the home of the three main ethnic groups who lived in fairly equal proportions.

20 Batticaloa is a major city in the Eastern province in Sri Lanka.
1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

Muslims, although relatively smaller in number. The terror has led to massive population displacements. Most of these movements have taken place within the district sometimes for short periods, sometimes long-term and often repeatedly. Presently, according to the Ministry of Resettlement in Sri Lanka, there is only one welfare center in the Trincomalee district housing 557 persons\(^{21}\).

Next, I move on to document the concepts of home and belonging, the focal point of this thesis, which span over the past few decades. There has been an escalation in the amount of research conducted within various disciplines throughout the social sciences, such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and a few others (Azmi and Lund 2010; Blunt and Dowling 2006; Blunt 2005; Mallett 2004; Blunt and Varley 2004; Valentine 2001; Holloway and Hubbard 2001; Case 1996; Feldman 1990; Relph 1976). Scholars, from all these disciplines, explore home from a wide variety of angles, thus developing contrasting meanings.

**The concept of 'Home'**

Home has a significant function in people's lives. In empirical research and theoretical concepts, it is associated with notions like shelter and comfort. When people come home, they want to feel safe and comfortable. McLeod (2000: 210), in this regard, argued that “to be at home is to occupy a location where we can be with people very much like ourselves”. People are looking for who they are, where they come from and try to find their place in life. The term home is highly complicated and it has emerged as a multidimensional and a multi-layered phenomenon (Wardhaugh 1999; Bowlby et al. 1997; Somerville 1992).

Mallett (2004) has reviewed the literature on house and home and finds that home is variously conflated with or related to house, family, self, gender, and journeying. Citing various scholars who have focused on the experiences of migrants and refugees, she argues that ideas about staying, leaving and journeying are integrally associated with notions of home. She shows how home, be it defined as a dwelling, a homeland or even a constellation of relationships, is “represented as a spatial and relational

1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

realm and to which they generally hope to return” (Mallett 2004: 77). Blunt and Dowling (2006) complement these findings and identify the geographical explanation of home with the notion of a physical 'place', a set of feelings and a sense of belonging which are relational. They also insist, “the defining feature of home is that it is both material and imaginatively” (Blunt and Dowling 2006: 22; Blunt 2005). And this imaginative feature links home to several places (ibid.). Therefore, when people are talking about their home, it can be about a physical place or their sense of belonging (Herath and Silva 2012). A slightly different perspective is proposed by Altman and Gauvian (1981). According to them, home is both a way of expressing individual identity and a way of belonging to a culture. Therefore, home is positioned within particular social and cultural forces. To young adults, for example, home is not just a part of their developing sense of self, but it is also tied into the rules of the house they share with their parents. This cultural discourse is revealed when faced with understanding new household forms, such as sharers or friends living together. Moreover, the importance of home is brought to the forefront in instances of disruption, loss, upheaval, and trauma in people's lives (Altman and Werner 1985).

While reviewing the existing literature, I assume that the concept of 'home' is endowed with powerful meaning including attachment to a social and physical place and a sense of belonging. The meaning given to 'home' as a sense of belonging highly influence the theoretical perspective of this thesis. The physical dwelling or shelter is described as simply one aspect of home. Home is conceived as a locale (Saunders and Williams 1988) which, at the same time, is regarded as a place of social interaction. It is the physical “setting through which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are constituted and reproduced” (ibid.: 82). As such, home is a 'socio-spatial system' that represents the fusion of the physical unit or house and the social unit or household. The physical aspects of home, including the location, the design, and size of the house, 'both enable and constrain' different relationships and 'patterns of action' (ibid.: 82). Within this general framework, gender and age are the 'key dimensions' that differentiate perception of the meaning of home. Geographical factors, like residential location, together with issues such as class, ethnicity, and housing tenure, explain some of the variations (Saunders 1989; Saunders and Williams 1988).

Additionally, Azmi and Lund (2010) in their paper on how women migrants contribute to making homes and sustaining livelihoods at the home place, find that most of the literature on house and home
1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

is mainly based on experiences from Western countries. They argue that the concept of 'home' gains meaning through the absence of a home. Bowlby et al. (1997) note that during a person’s life course he or she will change his or her own orientation and idea of home. For migrant women, home carries contradictory and ambiguous meanings as they negotiate life 'here' and 'there'. This also shows that a home changes its signification when articulated from different locations. Although the migrants have been living in someone else’s 'home' during their contract period overseas, their real 'home' may be in their place of origin and where they return to.

Tamils' conceptualization of Home

The concept of home among the Tamils has been wonderfully dealt with in the books of Daniel (1984), *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* and Sharika Thiranagama (2011), *In My Mother's House: Civil War in Sri Lanka*. Traditionally, to the Sri Lankan Tamils, home or *Ur* is their natal village on which they were born and nurtured. It forms the main basis of their identity as discussed by Thiranagama (2011: 18). *Ur*, in Jaffna, as identified by Daniel (1984: 102), also symbolizes one's 'kunam' or character that is necessary for social interaction. Moreover, persons belonging to the same Ur share similar characteristics through their 'nourishment in the same soil' providing 'collective identification of people from that Ur' (Thiranagama 2011: 18). They consider staying away from their Ur as a form of supreme punishment that is much more severe compared to 'social death' (Cheran 2007: 151).

Additionally, Daniel's (1984: 62) research on Ur in the South Indian villages establishes the fact that the Tamils get to know about their own identity only after having nurtured on its soil, eating food from there, and inhaling the air of his/her village. Therefore, the relationship between a Tamil and the soil of his Ur is considered the most important among all others. This aspect is well researched in Thiranagama's book, which offers a significant contribution in the field of political anthropology and the ethnography of violence, particularly concerning the concepts of home and displacement. A number of issues have been investigated, namely, the effects of the protracted war on the meanings of Ur.

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22 *Ur* is an everyday and often used Tamil word for 'homeland/village' and has been used extensively by Sharika Thiranagama in her book *'In My Mother's House'* University of Pennysylvania Press, Philadelphia (2011).
1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

amidst profound displacement, transformations of familial and generational experiences (Thiranagama 2011: 5), and the impact of the political violence on civilians executed by both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan state (ibid.:18). Though there is lack of a simple and easy definition of \textit{Ur}, Daniel has defined it as a “named territory that is 1) inhabited by human beings who are believed to share in the substance of the soil of that territory, and 2) a territory to which Tamil cognitively orients himself at any given time” (Daniel 1984: 63).

In a wider context, the book of Thiranagama focuses on the controversial and dramatic ending of the long civil war. Her main aim is to examine the position of the victims of the war and their 'historical and political trajectories' (Thiranagama 2011: 19), which shape their ideas of home. She studies home as 'an everyday language of love, affection, sentiment and memory' (ibid.: 19). This study elucidates the various heart-rendering stories of eviction and portrays the narratives of Northern Muslims, focusing on their notions of \textit{Ur}, discussing 'un-homeliness' and 'homeliness' at their present locations (ibid.: 19).

The author applies an innovative perspective on generations and generational divergences, focusing on the difference between young and old generations on experiences of war. For the elderly, memories of home create a strong desire to return to their \textit{Ur}. By contrast, younger people are reluctant to return because of the painful memories they associate with their former homes at war times. In between, the middle generations are stuck with both memories of their homes and of eviction. The analysis confirms the problem of not being able to return, which is common to most of the Northern Muslims. The author wraps up her study by elaborating on the question of 'future homes; in Colombo where the minorities 'have homes but not a homeland', and their new homes do not correspond to the past one (Thiranagama 2011: 255).

In the following section, I attempt to discuss the work that has already been done on the concept of belonging.

Belonging and its different forms

According to Anthias (2006: 21), people belong together when they are involved in sharing the same 'values, networks and practices'. It combines perceptions and performance of commonality, a sense of
1.2 Displacement in and across borders: the academic response

mutuality, more or less formalized modalities of collective allegiance and material and immaterial attachment that often result in a sense of entitlement (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 13). There is also another property of belonging, namely, the possibility to forge new ties of collective boundedness and reciprocity across collective boundary-lines (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 18). The concept of belonging, drawing upon the social boundary-making approach (Wimmer 2008; Lamont and Molnar 2002), provides a tool to inquire how horizons of togetherness can be widened in order to incorporate newcomers, how to extend collective understanding by including former strangers and how to enlarge the understanding of a broadened horizon encompassing the life-world (Fortier 1999).

Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013: 14), while illustrating the concept of belonging, differentiates between 'belonging with' and 'belonging to'. Drawing on her differentiation, this thesis concentrates on the individual’s quest to 'belonging with' which is a combination of commonality, reciprocity, and the material and immaterial attachments that often result in a sense of entitlement.

Also Hage (2002) conceptualized belonging as the “combined result of trust, feeling safe, community, and the sense of possibility” (Hage cited by Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 13). It is a “combination of individually acquired, inter personally negotiated and structurally affected knowledge and life-experience. It is a central dimension of life that is easily felt and tacitly undergone … and that is very difficult to capture through analytical categories, given its situated nature and multi-dimensionality” (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 13). Yuval-Davis et al. (2006), in their article, showed that 'belonging' is constructed at three analytical levels: social locations, individual's identifications and emotional attachments, and ethics and political value systems by which people judge their own and others. She further claims, while making the concept more clear, that people's self-identity becomes more dominant when they are threatened or when they feel less secure. Therefore, her three analytical categories also reflect on the emotions and attachment of people to a place or a community.

1.3 Filling up the gap: aim and research questions

Sri Lanka has been in the limelight for quite a long time due to the civil war. Both media and academicians produced a significant number of accounts on different dimensions of the war. Works of

23 Explained in details in Chapter 4.
1.3 Filling up the gap: aim and research questions

Eminent scholars, namely, Gerharz (2007, 2011, 2014), Orjuela (2008), Rajasingham-Senanayake (2004), Somasundaram (1998), Spencer (1990), and Tambiah (1986) have helped set the stage for social scientists working on similar issues on South Asia, especially on Sri Lanka. Besides scholars, namely, William (2005), Skinner (2005), Johansson (2004), and Brun (2000, 2001) have worked on the issue of internal and external displacement, which is one of the most severe consequences of the civil war that the world has seen in decades. Similarly, quite a number of works have been done on the Sri Lankan displaced persons taking refuge in India. The works of Kalivanan (2011) and Hans (1993) falls in this category. Both of them have described the flow of refugees from Sri Lanka and their various settlements in India. Forced repatriation to Sri Lanka, during various phases, has also been discussed by these authors. Issues regarding security and quality of life of the Sri Lankan refugees in the Indian camps have been explicitly discussed by Xavier and Benoit (2011). Furthermore, Valatheeswaran and Rajan (2011) in his article on the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu documented the influx and number of Sri Lankan refugees in India and the different kind of schemes that the Government of India together with Tamil Nadu Government provided to the refugees. A couple of works have also been completed on the different conceptualization of home among the Tamils (Thiranagama 2011; Daniel 1984).

However, these studies fail to elaborate on what makes home and what kind of attachment displaced persons (DPs)\(^{24}\) have to their homes being in or away. In addition, Daniel and Thiranagama conducted their research in the 1980s and in 2003 respectively. This means that these studies were prepared when the war was going on and it has already been eight years since the war has ended. Therefore, there is a lack of recent empirical evidence on the concept of home and the attachment to it, as by now many among the DPs have either returned to their homes or have integrated to their places of displacement. Hence, it is assumed that meanings given to homes during the time of war have changed after so many years with the end of the war. Thus, it will not be apt to say anything about the concepts of home and belonging without having any empirical analysis. This opens up room for further exploring this area in order to develop the concepts of home and home-making and the feeling of attachment that the displaced persons have towards their home even after so many years of displacement. In addition, the meaning given to homes by the IDPs and refugees vary in the sense that IDPs are within their country

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\(^{24}\) By displaced persons, I refer to both the refugees and IDPs who are the main targets in this thesis.
1.3 Filling up the gap: aim and research questions

of origin but the refugees have crossed the national borders and have taken shelter in other country. What do the refugees mean by their 'home'? Is it their motherland/birth country that they are talking about? Or is it that particular place where they were born and/or nurtured? Does the meaning of home remain the same for the refugees who are away from their motherland for more than two decades? Is there any difference in the meaning of home between the elderly persons and those born as a refugee?

My thesis attempts to unveil these unanswered questions which have not been researched until now.

Based on the background of diverse approaches in displacement, home and belonging, this thesis attempts to reveal the kind of belonging that different categories of displaced persons have to their past and present homes. This study aims to explore the contrasting meanings that these people give to their homes depending on their priorities in life. However, there are three different dimensions of belonging. My collected data demanded me to emphasize one particular dimension: 'attachment'. Therefore, my foremost concern is to analyze the different kinds of attachment that the displaced persons have towards their home, being in or away. Using this perspective, I attempt to investigate how do the returnees, coming back home after more than two decades, adapt to the changed (especially, unfamiliar and strange) environment at their original homes. Further, I seek to document the reasoning for integration of some at the place of their displacement. In doing so, I further examine their strategies of homemaking at their present locales.

Thus, with the aim of proceeding, I developed the following research question which acted as the main guidance in this study :-

• How do the IDPs and the refugees construct the notion of 'home' and 'belonging'?

A couple of sub questions will also be addressed to support the main research question:

• What makes home for the DPs?

• What kind of attachment do DPs have to their homes?

• How do DPs negotiate with resettlement and un-homing?
1.4 Structure of the thesis

My thesis is divided into two main parts which are further divided into seven chapters. The first part comprises of the first three chapters and outlines my research interests while the second part details my empirical findings and results through the remaining four chapters.

After introducing the research topic and establishing the aim of the study in chapter one, chapter two provides a brief overview of the background of my empirical research.

This chapter is organized around three aspects: Firstly, I outline the historical development of the island presenting the socio-economic profile of the country followed by a brief documentation of the civil war.

Secondly, I provide an overview of the different kinds of migration in Sri Lanka, for example, forced and labor migration. The notion of 'refugees' and 'IDPs' in the country have also been highlighted here along with the type of national and international assistance they receive.

Thirdly, I attempt to portray the narrative history of the Sri Lankan displaced persons living in Sri Lanka as IDPs and living in India as refugees. I explain the nature of livelihood pattern they have developed while living away from their native land and even for those who returned after almost a couple of decades.

In addition, the third section discusses the post-war scenario amongst the displaced persons in both countries. In this section, I depict several changes brought about by the war in the Northern part of Sri Lanka, mainly in Jaffna. The changes have been mostly contributed to the economic, social, and cultural perspectives of the Tamils in Jaffna. Towards the end of this section, I deal with the refugees in Tamil Nadu, about their decision to return or integrate and the kind of assistance they are receiving from the Tamil Nadu Government presently. The study also portrays the DPs who are trying to migrate to Australia, illegally, in order to have a better future.

Chapter three elaborates the methodological groundings of my thesis. It outlines the research perspective in general as well as a documentation of the research process and the methods applied. The main methodological strategy is also explained. In this chapter, I start with my own experiences
1.4 Structure of the thesis

regarding access to the field. Following this part, I discuss the relevance of 'multi-sited' fieldwork that I applied in my research as I am dealing with multiple sites. Later, I continue with my research, and methods. For analysis, I have chosen different forms of qualitative methods that includes formal, informal, and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. Next, I elaborate my own positioning in the field as establishing a good relationship with the respondent helps in collecting the desired material. Eventually, I talk about the 'Grounded theory' that have been used to analyze and evaluate the collected data and materials.

Moving on to the second part of my thesis, I introduce my theoretical frameworks along with the empirical findings and results to be detailed in the next four chapters.

In this direction, chapter four offers theories on 'home' and 'belonging'. I have divided this chapter into three parts: The first half provides an overview of the different theories of home along with developing my own focus on the concept of home. The second half of the chapter deals with the concept of 'belonging with' which is a combination of commonality, mutuality and attachment, with the objective of addressing the relationship and the degrees of belonging that the displaced persons have to their homes. I briefly talk about these three different dimensions of belonging that I have developed through the course of my research. Here, also I have developed my own focus on the concept of attachment and have analyzed its several dimensions. Finally, I conclude this chapter by an informed reflection on the two concepts of 'home' and 'attachment'.

In chapter five, I begin to understand my research findings based on the theoretical and analytical framework as discussed in chapter four. The main concern of this chapter is with the notion of Ur amongst the displaced persons residing in Sri Lanka and India. I have split this chapter into four sections: The first section deals with the conceptualization of home as it emerges in general in the theoretical debates and how they relate to the Tamil context. In the second part, I present the displaced persons' narratives of Ur and their families living in Colombo, Jaffna (Sri Lanka) and Tamil Nadu (India). In addition, I locate the contrasting meanings given to home by them, in regard to return, depending on factors like time, socio-economic needs and 'aspirations to the good life' (Appadurai 2004: 10). The third part reflects on the argumentation as presented by different categories of persons. I argue that elderly displaced persons in Colombo and Tamil Nadu, feel emotionally and spiritually
1.4 Structure of the thesis

attached to their original homes and through which they identify themselves. However, most of them do not intend to return because of their 'aspirations to the good life' (Appadurai 2004: 10) and a better future for their children, details of which will follow in the subsequent chapters. On the contrary, the young generations are reluctant to return to an unknown and strange place. In contrast, the displaced persons at the welfare centers in Jaffna view their home as a 'source of income' and 'identity' because of which they want to return. Besides, this section shows home as a safe and secured place which is devoid of any permanent structure. Several homes (of friends, relatives) at several places are a good substitute of having the feeling of home instead of a single one. Home to this group of people is a place where one can be happy and at ease. Home is also viewed as a prison, which is discussed in the third section. Finally, the conclusion highlights the different conceptualizations of home and relates them with regard to resettlement, integration, and return.

Chapter six evaluates and explicates how the notion of 'belonging' influences the ideas of home of the Sri Lankan displaced Tamils. It also addresses the relationship and the degrees of belonging that they have to their homes. To understand this relationship between the displaced Tamils with their original Ur and their negotiations with displacement and resettlement, I analyze the third dimension of belonging which is attachment. This provides a useful tool which I observed among the displaced persons in relation to their original homes. The meaning given to attachment to Ur in the Sri Lankan context needs to be seen in the light of how the relationship between the rural and urban lifestyle is symbolized and discussed. In this chapter, I attempt to elaborate on attachment (to Ur) from its relatively close form to its relatively weak form to which my data is linked. This is done to discuss the mutual process of formation of identity and ascribing meaning to places. Furthermore, this discussion plays a fundamental role which influences the interviewees’ decisions either to return to their Ur or resettle and re-integrate in their present location.

The last chapter summarizes the findings of this dissertation along with recent political developments. This has been completed in order to understand the future possibilities and prospects for the DPs. Moreover, the gaps, which have been filled up by this thesis, will be pursued. Finally, I conclude with some suggestions for the concerned authorities with regard to the possibilities of return and resettlement of the DPs at their own Ur.
Chapter 2: Setting up the context: An overview of internal and international displacement

Over the past few decades, the fleeing of refugees and IDPs in search of a secure and stable habitat has become a larger issue because of wars, protracted conflicts, mass violations of human rights, repression of minorities, natural and human-made disasters and so on. International Refugee Law has long made a distinction between refugees and IDPs although they are 'often used synonymously' (Bai 2005: 14). Regarding their needs and vulnerabilities, they face the same kind of problems like losing their homes and their identities in a strange land. Nevertheless, the number of IDPs is almost twice the number of refugees worldwide. Therefore, the displacing of populations in recent decades due to natural and human-made disasters has become a common phenomenon and remains a critical cause of vulnerability for people across the globe. Initially, according to Surendra Kr. (2011: 1), the international community neglected the IDP crisis because it was considered to be an internal problem for the country and was the responsibility of the national authorities to provide them with the necessary assistance and protection (ibid.). He identified three major developments which helped this global crisis to grab attention of the international community and aid agencies: First, sharp increase in the number of IDPs over the decades because of the 'changing nature of conflict and the rise in communal violence since the end of the Cold war' (Vincent 2001: 2; Surendra Kr. 2011: 1). Second, the issue of internal displacement has emerged as one of the most pressing humanitarian, human rights, political and security issues facing the global community. Finally, the national authorities are unable to provide necessary assistance due to resource constraints (Surendra Kr. 2011: 1). Sri Lanka, the country on which I am focusing, is one example of a country which has been in the news since the early 1980s due to its confrontation with challenges of IDPs. The Sri Lankan Tamil DPs are spread all over the world, and are also neglected by their country of origin and the host countries.

Therefore, researching on the shifting meanings of home and belonging among the displaced Tamils of Sri Lanka would not have been a topic of interest if the island had not experienced the twenty-six years long destructive civil war resulting in forced displacement and eviction. Moreover, Sri Lanka would not have become a topic of discussion worldwide if thousands of its citizens have not been suffering due to the war and displacement. However, displacement not only came as a curse to hundreds of people but also is looked upon as a blessing to many Northern Tamils which gave them

the opportunity to travel abroad or to the capital city to have a better future. “Because staying back in the Northern provinces could only give us a backward life experience which is inadequate in today's world”, said one of the middle-aged Tamil interviewee settled in Colombo. Thus, with the purpose of delving into my research topic, this chapter aims at describing the set of circumstances and the conditions that are relevant in conceptualizing home and belonging as has been perceived by the Sri Lankan Tamils staying in both Sri Lanka and in South India. Therefore, to discuss the circumstances and conditions, I have arranged this chapter into several sections: the first section discusses the historical development of the island along with a summary of the civil war. Following this, in the second section, I attempt to mirror a picture of the various contextual dimensions of the Sri Lankan displaced Tamils both in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. I will start with the narrative history of displaced persons of North-East which is among the major consequences of the 'ethnic conflict'. This part of the section consists of the narratives of Tamil refugees in India, together with mapping their flow and the phases that took place during their migration. This tracking will be done given the main focus of this thesis which deals with the concept of home and belonging to the people above. Furthermore, this is a pre-requisite for developing the next chapters of this thesis. In addition, I talk about migration to Australia which gained prominence amongst the refugees in the Indian camps during the time of my field-visit in Tamil Nadu. The final section portrays the post-war changes that have taken place in the war-torn areas of the North and shows the role played by the state, NGOs, INGOs and other development institutions' in the peace, reconstruction and development process.

2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island

Sri Lanka, known as Ceylon until 1972, is a small island-country which 'lies like a pendant at the extreme southern tip of India' in South Asia (Tambiah 1986: 1). A diverse and multicultural country, it is home to many religions, languages, and several culturally separated groups of people, who have developed their own sense of group identity on the basis of history, ethnic origin, geographical locality, language, religion, race and traditional attributes (Orjuela 2008: 67; Manogaran 1987: 1). Of these diverse groups, the Sinhalese are the majority, followed by the Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils.

3 According to 2012 population census, Sri Lanka's population, during post-war days, consists of 74.9% Sinhalese, 11.2% Sri Lankan Tamils, 4.2% Indian Tamils and the rest are Burghers, Moors and foreigners. The total population is 21.4 million (as of 2014 by UNFPA). http://www.internal-displacement.org/south-and-
2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island

Muslims, Moors and Burghers. On the one hand, the Sinhalese, majority of whom are Buddhist, predominate the Western and Southern coasts, the Central highland, North-Central plains and parts of the Eastern Plains. They consider themselves to be the descendants of the Aryan people of North India, pointing out that the Sinhala language is related to the refined and widely used Indo-European group of languages (Manogaran 1987: 1). On the other hand, the Northern provinces, comprising Jaffna and the Vanni, are inhabited by the Sri Lankan Tamils who speak Tamil, considered as Dravidian language. They are the descendants of the Hindu people of South India. The Sri Lankan Tamils also maintain a significant presence in the Eastern part which comprises Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The Eastern part is an 'ethnically mixed area where Tamils, Muslims, and Sinhalese are found in sizeable numbers' even though Tamils form the majority (Acharya 2007: 111). Indian Tamils, also known as Upcountry Tamils, are the descendants of laborers brought from Southern India by the British since 1858 to meet the growing demand for labor at the tea and coffee estates. They are mostly concentrated in the central

4 After the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, the Northern and Eastern Provinces merged into one administrative unit with one elected provincial council including one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers. However, on October 16, 2006, the Supreme Court ruled that merger of the Northern Province with the Eastern province is "unconstitutional, illegal and invalid" (Asia Tribune, October 17, 2006). Media stated that, the combined North Eastern Province occupied one fourth of Sri Lanka which was under the LTTE, directly or indirectly. This alarmed Sinhalese groups greatly. In recent times (August 2016), this topic has again come into limelight when C.V. Wigneswaran, CM of Northern Province, opined that “the North and East must be merged” (The Sunday Leader, August 15, 2016). Nevertheless, the Tamil-speaking Muslims stressed that the North and East should not be merged as that would lead them be a minority when the power is devolved.

5 Upcountry or Plantation Tamils are the immigrants from India into Sri Lanka in the 19th and early 20th centuries which include Canarese, Malayalese and Telugus from South India and Sindhis, Boras and Memons from North India. However, majority of them were from the southern districts of India such as Trichy, Thanjavur and Ramanathapuram and they arrived as recruited plantation laborer. The plantation Tamils, living in the Central hill country, are distinct from the Sri Lankan Tamils and constitute a major community in the country. According to 2012 Census, the population of Plantation Tamils are 842,323 out of 21 million Sri Lankan population. Since 1948, the Upcountry Tamils, who numbered over a million at that time, were rendered stateless. The then Prime Minister, D.S. Senanayake passed the Ceylon Citizenship Act, depriving citizenship to the Upcountry Tamils (over half the Tamil population) who had lived in Ceylon for several generations. This loss of citizenship was followed in the next year by the Ceylon Elections Amendment Act depriving voting rights to those Estate Tamils, who constituted about 13% of the population (see Vijayapalan 2014). In addition they were also discriminated in the areas of employment, education, housing, health, industrial relations, language and trade (Vijayapalan 2014: 2).
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highlands, also known as the Malayakam or Hill Country, others are also found in Colombo and the outskirts of the city (De Silva 2001) and a small number in the Northern provinces (Acharya 2007). The plantation workers have never been integrated into the surrounding social life, and have continued to live relatively isolated lives on the plantations. The Sri Lankan Tamil leadership, as stated by De Silva (2001: 442), failed to bring the Indian Tamils together into a pan-Tamil political force because of these separate geographical locations of the two groups. No doubt that both the Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils share the same language (Tamil) and religion (Hindu), but, the rigors of the 'Hindu caste system' convinced to keep them apart. The plantation workers, mostly, belonging to the Scheduled Castes in the Indian caste terminology, are regarded as 'low caste' Hindus by the Sri Lankan Tamil or Jaffna Tamil elite (De Silva 2001: 442). While the LTTE, being more liberal towards caste, do not agree to this prejudice of the Sri Lankan Tamils. This circumstance is very unfortunate that the LTTE has not been able to make as much headway among the Indian Tamils as they wanted to.

According to history (see Manogaran 1987), both the Sinhalese and Tamils trace their ethnic heritage and culture to India. Nonetheless, the physical separation of the island from the subcontinent fostered the development of the Sri Lankan society with its own historical and cultural traditions.

The believers of Islam or the Muslims in the island are categorized under two different ethnic backgrounds: Sri Lankan Moors and Malays. They are Tamil-speaking people who have a significant concentration in the eastern province but are scattered throughout the country. For the past 100 years the urban leaders and political spokesmen of the Muslim community have strongly denied any suggestion that they could be seen as 'Tamil Muslims' or 'Muslim Tamils', even though they speak Tamil at home, share many Tamil kinship and domestic practices, and have even composed Muslim commentaries and devotional works in Tamil, some of them written in Arabic-Tamil scrip (Uwise 1986, 1990 cited in McGilvray 1998: 433). From the early 16th century, members of the predominant Tamil-speaking Muslim community in Sri Lanka were designated by the term 'Moor' (Mouro, 'Moroccan') which the Portuguese applied to Muslims throughout their African and Asian empire, as well as by such familiar European terms as 'Mohammedan' or 'Mussalman' (McGilvray 1998: 434). Among the advocates of the separate state for the Tamils of Sri Lanka, many contemplated bringing the Muslims under the same 'umbrella of Tamil politics' assuming that their common language Tamil could link them together, in spite of having a fundamental difference in religion (De Silva 2001: 445).
2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island

Nevertheless, the Muslims have relentlessly rejected this linkage because they did not want any kind of Tamil control over them. This continuously repeated in several Tamil agitating activities, the worst among them was being confronted during the 1983 conflict.

Over the past century, the ethnic identity and political stance of the Sri Lankan Muslims have undergone certain changes in response to colonial and post-colonial pressures and from the internal dynamics of the Muslim community itself. They played a pivotal role in post-Independence Sri Lankan politics, but this became especially true after 1983, when the armed conflict over Tamil Eelam suddenly placed many of them in an extremely tight position, caught between the Sri Lankan military and the LTTE. Their existence was ignored by both the war combatants. LTTE claimed to represent all Tamil-speaking people including the Muslims, yet discrepancies occurred in all spheres especially in politics. For instance, the late 1970s witnessed the refusal of the Muslim elites to incorporate with the Tamil political parties, as the former preferred to proceed with the Sinhala dominated ones or compete as independent candidates instead. In contrast to the elites, however, some portions of Muslim youths from the East initially participated in the Tamil militant movement, but these relationships deteriorated eventually (Haniffa 2007: 52). Gradually, the Muslims acquired a clearer image of themselves as a distinct ethnic and religious group. Since the outbreak of the Eelam conflict, the Sinhalese majority parties deliberately tried to provoke and exacerbate local violence among the island’s minorities, the Tamils and Muslims in particular, in order to prevent the formation of a unified Tamil-speaking front comprised of both groups (McGilvray 1998; De Silva 2001). From 1990 onward, LTTE started committing massacres of Muslims at prayers as well as forcefully expelled around 80,000 Northern Muslims from their homes with the aim of making the North a Tamil inhabited area (Thiranagama...
2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island

2011; Hasbullah 1996). This event is known as 'Eviction'6 as termed by Thiranagama (2011: 28). Over the years, the LTTE provided a couple of justifications for this mass expulsion which resembled an act of ethnic cleansing. They claimed that this was necessary for 'security reasons' (Gerharz 2014: 43), at the political level, it was presented as a punishment for alleged ethnic betrayal which led to rising tensions between the groups in the late 1980s (McGilvray 1998: 473). This eviction had an impact not only on the demographic composition of the region but also in other areas. The displaced Muslims either moved to Colombo and joined the relatively large Muslim community there, some sought refuge in other parts of the South East, and the majority ended up in refugee camps in Puttalam. Here the concentration of displaced persons was among the highest (Van Hear and Rajasingham-Senanayake 2006: 50). Throughout the war, the displaced Muslims did not dare to take the possibility of resettlement into account, fearing the uncalculatable reactions of the LTTE. At the same time, many of them refrained from registering themselves as residents in the new places because this might forfeit their right to reclaim their property and resettle in the North (Haniffa 2007: 52).

In addition, there are also the Christians who maintain a significant presence in the coastal areas as a result of over 500 years of constant European colonial presence and the consequent Christianization of significant numbers (Acharya 2007: 111).

Civil war in Sri Lanka

The root of the conflict:

6 In the North, on October 30, 1990, LTTE forcibly expelled around 80,000 Muslims with the aim of making North a 'mono-cultural'- if not 'mono-religious' Tamil state (Thiranagama 2011: 13). On the morning of October 30, LTTE trucks drove all around the city ordering the Muslim population to meet at Osmania College where they were asked to leave the city within two hours or will be killed. They were only allowed to take with them the clothes they were wearing and no more than 50 Sri Lankan Rupees (SLR) in cash. Their houses were subsequently looted by the LTTE. A consequence of this strategic shift in relations between the LTTE and the Muslims is the massive eviction of Muslims from the East Coast. In July 1991, it was estimated that 40,000 Muslims were living in some sixty camps in Puttalam District (Bush 1993: 17). The Muslim Refugee Rehabilitation Organization estimated that there were more than 100,000 displaced Muslims in the country. By September 1992, it was reported in The Island International that some 150,000 Muslims were displaced from the North. Most of them sought refuge in the refugee camps in the North-Western provinces of Puttalam and Kalpitiya divisions. While many moved to the southern part of the country.
2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island

There has been a significant amount of literature on the island’s colonial and post colonial history of state and minority relations along with the civil war and post-war development (see Gerharz 2008, 2010, 2014; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1986, 1994, 2005, 2009; Orjuela 2008; De Silva 1981, 2001; Rajasingham-Senanayake 1999; Arasaratnam 1967, 1981, 1998; Wilson 1994; Spencer 1990; Manogaran 1987; Tambiah 1986). Several pieces of literature are also found about how people continue to live with death (Somasundaram 1998), their daily coping capacity to the ambiguous absence of their loved ones and lacerating loss, another day rife with memories, of forgetting and of waiting (De Alwis 2009: 380). Studies have been done on the livelihood strategies of farmers and fishermen in the war-affected districts of the country (Korf 2004; Goodhand 2000; O’Sullivan 1997). A 'three-pillar model of household livelihood strategies' has been delineated which focuses on how households (1) cope with the increased level of risk and uncertainty; (2) adjust their economic and social household assets for economic survival; and (3) use their social and political assets as livelihood strategies (Korf 2004: 275). There are quite a large number of studies made on human displacement, particularly, the situation of IDPs (Thiranagama 2011; Muggah 2008; William 2005; Brun 2003), including those staying either in welfare centers or with relatives in Colombo (Sidharthan 2003), and those who have migrated abroad and are living as a diaspora (Gerharz 2011; Wayland 2004; Cheran 2004; Fuglerod 1999; Mcdowell 1996).

I want to present briefly the colonial and post-colonial history of the country which serves as the background for this thesis. Since ages, Sri Lanka remained colonies under different European rulers like the Portuguese from 1505, the Dutch from 1637 and finally the British from 1796. A new era in the history of Sri Lanka began when the British defeated the Dutch in 1796 and annexed Colombo and Jaffna. Some reforms were introduced and since the end of the eighteenth century (until 1948), English became the language of government, the professions, modern commerce, higher education, and even of politics (Kearney 1978: 526). Meanwhile, in the Northern province, due to dense population and limited scarce resources (Gerharz 2014: 20), Tamils also succeeded in securing positions in public employment in the British-run administration, even in Sinhalese-dominated areas, as well as in the domain of business, trade, legal, medical, and engineering professions. These high achievements made the Sinhalese envious because they believed that the entire Tamil population had been earning a higher income compared to them. Therefore, Sinhalese politicians demanded a larger share of the economic
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resources of the country for their community in order so that the consequences of inequalities between the two communities might be redressed. Also, the colonial administration supported the immigration of the Plantation Tamils in order for them to work in the tea plantations (De Silva 1981: 284). The Sinhalese became resentful of them as they were settled in the predominantly Sinhalese areas of the hill country\(^7\). Therefore, the Sinhalese considered them as foreigners, who had no abiding interest in the island and who were prepared to work for low wages on the plantations (Shastri 1999: 66). Because of the gradual success of the Tamils in all spheres of life, the Sinhalese politicians, as put by Manogaran, began to speculate the ancient fear of a Tamil threat to the survival of the Sinhala race, its language, and culture (1987: 7). Thus the early decades of the twentieth century saw the resurgence of Sinhalese nationalism to which Buddhist activists gave a religious bent by warning that the people should strive to prevent the Tamils from dominating the economy of the island. Nevertheless, there was no open confrontation between Sinhalese and Tamil politicians until the 1920s. The ethnic rivalry became an issue in the 1920s when the British government began giving serious consideration to greater Ceylonese participation in the political process (Shastri 1999; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1994; Manogaran 1987; De Silva 1981). Sinhalese politicians insisted on replacing communal representation with some form of territorial representation so that it could reflect the size of the Sinhalese community in comparison to that of the Tamils. Tamil demands to retain communal representation were rejected.

In the late 19th century both Hinduism and Buddhism revived in Ceylon. The Ceylon National Congress was formed in 1919. In 1931, Ceylon was granted a new constitution. From then on the legislature was elected by universal suffrage. However, the Ceylonese demanded complete independence. Another constitution was introduced in 1946, but in 1947 the British announced that India was to become independent. The Ceylonese now demanded their independence and in June 1947 the British agreed to make Sri Lanka a dominion. Finally, Sri Lanka became an independent state on February 4, 1948.

Since, the country gained independence, ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils undermined national unity and destroyed the political integration of the island. The Sinhalese-Tamil relationship has its roots in a long history that includes both traditional rivalry and peaceful coexistence.

\(^7\) [http://www.sangam.org/articles/view2/?uid=653](http://www.sangam.org/articles/view2/?uid=653) accessed on September 15, 2017.
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between the two groups (Wickramasinghe 2006: 156). History says that the Sinhalese-Buddhist clergies claimed that they were 'the original people of the island' and that their race was chosen by Gautama Buddha to establish a Sinhalese-Buddhist society in Sri Lanka (Manogaran 1987: 2). The Tamils had been blamed by the Sinhalese historical traditions for the disintegration and collapse of the ancient Sinhalese Buddhist civilization in North Central Sri Lanka and for the forced migration of Sinhalese in the thirteenth century. The Sinhalese sensed a constant danger of their society being destroyed or polluted by the Tamils of India and Sri Lanka. To a large extent, Manogaran (1987: 2) wrote, that the subjugation of the Sinhalese by the Indian Tamils and the destruction of their flourishing civilization were the main reason for the Sinhalese to go against the Tamil demands for regional autonomy of their 'traditional homeland' of the Northern and Eastern provinces. In contrast, to the Sinhalese claims of being the original inhabitants of the island, Tamils too had a long and continuous history of settlement. Their numerical strength was large enough in the thirteenth century to establish an independent kingdom in the Northern part. Historical records indicate that the Malabar Coast on the western side of India was the source of major Tamil migration to the island until about the thirteenth century when it shifted to the present-day Indian state of Tamil Nadu. However, the impact of the early Malabar migration, their long period of residence in Sri Lanka, and their interaction with the Sinhalese people created a sharp distinction with the Indian Tamils. By establishing Jaffna as an independent kingdom under Aryachakravarti dynasty in 1215, Sri Lankan Tamils developed a unique community identity in respect of other kingdoms of the country (Manogaran 1987; De Silva 1981). When Sri Lanka was colonized by the Portuguese and the Dutch, they left intact the administrative structure of the three kingdoms (Kandy, Kotte and Jaffna) and recognized Northern Sri Lanka as the traditional homeland of the Tamils.

This historical relationship had been used to exploit the political situation of the island in various ways. Gradually, the Sinhala-dominated governments reduced the minority to an oppressed group. Interestingly, democracy played an important role in this discourse, but its intended purpose was very different. On the one hand, Tamil politicians sought federal arrangements to accommodate minorities within the state; for them, democracy entailed the potential to ensure the recognition of minority rights. Sinhala nationalists, on the other hand, attempted to institutionalize a Buddhist prototype of democracy based on the domination of Sinhala Buddhism (Wickramasinghe 2006: 157).
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In post-independence days, the Plantation Tamils were the very first target of discrimination when the parliament enacted legislation excluding them from Sri Lankan citizenship (Shastri 1999: 65). This situation proved, as shown by Gerharz (2014: 20) that “ethnic hierarchies played an important role in the state formation process”. Some Sinhalese leaders comprehended that to lead a fearless life their community should not only gain political power but also had to exploit the sensitive issue of ethnic identity. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was one of the eminent politicians who championed the cause of the Sinhalese masses by demanding the overhauling of the administrative, educational, and political structures, legacies of the colonial system that had bestowed ‘undue’ privileges on Tamils. Soon, the situation started to change dramatically with the campaigning for the promotion of Sinhala to the status of the national language (De Silva 2001: 446). In the process, the language policy adopted in the early 1940s which said Sinhala and Tamil were to replace English as the official language of the country, was unilaterally repudiated (Devotta 2004; De Silva 1996). Thus with the landmark general election of 1956, the 'Sinhala Only' act was passed, making Sinhala the only official language in the country (Kearney 1978: 527) in place of English. Tamil politicians adopted various strategies to show their disapproval. Some Sinhalese politicians, too, warned of the possibility of the creation of a pan-Dravidian Tamil state that would ultimately undermine the future of the Sinhala race, its culture, and Buddhism. Therefore, ethnicity became the major issue which was taken up by the political leaders to outbid their political opponents (Manogaran 1987).

Gradually, Sri Lanka became a 'Sinhalised state' where the minority Tamils, occupying relatively strong positions in education and state administration, started facing marginalization. Percentage of Tamils in the administrative sectors decreased to 5% from 30% (Orjuela 2008: 72). Number of Tamils in the military also fell from 40% to 1% and professional Tamils such as engineers, doctors and lecturers also experienced a drop from 60% to 10% (ibid.: 72). Minorities also were marginalized in the private sector. Also, around a million Tamil plantation workers, being denied citizenship, were repatriated in large numbers in the 1960s, 1970s and by the late 1980s became a politically significant minority (Kanapathipillai 2003: 3). This lead to the fall of the population of Tamils from 33 % to 20 % helping the Sinhalese to procure more than a two-thirds majority in parliament. Thus, the Tamils were no longer in a position to effectively oppose any policies that affected them. Therefore, this continued anti-Tamil discrimination compelled the Tamil population to fight for equal rights within the country's democratic
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system and demand a separate province for themselves on the North-Eastern part of the island. This demand gave rise to multiple small Tamil militant groups who came together and formed the LTTE in 1975 headed by Vellupillai Prabhakaran. The island that witnessed several anti-Tamil riots since 1950s and “the massive scale of violence in July 1983” which continued until May 2009, is considered to be the bloodiest amongst all (Rupesinghe 1988: 9).

The war:

July 1983 saw severe ethnic violence against the Tamils which marked the beginning of the civil war. The almost one week of continuous violence on the island came to be known as 'Black July' which shaped the history of the country remarkably. The anti-Tamil program of 1983 also gained support from the Tamil civilians as well as from India (Orjuela 2008: 73). The account of the civil war found in most of the literature (Mehta 2010; Gerharz 2007; Kanapatipillai 2003; Bastian 1990; Rupesinghe 1988; and Tambiah 1986) starts with the killing of 13 Sinhalese soldiers in ambush at Thirunelvelly in Jaffna by the LTTE on July 23, 1983 which also marked the initiation of Eelam War I, which ended in 1987. India intervened to end the war by sending the Indian Peacekeeping Forces (IPKF) to the Tamil areas

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8 Black July is the common name used to refer to the anti-Tamil pogrom and riots in Sri Lanka during July 1983. The riots began as a response to a deadly ambush on July 23, 1983 by the LTTE that killed 13 Sri Lankan army soldiers. Beginning in Colombo on the night of July 24, 1983, the riots spread to other parts of the country. Over seven days mobs of mainly Sinhalese attacked Tamils, burning, looting and killing. Estimates of the death toll range between 400 and 3,000. 8,000 homes and 5,000 shops were destroyed. 150,000 people were made homeless.

9 The civil war occurred in four phases which are known as “Eelam Wars”.

10 Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was the Indian military contingent performing a peacekeeping operation in Sri Lanka between 1987 and 1990. It was formed under the mandate of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord signed between India and Sri Lanka in 1987 that aimed to end the civil war. The main task of the IPKF was to disarm the different militant groups present in Sri Lanka. It was to be quickly followed by the formation of an Interim Administrative Council. These were as per the terms of the accord signed at the behest of Rajiv Gandhi. Given the escalating level of the conflict in Sri Lanka, and with the pouring of refugees into India, Rajiv Gandhi took the decisive step to push this accord through. The IPKF was inducted into Sri Lanka on the request of then-Sri Lankan president J.R. Jayewardene under the terms of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. Despite assertions by J.R. Jayewardene that the IPKF was subject to his direction and authority, the reality on the ground was that the IPKF forces took their orders from the Indian government (De Silva 2001; Rupesinghe 1988).
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With the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991\(^{12}\), by the LTTE in India, a noticeable change in the attitude of the Indian government towards the LTTE was noticed. His assassination was the direct result of the failure of India’s role as mediator in Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict which had begun under Indira Gandhi’s government as a calculated political response to the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983. The initiative had been continued under Rajiv Gandhi himself when India’s mediation role became more formal after 1987. This mediation process had three aspects: ‘attempts at resolution, management, and

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11 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 “The Indo-Sri Lankan agreement signed by President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India on July 29, 1987 constitutes a new phase in resolving the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The preamble to the accord underlines the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. It acknowledges Sri Lanka as a ‘multi-ethnic and multi-lingual plural society’ consisting of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors) and Burghers. It recognizes that the Northern and Eastern provinces of the country have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples. In theory, this constitutes a fundamental departure in the conception of Sri Lanka as a Buddhist theocratic state contained in the Republican Constitution of 1972 and reaffirmed in the Constitution of 1978. According to the agreement, these provinces would function as a single administrative unit, after the holding of elections to the provincial councils, not later than December 1987. Furthermore, a referendum is to be held before December 1988 for the people of the Eastern province to decide whether the Eastern province should remain linked with the Northern province or become a separate administrative unit with its own provincial council. The agreement provides for cessation of hostilities, the surrender of arms held by Tamil militant groups, and the return of the Sri Lankan army to barracks within a specified time frame. A general amnesty is to be granted to all political and other prisoners held in custody or convicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and emergency laws. The government of India would underwrite and guarantee provisions of the agreement and their implementation, and provide military assistance as and when requested by the Sri Lankan government for implementation of the accord. The accord also provides for an Indian peace-keeping military contingent to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities.

In return, India has undertaken to deport all Sri Lankans involved in separatist or guerrilla activities from Indian soil, and also to provide military training facilities and supplies for Sri Lankan security forces.” (Rupesinghe 1988: 346-347). The Indo-Sri Lanka accord failed in nearly all its objectives. Worse still were the consequences that flowed from it: apart from the failure to pacify Jaffna, it precipitated a serious political crisis in the Sinhalese areas of the country. The signing of the accord had led to violent protests, in and around Colombo and parts of the South-West coast, among them the most serious anti-government riots since independence. The government forces took about a week to quell the riots and they were able to do so only because of the rapid transport by air (by the Indian air force) of several thousand Sri Lankan troops from Jaffna (De Silva 2001).

12 The former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on May 21, 1991 by a suicide bomber in Sriperumbudur, near Chennai. The suicide bombing was carried out by Thenmozhi Rajaratnam alias Dhanu and LTTE was blamed for the assassination.
2.1 Historical development: civil war and migration in the island settlement of Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict’ (De Silva 2001: 454). Throughout the period 1983–1990, India never abandoned its role of being a principal in the dispute, and the presumed protector of the interests of the Tamil minorities in the island. After the signing of the Accord in 1987, the mediator found itself in the role of active participant and continued in that role until the middle of 1990, during which it fought the LTTE in the North-East of Sri Lanka. This presented a unique example in the history of mediation in ethnic conflict where the mediator took on the role of combatant, and “the presumed guardian of an ethnic minority waged an eventually unsuccessful military campaign against the principal political group of that minority and its military wing, which India and Tamil Nadu had helped to build” (De Silva 2001: 454).

Eelam War II began in July 1990 and closed in a ceasefire in January 1995. The next round of fighting that is Eelam War III began in April 1995 and reached its climax in the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) of February 2002, the longest in the conflict. It was officially revoked by the Sri Lankan Government only in January 2008, though for all practical purposes, it had been broken in 2006. The decisive Eelam War IV started in July 2006 and flared up into an all-out offensive. The military scored a historic victory in May 2009, when the Tigers capitulated near their stronghold of Mullaithivu.

13 Eelam War II started in 1990 after the failure of peace talks between the Premadasa government and the LTTE. This phase of the war was initiated by the LTTE who increased its size as well as enhanced its military capacity. They massacred almost 600 Sinhalese and Muslim police personnel after they were ordered by the Premadasa government to surrender to the LTTE. It was considered to be bloodier than the first one (Gerharz 2007).

14 Eelam War III commenced in 1995 and continued until 2002. After the period of 100 days cease-fire, the hostilities broke out on April 19, 1995. The LTTE planted explosives in two gun boats and blew them up. Also, a new weapon "Stinger", a shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missile was used in this conflict by the LTTE. This was used to take down two Sri Lankan Air Force AVRO aircraft flying over the Jaffna peninsula. Eelam War III also marked the rise of the LTTE and the decline of the Sri Lankan Army.

15 The Ceasefire Agreement was signed between the GOSL and LTTE on February 22, 2002, at the initiative of the Norwegian Government, to find a negotiated solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The GOSL and the LTTE recognized the importance of bringing an end to the hostilities and improving the living conditions for all inhabitants affected by the conflict. Thus, it ended twenty years of conflict, in which as many as 70,000 died. But attempts to reach a political solution quickly ran into problems. Negotiations ground to a halt in mid-2003, when the LTTE suspended its participation. Talks in February and October 2006 failed to restart discussion of a political settlement, and on both sides military leaders seemed to be in the ascendancy. In July 2006, the Sri Lankan military launched its first open offensive to seize LTTE-held territory in the eastern Mavilaru area and the war started again which continued until May 2009.
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There are several pieces of literature on the study of riots and ethnic conflicts along with detailed description of the war provided by foreign correspondents, tourists and several academic scholars (Coomaraswamy 2003: 3).

The war became more fierce from 1987 when India deployed IPKF to the island and the “three failed peace talks (1990, 1995, and 2002) all of which consolidated and transformed the LTTE hold over Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, and Tamils in Sri Lanka and the diaspora” (Thiranagama 2013a: 20). The failure of peace negotiations in 1990 saw the LTTE setting up a parallel state in areas they controlled, including a judiciary, police force, and taxation system. The subsequent failure of the 1995 peace talk\(^\text{17}\) saw the Sri Lankan army takeover of Northern Jaffna and the LTTE moving its capital to the Vanni region in North-Central Sri Lanka. The third peace talk that is the CFA began in 2002 and collapsed by 2004, moving Sri Lanka back into war. A new dimension emerged when a major split

\(^{16}\) Renewed hostilities began on the July 26, 2006, when Sri Lanka Air Force fighter jets bombed several LTTE camps. The fighting resumed after a four-year ceasefire between GoSL and LTTE. Continued fighting led to several territorial gains for the Sri Lankan Army, including the capture of Sampur, Vakarai and other parts of the east. The war took on an added dimension when the LTTE bombed Katunayake airbase on March 26, 2007, the first rebel air attack without external assistance in history. Eelam War IV ended on May 18, 2009 with the Sri Lankan Army gaining control of the last bit of territory held by the LTTE and with the death of Velupillai Prabhakaran. The final few days of the war near Nandikadal Lagoon in the north east of the island saw very heavy fighting and led to Sri Lankan forces being accused of war crimes, which were denied by the government. Some 300,000 Tamil civilians who were trapped inside the war zone and prevented from escaping by the LTTE were caught in the crossfire during the final phase of the war.

\(^{17}\) A fourth attempt at peace was made in 1994-95 in the context of a regime change in Colombo. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga represented the liberal face of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), and she had won the elections on a peace platform. Kumaratunga, immediately began negotiations with the LTTE. She put forward a set of proposals for devolution of powers to the regions, which represented the boldest attempt to redress the imbalance in the relationship between the different ethnic groups. Unfortunately, history repeated itself and both the proposals and constitutional reform initiatives submitted by her to the parliament were bitterly opposed by the opposition United National Party (UNP). After four rounds of talks, this peace initiative too collapsed in April 1995, resulting in a new phase of war. President Kumaratunga and the Sri Lankan armed forces felt that if they could defeat the LTTE militarily, a durable peace with the Tamil polity, excluding the LTTE, could be negotiated and put in place. The military campaign, however, proved equally protracted, and deadly terrorist tactics forced the Sri Lankan forces and the government to reconsider their offensive policy. The climax came with the fall of the Elephant Pass, the gateway to the Jaffna peninsula, in December 1999. It was at this juncture that the UNP led by Ranil Wickramasinghe defeated the SLFP in the parliamentary elections. Wickramasinghe was chosen the Prime Minister and Chandrika Kumaratunga of SLFP stayed on as the President. Thus there were two contending centers of power. However, Wickramasinghe made an attempt at making a peace deal with the LTTE as soon as he came to power (Podder 2006).
erupted between the northern and eastern wings of the LTTE in 2004, the eastern faction eventually allying with the state.

The main aim of the then government was to bring the LTTE to the negotiating table. Ceasefires were accompanied by five direct and two back-channel negotiations with the LTTE. The first of five attempts was the failed Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, which was followed by efforts towards power-sharing, made by Presidents R. Premadasa and Chandrika Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickeremesinghe and President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The LTTE was offered the best chances for devolution by Wickeremesinghe, when both sides agreed to explore a federal solution in December 2002, but the Tigers reneged on this proposal. President Mahinda Rajapaksa (President since November 2005-January 2015) explored outcomes from two rounds of proforma talks at Geneva and Oslo in 2005-06 but became convinced that the LTTE would never be amenable to a negotiated settlement, as he was determined to win Eelam through military means. He made one last attempt at the resolution of the conflict through dialogue. Eric Solheim, a special advisor to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sri Lanka, who was the key architect of the CFA and negotiations, attempted to arrange a meeting of the SLG with Prabhakaran. However, it did not materialize. When Prabhakaran had firmly shut the door to negotiation and the average military losses had climbed up to 90 deaths per month in 2006, Rajapaksa chose to retaliate with military action. The government was determined to ensure that the following phase of the war would be the last. Hence, “it beefed up the armed forces, gave them specialized training, adopted new tactics, and bought sophisticated weaponry” (DeVotta 2011: 133). Within a couple of months, after Rajapaksa came to power, the military commenced their actions of killing Tamil men publicly. Their main target was the Tamil leaders and conducted large-scale search operations, mostly in Colombo, to disrupt LTTE sleeper cells and apprehend LTTE supporters. Many among those arrested and detained without charge are said to have disappeared (DeVotta 2011: 133). The Rajapaksa government, as pointed out by DeVotta (2011), adopted several strategies in order to fight against the LTTE. They tried to intimidate the Tamils with threats in government-controlled areas, banned NGOs operating in LTTE-controlled areas and forced many NGO personnel to leave the island by refusing to renew their visas, controlled the media, killed more than a dozen journalists, suffocated civil society those who were speaking out on the plight of Tamils, and kept political opponents weak and confused (DeVotta 2011: 133). Furthermore, the authorities strictly controlled entry into future
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battle zones to ensure that no independent sources could monitor the military’s behavior. Thus, the last phase of the civil war was waged without having any international witnesses.

Between January and May 2009, the LTTE took with them more than 300,000 civilians, who were trapped within LTTE-controlled areas and were used as human shields (Thiranagama 2013a). The military, claiming to conduct the world’s largest hostage-rescue operation, targeted civilian areas and killed more than 20,000 Tamils and injured another 30,000\(^{18}\). Also, the military buried alive civilians those who had sought shelter in makeshift bunkers. The troops committed rapes and execution-style murders as well\(^{19}\).

The LTTE acknowledged defeat in May 2009, with the death of Prabhakaran and most of their senior leaders. Despite being assured of a comprehensive victory, the Sri Lankan military killed many surrendering senior LTTE cadres on the orders of Gotabaya Rajapaksa\(^{20}\). The vast majority of the nearly three-hundred thousand Tamils who came out of LTTE-controlled areas were kept in camps, after that, screened, and, gradually released. Access to the camps was strictly controlled. The government sought to rehabilitate some LTTE cadres. However, many among the IDPs were tortured and thousands disappeared. According to the Sri Lankan government, the period from July 2006 through May 2009 saw 6,261 soldiers killed and 29,551 wounded, with 22,000 LTTE cadres killed. The military lost 23,000 killed in action during the length of the war, while the total LTTE dead approximated 40,000 (DeVotta 2011: 134). Altogether, more than 100,000 were killed, although a joint

\(^{18}\) Some reports suggest that the number of civilians killed were around 40,000. While, the UN’s conservative figure suggests that around 7,000 were killed. See Joe Leahy, “Tamil Rebels Concede Defeat in Sri Lanka,” Financial Times, May 18, 2009; “Times Photographs Expose Sri Lanka’s Lie on Civilian Deaths at Beach,” Ilankai Tamil Sangam, May 29, 2009; Dean Nelson, “Up to 30,000 ‘Disabled’ by Sri Lankan Shells” Daily Telegraph, May 24, 2009; “After the Slaughter,” Economist, May 30, 2009 (44–45).


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study by Harvard Medical School and the University of Washington claims that up to 220,000 people may have died in Sri Lanka’s civil war from 1975 to 2002 (Obermeyer et al. 2008: 1482-1486).

The international community believed that the LTTE’s demise would finally allow the government to offer a fair deal to the Tamils under which they might live with self-respect and dignity (DeVotta 2011: 135). Instead, Rajapaksa government, together with the Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism tried to marginalize them further which led to his defeat in the 2015 Parliamentary elections.

The aftermath of the war:

According to Herath, Sri Lanka is often depicted as a ‘post-war’ society, although there is a huge controversy in academics and policy discourses on this issue as it essentially denotes a situation where the main causes, as well as the impacts of the war, are positioned in a way to achieve this goal (2012: 58). The island suffered terribly. The human and economic costs of the conflict are felt most directly by the people of the North-Eastern provinces. The effects have far-reaching social, economic and psychological dimensions. Livelihood, particularly for the poor in these areas have been totally destroyed and devastated and land-mines await many of the returnees. The valuable agricultural land, private lands, and fishing areas have fallen within the High Security Zone (HSZ) areas. Many of the displaced persons have lost their homes and other valuable assets such as means of production as well as their social capital. They have been housed in insufficiently resourced welfare centers provided by GoSL. Though the war has ended eight years back, still there is absence of complete peace in the North-Eastern provinces because the minority Tamils remain in a disadvantageous position even after all these years. Though the end of the war brought with it a little 'hope of new possibilities and

21 The Sri Lankan government created a number of High Security Zones during the decades-long conflict. The main objective behind enforcing these zones is to prevent the LTTE from getting arms and other supplies through sea from its international network. The most affected due to such enforcements are, however, the fishermen. These areas were basically set-up to protect military camps, strategic installations, and the lifelines of security forces in Jaffna - Kankesanthurai harbour and Palaly airport - from LTTE attack. These zones comprise large chunks of territory surrounding or encompassing strategic military installations. In the Jaffna peninsula there were 18 HSZs covering about 190 sq km. While the HSZs have by and large served their purpose of securing military installation, they have led to the displacement and economic deprivation of nearly 1,30,000 civilians. The displaced persons have to live either with their relatives or at refugee camps. This apart, there are large tracts of agricultural lands that fall under these zones that have deprived many farmers of their livelihood. About 16,027 farming families have been affected. [http://www.ipcs.org/article/sri-lanka/high-security-zones-in-sri-lanka-2321.html](http://www.ipcs.org/article/sri-lanka/high-security-zones-in-sri-lanka-2321.html) accessed on October 4, 2017.
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parameters' for the Tamils, it also brought 'the possibility to reflect concretely on the specific social, cultural, and economic forms created during the ongoing war' (Thiranagama 2011: 4).

The war displaced hundreds of thousands of people, among them several thousands are still counted as IDPs till date (as per the Ministry of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Relegious Affairs), despite the assurance from the GoSL in September 2012 that there were 'no more Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)'. The IDPs are currently staying either with their family and relatives or in the welfare centres that are in the North-Eastern provinces of the island. Tamils being the majority of the “political migrants”, the conflict has also indirectly fueled the increased flow of predominantly “Sinhalese labor migration from the south-west” (Sriskandarajah 2002: 289; Arunatilake et al. 2001).

In the next sections, I attempt to discuss internal and external migration/displacement in Sri Lanka, which is one of the main points of focus in this thesis.

2.2 Sri Lankan Tamils and migration: an overview

Migration in the island: causes

Migration in Sri Lanka dates back from the days of British colonial rule during the first half of the 20th century. The educated and professional elites, mainly the Jaffna Tamils, have had a long history of temporary emigration for education and employment either to the capital city of Colombo or other southern places in the country as well as to Britain and all over the world, especially to the Commonwealth countries and also to the West (Sriskandarajah 2002: 289). Having a good knowledge of English, Jaffna Tamils were mostly appointed as public servants in both the British administrative system and the education system in the country. Also, they worked as civil servants and in the private plantation sector (Gerharz 2014: 45). Because of their language skills, they were also qualified in the commerce and banking sectors.


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By the late 1970s, thousands of young Tamil students migrated abroad to seek opportunities in higher education as the state government, in the early 70s, imposed quotas limiting Tamil admissions to local universities. This constraint led to the country's 'brain drain' as highly-skilled professionals seeking employment in the West and in places as far afield as Nigeria and Papua New Guinea (Sriskandarajah: 289). Another reason for Tamil migration was because they felt discriminated by the state’s employment and language policies. Also, several years of failed socialist economic policies had also left unemployment hovering around 20% and the economy in shambles by the late 1970s (Sriskandarajah 2002).

Furthermore, in 1977, the massive development work undertaken in petroleum-producing Middle-East countries created a great demand for construction and other unskilled labors (Sriskandarajah 2002). The then UNP government took up this opportunity to ease some of its employment and foreign exchange shortfalls and started promoting labor migration within the island. Regulations on travel and foreign exchange convertibility were relaxed to facilitate overseas work and remittances. Moreover, the devaluation of the rupee made foreign earnings more valuable relative to local earnings. These factors provided the initial impetus for the flow of labor migration to the Middle East that is crucial to the country’s development (Sriskandarajah 2002: 289). Since the late 1980s, statistical evidence and my interviews with the development experts in Sri Lanka show that the island experienced a rising demand for female garment factory workers as most females that migrated as factory workers had prior experience in the domestic market which helped them to gain better employment prospects abroad.

Next, to external migration, Sri Lanka is also known for its internal migration since ages as most of the citizens migrated from the rural areas to urban cities seeking for high employment opportunities and better socio-economic livelihoods. It has been recorded that Colombo, being the center of economic activities, during 1971-1981 received a record number of in-migration compared to other districts, nearly six times the average of the rest of the districts.

However, with the onset of the war, migration of Northern Tamils shifted from being voluntary to forced. Sriskandarajah (2002: 290) maintained, due to the war, many Tamils doubted that their physical security was not guaranteed in the country forcing them into nomadic existence in search of a more secure and settled existence. Initially, displacement of the Tamils began with the anti-Tamil riots.
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starting from the year 1958 followed by 1977, 1978 which pressured many to leave their homes in the Sinhala dominated southern parts of the country and moved to the North and East.

As it stands, the forceful migration among the Northern population of Sri Lanka which had been started since late 1950s turned to a massive avalanche phenomenon in 1983 due to the devastating war between GoSL and LTTE. The fleeing rate never gets rested, in contrary, it increases humongously over the years. This outbreak shaped to a multi-religious migration when several thousands of Muslims were evicted in 1990, and it became multi-dimensional when LTTE drove out the Northern Tamils in 1995. This massacre came to be known as the 'Exodus'\(^2\) (Thiranagama 2011: 28), which was a huge and largely unacknowledged crisis for the Northern Tamils, displacing around 450,000 Tamils. Around 950 Muslim families, who were evicted in 1990, have returned until mid-2015. However, they did not receive much help either from any NGOs nor from the Government\(^3\). The rest are still living as IDPs in the North-Western province of Puttalam.

Migration to Tamil Nadu: Sri Lankan refugees in India

India has been receiving a large number of refugees from its neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka, Tibet, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, and Afghanistan, although it has no specific legal framework to regulate entry and status of refugees (Nair 2007: 1). Also, India is not a signatory to the '1951 Geneva

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\(^2\) Exodus, which took place in Jaffna and its surroundings in 1995, is the most serious displacement when the North-East war escalated to unprecedented heights. The Government forces started advancing towards the town and LTTE in turn, forced everyone to leave their homes from the North. Nevertheless, it was reported that victory was a hollow one since Jaffna turned into a 'ghost town' (William 2005: 263). Among all the displaced, around 170,000 stayed behind in the eastern part of Jaffna peninsula while 230,000 persons crossed to LTTE controlled Vanni region. By mid June 1996, many of the displaced in the military-controlled peninsula returned to their homes, but those in the Vanni were largely stuck there, mainly because of restrictions on civilian movements imposed by both the LTTE and the Government. From November 1999 to April 2000, the LTTE achieved massive military gains beginning with the capture of key military installations in the Vanni, overrunning the strategic Elephant Pass, reaching the outskirts of Jaffna town and coming within range to shell the military base in Palali and Kankesanthurai (KKS) port. The fighting in Jaffna peninsula in May and June 2000 displaced an estimated 165,000 persons. Many families were separated during the displacement between GoSL and LTTE controlled areas. Civilians living in LTTE controlled areas were reported to take shelter in underground bunkers due to shelling and bombing. Shortages were reported in essential food supplies. Schooling was disrupted as displaced persons occupied a number of schools.

\(^3\) My informant from Jaffna updated me via social networking sites.
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Convention' (see Pictet 1951). However, it keeps on welcoming refugees despite its own 1.2 billion population with at least six hundred million living in poverty with limited access to basic amenities (Nair 2007). Under India’s 'Foreigners Act 1946', the term 'refugee' is absent and instead uses the term 'foreigner' to denote aliens temporarily or permanently residing in the country. India’s Citizenship Amendment Act, 2003 defined all non-citizens who entered the country without a visa as illegal migrants, with no exception for refugees or asylum-seekers. However, the country has handled the influx of refugees at the political and administrative level. For instance, India has granted rights to Tibetan refugees that have not been granted to other groups. This right enables them to engage in gainful employment, economic activities, and even to travel abroad and return to India. India has not discriminated against the refugees by their country of origin, race, and religion. Presently, India is home to more than 300,000 refugees from all over the world. Among them, the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, which are my focus in this thesis, remain a concern because of their high number of influx into India since 1983.

With the outset of the war, a considerable number of Sri Lankan Tamils migrated to India leaving behind all their belongings as well as their self-esteem, self-confidence, identity, and dreams for the future as has been identified by Xavier and Benoit (2011: 4). The reasons for choosing India as their destination as pointed out by my interviewees were: firstly, the geographical proximity of the island makes the southern part of India the only easily accessible country in a time of crisis. Secondly, the close affinity in the culture and language of Tamil Nadu worked as an important factor. Finally, the positive response of the Indian state, as well as the civil society towards the incoming refugees, acted as another decisive factor.

The refugees arrived at the southern state of Tamil Nadu in four waves in accordance to the four Eelam wars (Valatheeswaran and Rajan 2011: 30-31 and OfERR India): The first wave of 134,053 Sri Lankan Tamils started arriving from July 24, 1983 until the end of December of 1987 to India. The first repatriation took place after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987 and between December


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24, 1987 and August 31, 1989, 25,585 refugees and non-camp Sri Lankans returned to Sri Lanka. The second wave began with the start of Eelam War II from August 25, 1989 until April 30, 1991, where 122,078 Sri Lankan Tamils became refugees in India. On January 20, 1992, 54,188 refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Sri Lanka, until March 1995 because of the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Eelam War III commenced in April 1995 starting the third wave of refugee flow to Tamil Nadu. 22,418 refugees arrived at the Indian coast in between July 1996 until August 2003. Finally, with the beginning of the Eelam War IV in 2006, 25,720 refugees migrated in the fourth phase (from January 12, 2006 to July 21, 2012). Thus, a total number of 304,269 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees migrated to India (OfERR India). With the signing of the CFA, refugees started returning. However, the fighting that resumed in 2006, left them confused, dreading what may be in store for them if they return to their homes. Again, the end of the war in 2009 is another beginning of going back to their homes. Until 2017, according to OfERR India and media, 213,724 refugees have returned either through the Government sponsored arrangements or through their own expenses or through the UNHCR assistance (see Appendix Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 5).

According to the interviewees at the Tamil Nadu camps, they left their homeland and migrated to India in search of a peaceful and secured life which seemed to be impossible in Sri Lanka at that moment. With the hope of having a secured life, they were forced to undertake the hazardous journey by boat across the Palk Strait, the 22-mile stretch of sea dividing India and Sri Lanka. They took a boat near Pesalai on Mannar Island or at Nachchikudah, 26 miles North-East of Mannar, paying boatmen around 6000-8000 Sri Lankan rupees. Acharya (2007: 118) in his article on the Sri Lankan refugees in India has given a thorough description of their journey to India where he says that there was always a fear of marine accident due to tidal waves and getting arrested by the police, as the Sri Lankan navy patrolling the straits between the two countries arrested the refugees and handed them over to police. While embarking on their journey to India, many had also been deported back to Mannar and had been charged before courts for leaving the country illegally (Acharya 2007: 118). Nevertheless, if they somehow managed to survive all these difficulties, they landed in Dhanushkodi28 on Pamban island and

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28 Dhanushkodi is a town at the South-Eastern tip of Tamil Nadu. Dhanushkodi has the only land border between India and Sri Lanka.
were screened by Indian police authorities of the 'Q' branch\(^{29}\) at Rameswaram\(^{30}\) on the same island to determine if they have links with the LTTE. After that, all refugees were sent to Mandapam camp on the mainland in Ramanathapuram District. It served as the transit camp from where they were divided among three groups and sent to the destined camps. The first groups are the ordinary camp refugees who were housed in 132 camps in Tamil Nadu and one in Orissa (Hans 1993: 30). All of them were registered at the nearest police station which entitled them to government assistance like cash, shelter, health facilities, clothing and provision of essential items. Initially, there was no uniformity in the camp facilities. Some were good, while others were unsatisfactory. Similarly, the reception from some locals was friendly while others were hostile. Women faced some social and psychological problems that continued and increased with time (Hans 1993). At present, there are 63,351 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in 107 government administered refugee camps in Tamil Nadu\(^{31}\) (see Appendix Table 6).

The second group consists of the special camp people who supposedly posed security threats since they were said to be involved in subversive activities in Sri Lanka. They were considered to be linked with LTTE directly. Thus there is a clear line of distinction between them and the other refugees. They were sent to special camps where they had to live under constant surveillance. Special camps are located at Puzhal in Thiruvallur district and Cheyyar in Tiruvannamalai district in Tamil Nadu (Hans 1993).

Finally, the third group comprises the non-camp refugees, who stay outside the camps and do not receive financial assistance from the Government. It is because they are considered to be the rich businessmen and professionals. They also include some young men who escaped to India from being recruited by the LTTE. Since Gandhi's assassination, non-camp refugees were moved into the camps

\(^{29}\) 'Q' branch is a special branch of the police in the Tamil Nadu state that was initially assigned the function to curb.

\(^{30}\) Rameswaram is a town and a second grade municipality in the Ramanathapuram district in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is located on Pamban Island separated from mainland India by the Pamban channel and is about 50 kilometres from Mannar Island, Sri Lanka. It is situated in the Gulf of Mannar, at the very tip of the Indian peninsula.

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for security reasons and released afterward. As of November 2016, there are 37,868 refugees living outside the camps.[32]

Sri Lanka also saw an increasing number of persons, especially the Tamils, migrating towards Europe, North America, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. However, during my field-visit in Tamil Nadu in May 2013, migration to Australia gained prominence amongst the refugees in the camps. This situation is mostly because the refugee's idea of a better future is in Australia.[33] The next section elaborates on the issue of Australian migration.

Migrating to Australia

Most of the refugees, I talked to, are motivated to migrate to Australia with the sole hope of having a better future for them and their children. They are not even afraid to risk their lives by embarking on the dangerous journey by boat. Since 2009, the number of Sri Lankans migrating to Australia has increased each year which is evident from the available statistics. According to Howie (2013), only 736 Sri Lankan boat migrants travelled to Australia in 2009 with the end of the civil war. The year 2011 witnessed only 211 Sri Lankans arriving in Australia by boat. In 2012, around 6,412 Sri Lankan boat people, including both Tamils and around 1000 Sinhalese, arrived in Australia (Howie 2013). In the same year, as the author writes, the Sri Lankan authorities claimed to have intercepted over 3,000 Sri Lankans en route to Australia. The numbers have continued to rise in 2013, with over 1,730 Sri Lankans arriving in Australia.[34]

Reasons behind choosing Australia, as Howie (2013: 98) found out during her field visit to Sri Lanka are mostly “the effects of the war, post-war struggles, political problems, persecution, systemic discrimination and other forms of injustice”. She further maintains that due to the involvement of relatively low cost, Sri Lankans get motivated to migrate to Australia instead of other Western countries. (ibid.: 98). In addition, Australia is one of the few Western countries which have not legally


[33] According to my collected data.

banned the LTTE or its humanitarian arm Tamils’ Rehabilitation Organization (TRO)\textsuperscript{35} to date. Besides, according to Sarvananthan (2013), the TRO is openly operating in Melbourne and other cities of Australia with bank accounts, fund raising, and other activities even nearly five years after the end of the civil war. Therefore, former members of the LTTE and its supporters believe that they have relatively better chances of being accepted as refugees in Australia than in most other countries if they claim to be associated with the LTTE one way or the other.

Another reason for the flight is undoubtedly direct threats of physical violence; however, there are some political refugees and a significant proportion of Sinhalese (up to 20%) as well. I learnt from anecdotal evidence that the groups of people willing to migrate to Australia through illegal channels are mostly former combatants and supporters of the LTTE. Also, people having relatives or friends in Australia are attracted to migrate due to the ‘demonstration effect’ of their peers. The overwhelming factors driving migration are poor living conditions and lack of opportunities in both Sri Lanka and India. Their hope, depleted by decades of conflict, has not been restored by the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of some level of material wealth. Furthermore, the alleged autocratic nature of the regime, continuing human rights abuses and threats to democratic processes, the freedom of the press and the independence of the judiciary do exist are also reasons for them to risk their lives. A survey of youths undertaken in the latter half of 2009 by a team led by Prof. Siri Hettige of the University of Colombo throughout the country (including the conflict-affected regions) (unpublished) revealed that about 50% of the youths (18-24 years old) in Sri Lanka wanted to go abroad (across all ethnicities). This enthusiasm to go abroad shows that there is a crisis of confidence in the country among the youth.

In contrast, Sri Lanka’s high commissioner to Australia, Thisara Samarasinghe in an interview stated that the Sri Lankan boat migrants are not fleeing persecution, but are seeking for economic

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\textsuperscript{35} The Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) was established in 1985 in Tamil Nadu in southeastern India by Tamil refugees fleeing the violence in North and East Sri Lanka. Its initial operation was to provide relief to the refugees in India. After the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and the subsequent fighting between the LTTE and the IPKF, TRO moved its operation and headquarters to Jaffna in Northern Sri Lanka. The headquarters moved again to Kilinochchi after Jaffna was taken by Sri Lanka Armed Forces in 1995. After the signing of the CFA in 2002 between the LTTE and the Government of Sri Lanka, TRO was recognized by the Government as a legitimate NGO and was granted NGO status. During the period 2002 to 2005 TRO operated from offices across Sri Lanka in both Government and LTTE controlled areas providing post war and post tsunami relief and rehabilitation to Tamil community.
opportunities to lead a better life as he thinks, at present, Sri Lankans are in no need to seek asylum because the war is over and the country is progressing\textsuperscript{36}. Moreover, a couple of reports reveal that Australia had been deporting the Sri Lankan migrants back to their homeland. For instance, in July 2014, a boat-load of 41 people had been handed back to Sri Lanka\textsuperscript{37} and had successfully returned 12 Sri Lankan safely to Sri Lanka on May 6, 2016\textsuperscript{38}.

It has been eight years since the war ended. The former Rajapaksa-government faced a huge challenge in the post-war years regarding reconciliation and re-building the country, both physically and mentally, especially in the North-Eastern parts. The following section presents an insight into the post-war realities in an area still very much affected by the aftermath of the war.

\section*{2.3 Post-war scenario: a summary}

\textbf{The case of Northern Sri Lanka}

To detail on the post-war situation in Northern Sri Lanka, I begin with the Tamil-speaking Muslims who were displaced during the 1990 Eviction. At present many among them are trying to integrate into the North-western province of Puttalam while the rest are dreaming of return. To know about their situation, in the following, I will review the literature on Sri Lankan Northern Muslims.

Brun's (2003) doctoral thesis, 'Finding a place: Local integration and protracted displacement in Sri Lanka', analyses the local integration processes unfolding in Puttalam after the arrival of the Muslims. Her work explores the processes as practiced by the IDPs and the locals and focuses on the different local integration processes in situations of protracted internal displacement. She further shows war-related displacement and the following local integration processes changing social organization, practices, identities and place. She analyzes local integration through a 'local perspective' of

\textsuperscript{36} \url{http://www.abc.net.au/lateline/content/2013/s3734398.html} accessed on October 11, 2017.


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displacement' which implies studying displacement where it takes place. It implies asking what place
displaced people and their hosts have the right to; and where and how displacement and local
integration processes unfold. The main dimension of the local perspective considered is
reterritorialization: the finding and construction of one's place in society after displacement.
Reterritorialization is explored through looking at how IDPs and their hosts make homes and
livelihoods after displacement. It is shown how the displaced people are gradually settling down in
Puttalam, while still having the belief to return to their homes some day. The finding of a place and
making of life involve negotiations between the IDPs and their hosts about the rights to resources and
territories. In this context, Thiranagama's (2011) account of the relationship between the Muslim IDPs
and the locals is best suited. Initially, the Northern Muslim IDPs maintained a cordial relation with the
local Muslims in the Puttalam district. However, with the passage of time, their relationship started
souring. As Thiranagama has observed during her field-visit in 2003 that locals have started disliking
the IDPs because of their 'well-off status' and becoming recipients of daily rations and some other
advantages from the Government (Thiranagama 2011: 149). The IDPs faced discrimination at
administrative and bureaucratic levels because of their inability to speak Sinhala unlike the local
Muslims. On the other hand, the IDPs also started discriminating the locals regarding sophistication
and education as again pointed out by Thiranagama (2011: 150). Most importantly, IDPs believed
themselves to be different from the locals and this differentiation is based on their former homes which
are the 'life-worlds' that they brought with them in their heart to Puttalam (ibid.: 151). Further,
according to Brun (2001), displacement and local integration involve a feeling of belonging to several
places, of planning for alternative futures in those places, and the struggle to find a secure place in
society.

According to IDMC interviews39, many were reportedly not living permanently in their home areas in
the North, but commuting between the North and Puttalam district, their place of displacement. Some
communities who wished to integrate locally in Puttalam district could do so and have been able to
register as residents and voters there, but others have not.

accessed on October 15, 2017.
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Next, I portray the ambiguity of the IDPs in deciding whether to return to their homes or integrate at the displaced places. While doing so, the varied factors influencing their decisions are discussed. Wanninayake (2015) in her study on the post-war resettlement process in North-Central Sri Lanka (Anuradhapura and Vavuniya to be specific) argued that different factors, like socio-economic and security factors affect the IDPs’ decision to return to their homes or to integrate with the host. She has pointed out that economic factor was the most important and influential factor in determining the place of residence for the IDPs. This included accessibility of arable land for cultivation and residence, opportunities to continue the former occupation, availability of infrastructural facilities, farming, trading, financial aid, and relief. However, she pointed out that social relationship, fear and (in)security also acted as an influential factor in the decision-making process. A couple of literature has showed that people flee their homes and are unwilling to return when they fear of their freedom, physical person, or lives (Moore and Shellman 2004). Another factor which played an important in making up their minds to return was the lack of proper health services like health, education, and administration in their areas of original homes. Also, 'complete collapse of family values', as pointed out by Schrijvers, at their original homes were taken into consideration while deciding on their return (1999: 312). In addition, their houses and the surrounding areas have been occupied by either the armed forces or paramilitary groups or by other IDPs which is not allowing them to return (Wanninayake 2015: 58). Furthermore, most of the houses are either fully or partially destroyed, so there is no place to return. Besides, land mines and ordnances contaminated many areas. Lack of humanitarian assistance and continuing human rights violation were other factors influencing their decisions to return. Therefore, the IDPs continue to stay either at the welfare centres or with their friends and relatives (ibid.: 58).

On the one hand, those who stay with their friends and relatives have succeeded to create a new environment at the new places. Social relationships like kinship relations, marriage ties, caste, ethnic and friendship relations created a favorable situation between the host and the IDPs which influenced their decision to stay (Wanninayake 2015: 59). On the other hand, due to the long duration of stay at the welfare centres, IDPs have also developed certain social relationship with their new neighbors. This study differentiates between the adults and the youngs where the former are more willing to return whereas the latter are unlikely to do so. Similarly, differentiation has also made between the categories of male and female on their eagerness to return. Wanninayake shows that the majority of the males are
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likely to return but the females, considering their security and future of their children are most reluctant to return (2015: 59). Finally, being fled from their homes due to verbal threats, warnings, harassments, land mines, and air attacks, IDPs consider the factor of fear and insecurity to be another influential factor in their decisions to return (ibid.: 60).

Impact of the war

As a result of the civil war, presently the Jaffna peninsula consists of around 583,378\(^{40}\) inhabitants which is about half the original number of population. This is mainly because most of Jaffna Tamils are dead or have fled elsewhere within the island or overseas. According to the Ministry of Resettlement, (as of June 30, 2017) there are 32 welfare centres in the entire Jaffna district housing around 2998 IDPs\(^{41}\). according to IDMC\(^{42}\), a considerable number of IDPs those who have returned, remains of concern as they have gone back to their homes without the necessary infrastructure in place to facilitate a durable solution, including shelter, water, and sanitation. They have returned to their original homes which does not at all look like 'proper homes'. Instead, they look similar to what has been reported in Groundviews by the returnees about their homes which were, 'without proper shelter, income or basic infrastructures and resources to fend for themselves'\(^{43}\). As of December 31, 2016, the Ministry of Resettlement\(^{44}\) declared that the Government of Sri Lanka has resettled 887,400 IDPs in the North-Eastern provinces while another 40,808 are yet to be resettled. Among them, 3,552 IDPs are housed in

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40 According to 2012 census.


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the welfare centres in Jaffna and Trincomalee, and the rest are with friends and family residing in different parts of the North-Eastern districts.

The Northern part of the country, being a predominantly agricultural area, as documented by Mikunthan (2010), witnessed serious economic losses in the first place. He also emphasized on the dairy farms which, too, suffered a huge amount of loss at the expense of livestock resources because the livestocks were left behind during displacement. Also, due to heavy shelling, all the valuable machinery and household vegetations, cultivated over the past years, were destroyed. By all means, the development achieved for over generations was lost within a short span of time, and almost all the residents fled from their homes with a very minimal scope of return.

Secondly, during the pre-war days, Jaffna has been symbolized among the Sri Lankans as 'Hinduism' and 'superiority' which remained non-accessible for several years due to the armed conflict (Gerharz 2014: 38). Jaffna Tamils, no matter where they are settled, consider Jaffna to be their homeland where “Tamil culture can be found in its purest form” (ibid.: 38). They mainly belong to the powerful and conservative 'Vellalar caste' which, for centuries, have dominated, the region's land, economy, political and educational affairs and job opportunities (Pfaffenberger 1981: 1146). The Jaffna Tamils take pride as having preserved their ancient customs, heritage, and values (ibid.: 1148). They are “the carriers of Jaffna Tamil culture” as observed by Gerharz (2014: 41) in contrast to other groups in the country. However, the armed conflict resulted in rapid social and cultural changes in the Jaffna Tamil society. The social and cultural traditions are part of the lived reality of the Jaffna Tamils and their personal experiences claimed that 'religiosity or religiousness do not seem to have waned and caste though weakened remains important in some areas of social and economic life' (Herath 2012: 69). Nevertheless, presently, the majority of the displaced Tamils (living either in Colombo or abroad) do not want to return whereas most of the returnees repent their decision to return a dramatic change in the status and role of most of the Jaffna Tamils.

Thirdly, another important consequence is the increase in suicide rates among the Northern Tamils because of the war, displacement, growing competition for education and careers, high rate of unemployment and abuses from the male counterparts (Silva 2012; Jaffna Statistical Handbook 2012). However, people are also indulging in a huge amount of alcoholism in order to forget about their
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physical and mental sufferings which are regarded as another main reason for committing suicide (Herath 2012).

Fourthly, Herath (2012) shows that the vulnerabilities of women have increased in the North in the post-war days. Rape and domestic violence have also increased at a heavy rate. Extra-marital relations have much increased which is creating many problems for the institution of marriage. A shocking fact was revealed, too, that in the welfare centres, there are quite a few families where both the mother and daughter are pregnant at the same time, but they are without husbands. Instances of unwanted pregnancy, teenage pregnancy are most common at the welfare centres of Jaffna. In addition, child abuses also increased which is evident from the fact that in 2004, 460 cases of child abuse were reported which rose to 954 in 2011 (ibid.). Complaints have been launched of torture and sexual misconduct performed by the security forces in the Northern Province. Since May 2009, a total of 160 cases of tortured individuals have been reported.

Fifthly, the devastating civil war also led to the 'change in sex ratio which includes changes in size and composition of the population, distorted sex ratio, a distorted age structure, a high ratio of military personnel compared to civilians in the affected areas, a high rate of women-headed families, a high rate of disability and a high rate of family breakdown' (Silva 2012: 33). This imbalance is the result of the war which includes deaths and disappearances, injury, repeated population displacement, war-induced human migration, early marriage as a means of escaping forced recruitment in the LTTE and large-scale troop mobilization during and after the war (Tambiah 1986). This fact is evident from the decline in population in the Northern provinces 'from 1,109,404 to 997,754 between 1981 to 2011' (Tambiah 1986: 37). This is mostly due to the excess disappearances and outmigration for security reasons as well as for education and employment purposes from the province. Finally, eight years since the end of the war, military presence still remains extraordinarily high in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Evidence has proved the deep involvement of the military, in the Northern districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, in civil affairs and administration, with the stated objective of 'controlling and monitoring' the civilians45.

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Developmental works: role of governmental and non-governmental agencies

I will, now, show how the national and international agencies attempt to support the war-torn areas of the North-East since the onset of the conflict and how far they have been successful in their work. I also try to show whether all the support and help from different communities have reached to the affected people or not as the Government always acts as the middle man. Because it is a sad reality that a part of the huge amount of money allotted for the developmental work is used for personal purposes. This is evident from Gerharz’s quotes about her landlord’s idea of development which for him is “UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), for agriculture, it is CARE. All these NGOs do development”. However, his reply to the role of government is, “The government agent is only getting the money. Then it works with NGOs. The money comes from the EU [European Union] donor countries. The government agent asks for, so they give. But suppose they give 5 million for road development, 4 million is for the project, 1 million somebody eats” (2014: 132).

Nevertheless, the role played by the International and national agencies in the development of the war affected areas should not be ignored. Although, due to the presence of LTTE in Jaffna, none of the international agencies were there. It was only in 1995, when the government regained its control over Jaffna that international agencies like UN Emergency Task Force, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Halo Trust, World Health Organization (WHO), International Red Cross Committee and European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) engaged themselves with the developmental works of Sri Lanka (Gerharz 2007: 53; Foster 2003: 156). The government also took some initiatives towards the development process. $200 million was offered by the donor agencies towards humanitarian assistance in Jaffna (Foster 2003: 157). But the LTTE resumed its fighting in the peninsula and most of the agencies, except GTZ, left Jaffna. With the CFA, the situation changed completely.

Focus has also been given on the post-war reconstruction policies of Sri Lanka in some recent literature (see Gerharz 2014; Herath 2012; Herath et al. 2010). Since the official end of the war, the foremost task of the GoSL was to look after the resettlement process of the Tamil IDPs, rebuild the shattered infrastructure, improve their health and education system, demine the areas of their residence.
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Impressive outcomes were achieved concerning economic growth, rebuilding of roads, houses and public buildings, and standards of health and education have been maintained. Also, the Government along with the NGOs, INGOs and donors launched some reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes with the main aim of restoring peace and normalcy in the war affected areas as well in the lives of the people residing there (Azmi 2012: 171).

Reconstruction in the housing sector

The destruction of movable and immovable properties was immense. It was reported that until the end of 2011, only 8% of the houses have been rebuilt while the rest are non-existent as all had been razed to the ground due to shelling (Herath 2012: 65). Few of them are partly constructed with temporary materials like low-quality wood pieces, tin sheets and cement bricks provided by the government or the NGOs and donors.

According to the Divisional Secretariats of the Jaffna district, by the end of 2011, 155,516 housing facilities are available in the district where 107,126 are permanent houses, 25119 are semi-permanent houses, 18003 are huts, and 5268 are temporary shelters (Jaffna Statistical Handbook 2012). Various NGOs, INGOs and donors such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), SLRC, OMI, MDF, and Caritas helped in the construction of houses. In 2011, Ministry of Resettlement allocated 100 houses with a grant 10,000,000 SLR and a loan of amount 20,000,000 SLR from National Housing Development Authority (NHDA). The Indian Government is also assisting the housing scheme of the North. Under the project, around 65,000 houses were planned to be built in the civil war-hit Northern and Eastern provinces. The duration of their project was estimated for three years, starting from mid-2012 and expected to finish by mid-2015. However, this project has fallen into controversy and progress has not been made much.46

The Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu

This section elaborates on the situation of the Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu residing either in the camps or outside the camps and the kind of help they are getting from the Indian Government. There

2.3 Post-war scenario: a summary

are studies (see Xavier and Benoit 2011; Valatheeswaran and Rajan 2011; Kalaivanan 2011; Hans 1993) that assess the living conditions of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu and examine their socio-economic status in camps, their livelihood options, asset holdings, and the problems they faced or continue to face in everyday life, as well as their coping strategies and mechanisms at the household level.

Housing and camp-life in a nutshell

Xavier and Benoit 2011; Valatheeswaran and Rajan 2011 in their articles have described the situation of the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu in a very detailed manner. According to them, the camps provide the basic facilities like access to 24-hour electricity, water, fuel and availability of toilets. Nevertheless, they have poor infrastructure. The huts are generally constructed with asbestos and iron sheets which become really hot during summer time making it impossible for people to stay inside. Also, it creates several skin diseases, health problems and serious illness like cancer to the residents. Since the camps are usually located far away from the hospitals, it creates difficulties for the refugees to have access to proper medical care. Exploitation is another major problem in the camps. They are exploited by people within their own community and also by the Camp Administrative Officer (CAO) (Valatheeswaran and Rajan 2011). Being refugees, it is very difficult to find employment even if they are educated and qualified. The locals hesitate to employ the refugees because they feel it would lead to unnecessary harassment by the police and also uncertainty in their work field as refugees are not permanent citizens of the country. Hence, very few refugees succeed to acquire a job in the local market. They are mostly engaged in casual labor jobs such as masonry, agriculture-related work and daily wage laborers. Very few among the refugees also enjoy the opportunity to work in Private sector industry though they are discriminated at work by extra facilities and wage increments than the other employees. Most of the refugees depend on the cash dole which is a source of livelihood to them.

From the time of their arrival in the mid-80s, Valatheeswaran and Rajan (2011) has pointed out that the refugees in India led a peaceful life. However, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi changed their lives.

47 Cash dole is the portion of money given every month to the refugees staying at the camps by the Government. The money is distributed at the following rate: Rs.1,000/- for the breadwinners of the family, Rs.750/- for the additional members aged above 12 years and Rs.400/- for the remaining members aged below 12 years (OJERR India and Kalaivanan 2011).
2.3 Post-war scenario: a summary

They began to face hostility and lost all sympathy and support from the Indians. The State Government shifted the non-camp refugees into camps for security reasons and closed the education facilities that the children used to have. Indian Government placed restrictions on their movements and they were kept under 24*7 police surveillance. There is one policeman in-charge of every camp whose duty is to be there both during day and night. Until now, no outsiders are allowed to enter the camp without permission from the Q branch.

Assistance from the Tamil Nadu Government

The refugees have access to essential relief assistance from the Tamil Nadu Government on humanitarian grounds as has been documented by Kalaivanan (2011: 33) and OffERR India. According to Department of Rehabilitation of Tamil Nadu, households receive cash assistance under the Tamil Nadu Government’s Infrastructure Development Programme to improve the physical infrastructure of the camp. This information includes assistance for the repair of huts, street lights and the provision of drinking water, toilets, and road facilities. Also, Sri Lankan refugees also get free medical services from the government hospitals. They can claim financial assistance for major medical treatment from the State Government, which is sanctioned by 'the Sri Lankan Tamil Special Relief Fund' on the recommendation of the district collector. The Tamil Nadu Government started the 'Welfare of the Sri Lankan Refugees' scheme in 2007 in order to improve the standard of living in the camps. The State Government provided Rs. 42.14 crore under this scheme. Additionally, 'Sri Lankan Tamils Relief Fund' has been constituted to help the war-affected Tamils in Sri Lanka.

2.4 Conclusion

After eight years also the two main ethnic communities (Sinhalese and Tamils) are still divided when it comes to issues related to reconciliation. Since the time of my field-visit in 2013 until the time of finalizing my thesis, the only question which acted as the key question to distinguish between the two ethnic groups has been on the role of the Government to address the root causes of the ethnic conflict. Most of the Tamils, whom I met either in Colombo or in Jaffna stated that the Government is doing different kinds of developmental works like roads are being rebuild, temples are getting constructed, but that is not helping in any kind of progress particularly to the Northern Tamils. Their mental
conditions are still the same as used to be during the war. To add, they are still considered as second class citizens in their own country. One of the officials from a reputed NGO, based in Jaffna, also was of the same opinion regarding development in the Northern districts. He pointed out that, “If you take the A9 Road\(^{48}\), you will get to see the amount of development in the Northern provinces, roads have been reconstructed, international banks have flooded the market...but then if you take roads from the highway, then you will get to see the real development. The roads are same as used to be before, houses are still damaged and broken, no one is bothered about them”.

In contrast, a totally different view has been given by one of the development experts in Colombo. “Our Government has done a lot of developmental work for us and also for the Tamils in the North. But you see it is very difficult to develop everything all at once. It will take time. At the same time, Tamils also have to cooperate with us by not indulging in any more fights. We have information that the Tamil diaspora is trying to build another militant group and the Tamils here are helping them”.

The three statements show the different views put forward by three different categories of persons. Each one of them is correct from their own stand-point. The Rajapakshe government has done a whole lot of things for the development of the country after the end of the war. But these developments are only witnessed by the people from the southern part of the country. During my visit to Colombo, Sri Lanka in January 2013, I witnessed some of these developments. For instance, the government launched an ambitious program of physical infrastructure development to completely upgrade the sea, air, road, power and telecom backbone of the country. It expanded the International airport in Negombo and developed a new airport in Mattala. A port has been developed in Hambantota to function as a service and industrial port and later be developed to handle trans-shipment cargo. The port is ideally located to serve the main East-West shipping lane connecting Europe and the Middle-East with South-East Asia. Also, all the southern highways have been newly built for quick and easy transport\(^{49}\).

When I visited Jaffna in February the same year, on the A9 road, I could see the renovated roads, newly built temples, the emerging international banks and restaurants. However, as soon as I entered the town,

\(^{48}\) A9 Road is the main road connecting Jaffna with the city of Kandy and is classified as 'A' as it is equal to a 'highway' in the country (Gerharz 2007: 113).

2.4 Conclusion

the interior part still remained untouched. Roads, as well as the houses, are all broken. Most of the houses are abandoned, so trees have grown inside them. People have to travel long distances for shopping as only one or two shops are only there in the whole area. Most importantly, the Jaffna Tamils still have not recovered from the trauma of losing all their belongings. They are stuck with their past and still cannot move on. Those who are in the welfare centres are counting their days to return as the military, and the government is still not allowing them to return.

Against this background, the next chapters explore the concept of 'home' and 'belonging' as understood by the Sri Lankan Tamil displaced persons, residing either in their own homes or away in the post-war era. I did this research through a qualitative methodological approach which I attempt to document in the following chapter.
2.4 Conclusion
Chapter 3: Methodological approach

Exquisite natural beauty, marvelous sea beaches located throughout the prolonged coastline, historical and religious significance attract travellers to visit Sri Lanka throughout the history. There is no surprise that the tourism industry in Sri Lanka is one of the main revenue earners in their economy. Sadly, the dreadful civil war stagnated the growth of tourism industry over the years. With the end of the war, the country has been regaining gradually its lost glory of tourism. In 2016, Sri Lanka Tourism boomed to a new milestone of over 2 million tourist arrivals, transcending all time high hits in the history which is an increase of 14% over previous years.¹

In addition, the end of the war made Sri Lanka “an over-researched terrain” for the foreign social scientists and development experts (Gerharz 2007: 58) because of the increased interest in conducting research on the war-affected North-Eastern part of the island. However, things have not changed in the last 10 years. Still, a whole lot of social scientists and development experts, from all over the world, are interested in working on the development issues of the country and I am not an exception to them. I have grown a strong interest to work with the displaced persons who have lost their kith and kin due to the war. As a result, I took up the concept of home of belonging among the Displaced Persons to work on with.

Considering the purpose and type of research questions, I adopted a qualitative approach to study how the displaced persons conceptualize the notions of home and belonging. Therefore, this chapter presents an outline of the methods and materials which I used to collect data and to answer the research questions. Firstly, I discuss about my access to the field where I portray the places, Colombo, Jaffna and Tamil Nadu, which I visited to conduct my research. Also, in this part I document the methods of data collection. In addition, I talk about the interviews and my respondents. Following this, I present some of the ethical challenges which I faced throughout my field research. I talk about my positioning in the field as well. As I conducted this research in two different countries, so I applied the multi-sited approach which is discussed in the next part. Finally, I conclude this chapter by elaborating on the analysis of my collected material where I decided to apply the Grounded Theory.

3.1 Access to the field

I focused on the capital city of Colombo which is the largest city and the commercial, industrial and cultural capital and is located on the west coast of the island. There, Sinhalese form the majority

3.1 Access to the field

along with Tamils and other ethnic groups. The general life in Colombo can be related to any other South Asian cities where English plays a very important role in communication. Without any surprise, the fortune seekers including the displaced Tamils from the rest of the country has been trying to establish themselves in the city over the years. Most of the head quarters of NGOs, INGOs are located here along with the University of Colombo. To gain contextual knowledge and statistical evidence concerning the issues on ethnic conflict and displacement, these are the ideal places to get to know the recent past and present scenarios.

I landed in Colombo in the first week of January 2013 and stayed for a month in a rented apartment which was owned by a Sinhalese person, who is by profession an acting National Security Officer living with his family. The neighborhood is mainly inhabited by Sinhalese, who seem to be rich as their houses are like Villas. During my stay, I conducted around 30 interviews with experts including Sri Lankan and Foreign Social Scientists, NGO representatives, former government agents and few self-settled displaced Tamils along with informal interviews with my Landlord and his relatives (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elderly (60+)</th>
<th>Middle-aged (30-60)</th>
<th>Young (18-30)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Tamils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil-speaking Muslims</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
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International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES) left a huge contribution to the expansion of my contacts and networks. I also got a scope to attend few open lectures which added to my knowledge of Sri Lanka and its current development. In addition, I visited other research institutions that includes Law and Society Trust, Social Scientists’ Association and Women’s Education and Research Centre. In these research institutions, I got the scope to exchange views and information with the research scholars and other working staffs. I also got the opportunity to talk to them regarding their experiences during the
3.1 Access to the field

war. As a result of this, a large part of my data is yielded from informal interviews and participant observation in various fields and contexts. Together with this, I also collected a wide range of reports from all these institutions which includes project proposals, annual reports and other kind of documents which are relevant to my study. Also, I kept an eye on the daily English newspapers while in Colombo and Jaffna and gathered articles which deal with my pertinent issues. And, finally, parts of my research material are based on 'Internet research' which keeps me updated till now.

After staying in the city for a couple of weeks and exchanging different ideas, I could immediately sense the prejudices between the two ethnic groups. For instance, when I told my house-owner about my visit to Jaffna, he said “are you going to meet Prabhakaran? You have guns and bullets? You (are) going to fight there?”. All Sinhalese (I met), highly discouraged me to go to Jaffna. Some even said, “if they (military) find you gathering data without permission they will imprison you at least for 5 years. You have to be very careful in Jaffna. Do not talk unnecessarily to any one”. The most frightening of them was “you will not be able to enter Jaffna as there is a military check post in Omanthai and they will caught you and send you back to Colombo and will do whatever they feel like with you”. All these kinds of statements deteriorated my mind set but also there were encouragements: Tamils including interviewees and experts showed their interest on my research topic and insisted me to visit the place. Moreover, one among them accompanied me in the journey to Jaffna by a night bus which took almost 10 hours. While entering Vavuniya, at the Omanthai check post, militaries asked for my Passport and stored my details (destination, purpose of visit, address in Jaffna, duration of stay). Finally, I reached Jaffna in the very next morning with a hope to stay for the next half a year.

My decision to concentrate on Jaffna developed because compared to other Northern regions eg. Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu, Jaffna is not that much under military surveillance which makes access to the field possible in the first place. The district of Jaffna consists of the Jaffna Peninsula and seven inhabited Islands which made it highly suitable for a research of this design as I could collect and compare data from all these areas. This area encompasses a broad spectrum of (Hindu and Christian) Tamils, living alongside with Muslims and a small number of Sinhalese.

Things were totally different in Jaffna than Colombo. From public transport to foods, dresses and most importantly the language. Fortunately, I managed to conduct about 55 interviews with social scientists
3.1 Access to the field

and media journalists, Catholic and Anglican Priests, Government officials, teachers, locals, displaced persons residing in the welfare centers (see Table 2) and managed to meet five of the NGOs in Jaffna. It was really difficult to get an appointment from the NGOs because of their tight schedules and privacy policies. These interviews mostly helped me to gain knowledge on the recent developments in Jaffna. The locals and the IDPs at the welfare centers shared their experiences during the war and the post-war days. The locals, in addition, spoke of their future aspirations which is leading many of them to shift elsewhere. While, the IDPs expressed their deep emotions towards their former homes and how much they long to return. Their interviews also reflect their expectation from the Government and how disappointed they are because the government did not keep their promises to return them to their homes as soon as the war ended.

Table 2. Number of individual Interviewees in Jaffna

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<th>Elderly (60+)</th>
<th>Middle-aged (30-60)</th>
<th>Young (18-30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Tamils</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Tamils</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil-speaking Muslims</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I stayed with a Tamil family in Jaffna, which was already reserved for me. My landlady, a well-known social worker on Gender Based Violence in the town, turned out to be a good informant. Almost all the women (victims) and other civilians frequently visited her place to discuss about their issues and I got a scope to observe them and even sometimes talked to them. I also participated in many discussions and workshops (for eg. Banner making, Sports day, One Billion Rising around the world in V- day) which usually took place in her house along with some other locations like Jaffna Fort, near the Jaffna Library.
3.1 Access to the field

etc. The Gender based violence team is trying their best to help the women in the whole North-Eastern provinces in order to stand for their rights and to live independently and happily.

After staying in Sri Lanka for three months, I decided to move to Tamil Nadu to study the Tamil refugees who migrated to India from Sri Lanka. I made this sudden unplanned move after conversing with several experts in Colombo and Jaffna about the Tamil refugees in India. To add, many of my interviewees also spoke of their relations who are in India. And according to them, their relations in India are leading a far better life compared to them. Thus, with a strong determination in mind, I chose Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{2}, the southern state of India, to study the concept of home and belonging among the Tamil refugees. I flew to Chennai and stayed there for the next two months. For the first few days, I had difficulties in establishing contacts and access to networks to continue my research. Luckily, one of the NGO officials in Colombo provided me with a contact in Chennai helping to develop further contacts. After few unsuccessful attempts of getting access to the field, finally I succeeded to engage myself as an intern in one of the renowned Chennai based NGO 'OfERR\textsuperscript{3}', composed of mainly Sri Lankan refugees, working for the Rehabilitation of the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in India. Being an intern, I got the scope to get in close association with them and their works. Within a very few days, I accomplished good rapport with them and gained their trust in order to visit three refugee camps, namely Kotapattu camp (Trichy), VV'kottai camp (25 kms from Trichy) and Rayanur camp (Karur) in Tamil Nadu district. I, also, visited Pethikuppam camp in Gummidipoondi (48 Kms from Chennai) along with one of my Sri Lankan informants living in Chennai. In India, altogether, I did 35 interviews including Social Scientists and researchers, NGO representatives and Sri Lankan Refugees in the camps as well as the self-settled persons (see Table 3).

\textsuperscript{2} The rationale behind choosing Tamil Nadu is detailed in my next paragraphs.

\textsuperscript{3} OfERR (Organization for Elankai Refugees Rehabilitation) was founded in 1984 with the objective of rendering relief and rehabilitation service for the Sri Lankan Tamils seeking asylum in Tamil Nadu. OfERR is presently working for all the refugees in the camps and delivering humanitarian service including community organization, education, women empowerment, health and nutrition, human resource development, counseling, livelihood, documentation, etc. \url{https://oferr.org/} accessed on October 15, 2017.
3.1 Access to the field

Table 3. Number of Individual Interviewees in Tamil Nadu

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Elderly (60+)</th>
<th>Middle-aged (30-60)</th>
<th>Young (18-30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Tamils</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Tamils</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Towards multi-sited approach

The topic of my research is to focus on the common concern about the articulation of home and the kind of belonging the Sri Lankan Tamil DPs have to their homes being in or away. The proper site to explore such a topic is composed of 'a collection of forms of practice, which may be found in different, but complexly connected sites' as stated by Nadai and Maeder (2005). Again, these sites are initially determined by theoretical reflections. In search of a field to investigate this concept empirically, I decided to focus on Sri Lanka and India as the former is their motherland while the latter is a foreign land. Examining the concept of home of the DPs in these different sites helped me to develop new varied insights on home, similar or dissimilar, due to differing locales, cultures and traditions.

I characterized Colombo, Jaffna and different parts of Tamil Nadu as my primary field sites because these locations are interlinked in terms of Sri Lankan displaced people. Exploring these different field sites, geographically and socially, is a way of collecting data which deals with the common topic of conceptualizing home among the IDPs and their socio-economic problems. Therefore, I applied multi-sited approach which proved to be useful to investigate these issues.

The concept of multi-sited ethnography was developed by anthropologist Marcus in the mid-1990s, where he explained it as the study of social phenomena that focuses on multiple sites which solves the need for a method to analytically explore transnational processes, movement of people and ideas that extend over multiple locations (Marcus 1995). Marcus, in his explanation, located the emergence of multi-sited ethnography within two broader developments: first, the unfolding of new arrangements.
3.2 Towards multi-sited approach

such as transnational migration, timespace compression, and globalization; and second, interdisciplinary efforts to develop new vocabularies for analyzing these evolving arrangements (Williams et al. 2014: 84-85). Falzon pointed out that the essence of this type of research is “to follow people, connections, associations and relationships across the space” (2012: 1-2).

In terms of method, multi-sited ethnography involves the movement of the researcher through a wide stretch of field so that he/she could compare the different varieties of collected data – actually, via sojourns in two or more places, or conceptually, by means of techniques of juxtaposition of data. Therefore, it is not simply a call to 'go to multiple places'; rather, it is a recognition that contemporary ethnographic topics escape the boundaries of the local, and so must be examined as inherently multi-sited phenomena (Williams et al. 2014: 84). Drawing on multi-sited ethnography, Burrell (2009: 181) constructs the field-site as a network that incorporates physical, virtual, and imagined spaces and provides practical steps for how to trace and locate these configurations in ethnographic research. Scholars of transnational studies have also taken up multi-sited ethnography in order to discuss transnational connection or friction without resorting to local-global dichotomies (Levitt 2009).

One of the underlying goals of this approach is to avoid the common trap of separating local practice from a global world system (Williams et al. 2014). It aims to trace the movement of goods, people, and ideas across different and sometimes conflicting spatial and political contexts (Burrell 2009; Appadurai 1996). Differing from a traditional ethnography\(^4\), multi-sited approach follows a research topic across numerous spaces for shorter periods of time. When conducting multi-sited ethnography, spaces can be geographic, social, or virtual, depending on what the researcher chooses to follow. Marcus (1995) wrote that researchers can follow people, a 'thing', a metaphor, story, life/biography, or conflict. Following a 'thing' is the most common type of multi-sited ethnography, and this involves tracing commodities, gifts, money, art, and intellectual property. When multi-sited ethnography focuses on following a metaphor, researchers trace signs, symbols, or symbolic meanings of a specific topic. Whatever a researcher chooses to follow will ultimately impact what spaces the researcher crosses.

\(^4\) Traditional ethnography typically situates a researcher in one field site for an extended period of time. The researcher does not move across many spaces but gets to know one setting extremely well.
3.2 Towards multi-sited approach

Gerharz also followed Marcus's multi-sited approach and while applying it to her own work reveals that methods in ethnography have started to pay attention to changing conditions caused by globalization processes (2007: 66). Previously, ethnography was focused on a “clearly defined field within which the ethnographer conducts participant observation” (ibid.: 66). She further points out that currently, there are no longer any clearly defined boundary, the field is turning into a space which has little to do with geographic boundaries. As the ethnographic landscape, topics and interests are all changing with time, so it is time to approach the field in new different ways (ibid.: 66). Though, as pointed out by Gille and Riain (2002: 286), the extension of ethnography to multiple sites is one of the best way to meet the challenges that globalization pose to place-based studies, but it also signifies a lot of difficulties. The difficulties range from selection of relevant sites to time and financial constraints which creates problem to build trust with the locals in the field. This new trend of research, as maintained by Gerharz (2007), is based on changing in one's interest and topic.

However, like other approaches, multi-sited approach is not free from criticisms. Falzon (2012), in his article writes about the critiques of Marcus's original formulation and its elaborations. Falzon, for instance, took up the suggestion of Hage (2005) where he said that multi-sited imaginings may well be a symptom of delusions of innovativeness if not grandeur, argues that, with respect to studying, say, migration, the concept of a single geographically discontinuous site is much more useful than that of multi-sitedness. He, further, suggests that multi-sited research may imply a tacit holism, and proposes that a 'certain reflexivity concerning the social relations that one is opting not to cover in depth' (Falzon: 466) makes for a better definition of one’s partiality. His conclusion is startling: 'I simply do not think that there can be such a thing as a multi-sited ethnography' (ibid.: 465). For him, multi-sited ethnography is a buzzword, since 'its signification and ramifications are (not) explored by many of its users ... (who) use it mechanically' (ibid.: 464). He takes this approach to imply some form of (geographical) spatial de-centredness because under pressure, the advocates of multi-sitedness sometimes defend themselves by saying that 'site' does not necessarily mean 'location' or 'place', but also 'perspective' (Falzon 2012: 2).

While in Colombo, I developed new insights on my topic, met experts who helped to gradually and cumulatively begin my selection for the next research sites. In fact, my decision to visit Tamil Nadu, as already mentioned, developed after staying and talking to people in both Colombo and Jaffna which
3.2 Towards multi-sited approach

later on turned out to be a very wise decision. I studied and observed the culture and social life of people around me. Gradually, I got accustomed to their culture and was soon adopted into their families as one of their members. It took me very little time, to get along with them, because being an Indian I share almost the same customs and traditions. And due to these reasons, I chose to describe my interviews, with them, 'as conversations' which suggests to be of 'a more personal quality' (Hannerz 2003: 209).

Depending on the nature of my research topic, I decided to rely on interviewing, informant work and participant observation in the application of multi-sited approach. I emphasized mostly on participant observations in Chennai because there were many activities within the NGO where it was worth to observe and participate. But there were also others which were “difficult to access” (Hannerz 2003: 211) which led me to opt for collecting articles from newspapers and official documents.

3.3 Documentation of research and methods

As emphasized by Cresswell (2003), the selection of my methodological tools were driven by my research questions, hence used qualitative method approach. This method, as Pickbourn (2011: 12) emphasizes, provides a holistic understanding of complex issues and processes, and increase the likelihood of uncovering unexpected and sensitive issues that are relevant to uncovering casual relationships. Thus its use helped me to get a detailed view on how displaced persons perceive displacement and view the changing meanings of home and belonging. Also, it helped to find how they negotiate with unhoming and resettlement. This approach allowed me to establish my researcher's role as an 'active learner' and helped me to avoid 'expert role' to make a judgement on participants, and enabled me to tell the story from the participant's point of view (Cresswell 1998: 15-18). With qualitative approach, I offered my respondents enough room to express and reveal their experiences and stories. I encouraged them to talk about their lives, their day-to-day to activities and the impact of displacement on their lives. For the sake of my research purposes, I adopted a listener role to learn about my respondents daily lives and carefully pushed them to speak about the changing meanings of home and belonging. However, this approach has also been criticized by social scientists for being subject to the researcher's bias, and it usually deals with small samples which lack the reliability and generalizability of findings (Pickbourn 2011: 12).
3.3 Documentation of research and methods

In the upcoming paragraphs, I present my methodological approach and have detailed the tools used for data collection, the rationale behind them and the challenges encountered in their application in the field.

A total of 120 interviews were conducted in between the months of January 2013 till May 2013 in both the countries. I visited Colombo in a time when the whole country was concerned with threats to the rule of law, religious discrimination and intimidation of civil society activists and journalists. This reflects the sacking of the Chief justice, Dr. Shirani Bandaranayake, in a process domestic courts deemed illegal\(^5\). On the other hand, a wave of hardline Buddhist attacks on Muslims and Christians also grabbed my attention. In Colombo, I came to know that protests were going on in front of one of the Muslim-owned renowned garment shops in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, incidents like destruction of ancient Muslim shrines in the island along with burning of mosques and Muslim-owned shops. Since January-April 2013, 97 such anti-Muslim incidents took place\(^6\). These incidents took place mainly because Bodu Bala Sena protested against the halal certificate and the slaughter of cattle in general, but no definite action was taken. My informant informed that the slaughter of cattle is one reason but the main reasoning is the increasing Muslim population in Colombo. She also said that by the next 10 years, Colombo will have Muslim majority which have made the Sinhalese afraid and are trying to get rid of the formers.

Besides, almost every Tamil respondent was looking forward for India's role in the United Nations Resolution against Sri Lanka which was scheduled in March 2013. They believed that with India's support, their problem could be sorted out. Finally, on March 21, 2013\(^7\), UN passed the resolution against Sri Lanka to conduct an independent and credible investigation into alleged war crimes where India along with 24 countries voted in favor, 13 against and with 8 abstentions.

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3.3 Documentation of research and methods

**Focus group discussions, in-depth, informal and semi-structured interviews, and participant observations**

Focus group discussion, in-depth, informal and semi-structured interviews and participant observation were the primary methods of my data collection. My samples varied in terms of gender, age, caste and class. The interview questionnaire was semi-structured in nature and was divided into two sections. The first section asked a number of demographic questions like, age, sex, marital status, family members, education, occupations, place of origin, etc. The second section asked specific questions to the respondents which included the degree of belonging that they have to their homes, how do they conceptualize the notion of home and how does the meaning change with time and priorities. This questions were followed by few other specific questions depending on whether the respondents were returnees or not. Returnees were asked about their experiences and feelings of return while the non-returnees were asked about their longing to return. I intend to explore the meaning of home and belonging and how it changes among the displaced persons, and semi-structured interviews helped me to deal with more specific issues as this (Bryman 2008: 439).

Considering the complexities of producing a sampling frame when working with a large number of respondents, I applied a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods as it helped me to select samples strategically, which were relevant to my research and in understanding specific phenomenon (Bryman 2008: 415). For the purpose of my study, I wanted to interview IDPs at the welfare centers and at the refugee camps in both the countries. My snowball sampling method was facilitated by local and international NGOs who were working on the issues like displacement and return. Initially, I made contacts with the NGOs before entering the field and these NGOs, in turn, helped me to establish contacts with the locals associations. These local associations helped me to get direct access to my target respondents. In Tamil Nadu, I got help from the local association who arranged for my overnight staying near the camps so that I can have enough time to talk to them. I selected my samples or respondents based on certain criteria so that I can get precisely what I am looking for: in Colombo, I preferred talking to the Tamil families who have been displaced decades ago. In Jaffna, I opted to talk to both the returnees and those who were still in the welfare centres. In Tamil Nadu, I talked to the self-settled refugees and also those staying at the camps for decades. I interviewed 34 IDPs, residing in the camps of Jaffna and Tamil Nadu. Furthermore, to get some
knowledge about the perception of home of the self-settled displaced persons, I made 36 interviews in both the countries including both male and female. I tried to maintain a balance regarding choosing the gender, however, I got the scope to talk to most of the female at the camps as I went there during the afternoon times. The process of my sampling was also dependent on time constraints and costs as well.

I chose different forms of interviews to talk to the displaced persons and the experts (in this field) in both the countries. As a method, interviews gave a closer contact and a better dialogue with the respondents. Interviews, as argued by Kvale (2006: 481) gave voice to many. Such as the grass root displaced persons, especially the female, who do not ordinarily speak in public, could talk freely revealing their social situations and their viewpoints.

To me, the most important task was the choice of informal in-depth and semi-structured interviews from among the various forms of qualitative interviews as that would help me to keep track of the time I need to allot for each of the interviews. On one hand, for the self-settled displaced persons both in Chennai and Colombo, I used informal in-depth interviews “to build greater rapport and to uncover new topics of interest” (Bernard 2000: 190). My idea was “to get them open up and let them express in their own terms” (ibid.: 191). The in-depth interview helped to proceed as a confidential and secure conversation between me and the respondents. By means of a thorough composed semi-structured questionnaire, which I showed my respondents for approval, I ensured that our conversation encompasses the topics that are crucial to ask for the sake of my research.

Another tool that I followed, at the welfare centers in Jaffna and at the refugee camps in Tamil Nadu, is the focus group discussion which aims to investigate and give voice to those groups in society who are most vulnerable and marginalized in development decision-making and implementation (Lloyd-Evans 2006). As an ancillary method to other research method, focus groups are not only an excellent tool for obtaining information on public perceptions of social issues, they also provide a conducive environment for understanding collective social action and accessing group beliefs, understandings, behavior and attitudes. As I visited the camps mainly in the afternoon, so it seemed difficult to talk to each individual because all of them were busy with their works. So I decided to conduct a focus group discussion as it is a good way to gather together people and discuss about their concept of home and belonging. They have almost similar backgrounds and experiences which was another advantage that I
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gained from this discussion. I moderated the group of participants and introduced the topics for
discussion and tried to make the discussion a lively and natural one amongst themselves.

While doing participant observations also, I chose informal interviewing to settle down and getting to
know “the lay of the land” (Lloyd-Evans 2006: 190). I constantly jotted down what I observed and
unburdened my memory in the evening after getting back home. On the other hand, there were some
situations where I knew, I would not get any further scope to meet some people, like the experts and the
displaced persons in the camps, so I opted for a semi-structured interview in order to efficiently use
their time (ibid.: 191). How do the displaced persons conceptualize home and belonging? How do they
negotiate with unhoming and resettlement? This two are my main research questions on the basis of
which I prepared the other questions. I posed, almost, similar questions but in a different way to the
same kind of people (for eg. the displaced, NGO and INGO officials and so on) which granted me the
opportunity to have their different views and opinions on the same matter and to compare them. The
first few interviews showed a need to adapt the interview questions in order to receive even more
precise and relevant answers on my topic. As I did not have a concrete questionnaire, so was quite
flexible with my questions as it depended on the response of my respondents. Based on their responses,
I further developed my topic.

Informal and semi-structured interviewing were used for both focus group and participant observations
in the camps. I observed and recorded some aspects of life around me while participated in some (ibid.:
321). I mostly did 'descriptive' and 'focused' observation (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 677), sometimes
observing each and every move and sometimes ignoring the irrelevant.

I used an audio recorder to record my interviews for documentation so that I could focus on the topic
and dynamics of the interview (Kvale 1996: 160-162). This in a way helped me to transcribe my
interviews later on. Before starting to record the interviews, I asked for their consent which allowed me
to track them without disruption of taking notes on what they said (Hertz 1995: 451). From the initial
moment of contact, almost all the respondents took charge establishing they were the collaborators if
not the actual conductors of this research. Many among the respondents in the welfare centers and
camps instructed me where to position my audio-recorder and when to switch it on and when to put it
off. With a hope to create a friendly atmosphere and build rapport, I accepted their instructions and
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offerings. As Gurney (1985: 43) wrote, “Female researchers must work especially hard to achieve an
to achieve an impression combining the attribute of being non-threatening with that of being a credible, competent
professional”. In some cases, especially most of the self-settled in Jaffna refused to record their voices
and some officials were not comfortable with the recordings. While focusing on sensitive issues like
the Government's role in their return or in rebuilding their homes, they often asked me to switch off the
recorder and sometimes even did not want me to jot down those issues which I had to keep it in my
memory and later jot them down.

In Colombo, I conducted informal in-depth interviews with the self-settled displaced persons at their
homes and met the officials from the NGOs, INGOs and donors in their respective offices. Respecting
their time slot, I did semi-structured interviews with the officials. Those interviews went on for 40
mins on an average and those conducted at homes went on for 60-90mins. In Jaffna, the situation was a
bit different. I was accompanied by a translator specially to the welfare centers where I had to provide a
questionnaire in order to make things easier for the others. It was a semi-structured focus group
discussion because the respondents were not comfortable in taking me to their respective places instead
they preferred to meet in their common halls. Sometimes, during the group discussions, I acted as a
mere observer observing the interactions among the interviewees which provided valuable data that
would have not been possible if I had conversed with them individually. Many a times the group
consented, discussed, objected each others statements which later on turned out to be a valuable
discussion for me. In the group discussion, many times I was also asked to express my views proving
my direct participation. For the self-settled persons, though I went to their homes but somehow they
were afraid to talk freely, with a fear somebody might be listening, so my interviews with them also
became semi-structured ones.

Likewise in Tamil Nadu, I followed the same way of conducting focus group discussions in the refugee
camps and informal semi-structured interviews with the self-settled persons and the officials.

**Ethical considerations: my position in the field**

Scrutinizing the concept of 'home' and 'belonging', and their changing meanings had been extremely
testing, as I dealt with multifarious sensitive and genuine issues such as forced migration, the
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government's role in resettling the displaced people and helping them to rebuild their homes. I have tried to put my best hand forth, with careful and calculated efforts, to maintain ethics in my study. Respondents had been informed well beforehand about the purpose and technique of my work, including the nature of questions they would be asked. They were also informed about the group of people who would be having access to the findings of my research and the means of its readings and publicization. Each of the respondents had been given the freedom to openly partake, and even refuse or withdraw participation from the research at any point in time (Scheyvens 2014). Confidentiality was prioritized, and no private data identifying the subjects has been reported or divulged (Kvale 1996: 114). Ethical decisions were included in every stage of the study, ranging from thematizing a research plan to reporting individual stages of the inspection (ibid.: 110). During an interview, my principle stand was to be flexible with the ethical decisions which was derived from a post modern, feminist philosophy expostulating the notion of researchers being merely neutral observers. Quite contrarily, they exercise solicitation, self-awareness, and have the requisite knowledge related to the code of ethics, and are highly judicious during the implementation of their enterprise. I, also, advised my respondents about any potential harm or benefits they might face as a consequence of their participation. This meant physical harm by the ruling party or the military of what might be revealed, it might also mean loss of livelihood or it may mean return to their original homes and improvement of their living standards. However, I described clearly how their identities will be protected, for example, how the information contributed will be separated from the master list which matches pseudonyms to real names (Scheyvens 2014).

Not only I tried to maintain ethics in my study, I was also assigned with different and shifting of identities during this ongoing study. This is exactly what Hertz (1995: 432) states about the changing and shifting of identities of researcher and respondents. To quote him, “The interview- from the moment of initial contact- becomes a socially constructed matrix of shifting multiple identities- both the researchers and the respondents”. At times, I was treated like an “honorary male” (Warren 1988 cited in Arendell 1997: 356) invited to share the scope of the anger and frustration of displaced men in the camps. With the women, I was the token nurturing, care-taking women, carefully listening to and prompting their stories and encouraging their expression of feelings similar to what Arendell (1997: 356) did in her research with the divorced fathers. Sometimes, I was also perceived as a student, donor,
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daughter, friend, journalist and even as a RAW\textsuperscript{8} agent. The displaced persons in the camps mostly perceived me as a donor or a journalist as they believed I have visited them either to question them and publish them in the foreign newspapers or to provide necessary help. They were disheartened to know that I am neither of the two and have visited them to complete my study which is based on the development of Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, I succeeded to accomplish good friendship and trust with the students both in Jaffna and in Tamil Nadu by convincing them that I also belong to the same categories, like someone who wish to finish his/her studies and would go for a job afterwards. In doing so, the 'hierarchy' as observed by Urbansky (2011: 14) between us disappeared and we established a good friendship which helped in gathering data along with the expansion of contacts and social networks. Most of the students from the University wanted to move abroad as they have “no future here”\textsuperscript{9}. They also asked about my survival strategies in Germany being away from home and many other personal questions. Specially, the male students from Jaffna showed their interest in knowing about the Indian Premier League (Cricket) as many of the Sri Lankan players usually participate in this tournament. Some were also interested in knowing about the German Soccer team.

In addition, being a Hindu Brahmin, most of the (well to do) Jaffna Tamils could relate their culture and traditions with mine and became talkative. During our interview sessions, many a times, it happened that we have shifted completely to different topics and did not realize about the time flow. We exchanged ideas on different issues like festivals, foods and the culture that we have in common. Many elderly people, during our interviews, became sympathetic towards me because of the mishap that happened to Rajiv Gandhi. They also appreciated Mrs. Indira Gandhi's ruling capability which often was compared to Prabhakaran's abilities. Thus, in the field, I was thoroughly immersed in making good rapport with the people, whom I intended to study (Okely 1994: 20), as this helped me to collect my desired material that I was seeking for.

\textsuperscript{8} Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is the primary external intelligence agency of the Republic of India.

\textsuperscript{9} Here means their respective present locations eg. Tamil Nadu and Jaffna.
3.4 Analyzing collected materials: Grounded Theory approach

The next most important thing is the analyzing part. The whole thesis, almost, depends on this part in order to acquire the desired path. This process is dependent on the sole decision of the researcher.

In the previous section, I have mentioned that I used tape recorder to record my interviews which I used later to transcribe. After returning back to Germany, I started transcribing my material and it took me almost 4 months to finish with all my interviews. Transcription has its limitation, as it does not provide any visual particulars of the situation, among other things it lacks social ambiance and personal interaction. Taking the limitations into considerations, I wrote down the important and significant elements of my interview sessions as I do not want to depend solely on my memory to memorize everything (Kvale 1996: 161). To analyze my research, I adopted verbatim form of transcription including pauses, repetitions, tone of voice and the level of anxiety or the meanings of rejection (ibid.: 166). I also adopted a role of a transcriber to maintain the reliability of my interviews, to make error free transcription and to make it interesting by using relevant portions with close and careful attention to interviews (Bryman 2008: 455).

I decided to apply the ‘Grounded Theory’ (Glaser and Strauss 1967) because it is, “a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. Theory evolves during actual research and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection” (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273). In this research, I did not begin with a pre-conceived theory in mind as my purpose was not to elaborate and extend any existing theory. So I decided to begin with my area of study and waited until the theory emerged from the data. This derivation of theory from data is considered to be more like ‘reality’ (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 12). Unlike other theories, the guidelines and procedures, enhancing the effectiveness of this methodology, leaves room for further creativity (Strauss and Corbin 1994: 273). Also, “matching of theory against data must be rigorously carried out” (1994: 273) in order to develop fine grained theory.

In the beginning, I started with the 'open coding' in order to find out the relevant ideas and themes and to relate them with my research question. While transcribing my data, I carefully delved into my

Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomenon found in the text (Borgatti 2005: 1).
3.4 Analyzing collected materials: Grounded Theory approach

collected materials and categorized small segments with probable codes, manually, “that identify and name specific analytic dimensions and categories” (Emerson et al. 2011: 175). Such line-by-line coding helped me to keep in track with all kind of ‘analytic possibilities’ (ibid.: 175) and developed concepts and analytical insights through close examination and reflection on data. In a way, 'qualitative coding' helped to open up 'avenues of inquiry' (ibid.: 175). This phase is very tedious since I had to conceptualize everything in the data. This generated several concepts which are then compared as I coded more data and merged into new concepts and finally renamed and modified.

Next, I focused on 'coding paradigm' that involved 'conditions, context, action/ interactional strategies and consequences' (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 96). After deciding on the core themes, I turned towards 'focused coding' which is fragile and 'line-by-line analysis of selected notes' (Emerson et al. 2011: 191). This stage helps analytically to develop and expand interesting themes, by linking together data and other sub categories that discriminate divergences within the broader issue (ibid.: 191). Simultaneously, I kept on writing Theoretical memos which is the basis of grounded theory methodology (Glaser 1998). "Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about substantive codes and their theoretically coded relationships as they emerge during coding, collecting and analyzing data, and during memoing" (Glaser 1998). Writing integrative memos helps in elaborating ideas and also in linking codes. One approach is to explore relationships between coded field notes to provide a more sustained examination of a theme or an issue. Furthermore, I got the scope “to reorganize and revise previously written code memos, identifying a theme or issue that cuts across a number of these memos and pulling together relevant materials” (Emerson et al. 2011: 193).

3.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter presented an outline of the qualitative approach that I used to collect data and to answer my research questions. Initially, I discussed about my access to the field where I portrayed the three sites, Colombo, Jaffna and Tamil Nadu, that I visited to conduct my field research. Also, I documented the different methods of qualitative approach namely, different forms of interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation. I presented the ethical challenges which I faced throughout my field research in Sri Lanka and a bit in Tamil Nadu. Working with three different places gave me the scope to apply the multi-sited approach which I have also showed in this chapter. To acquire the desired
3.5 Concluding remarks

data, it is important to establish good rapport with the respondents and in doing so often I had to assign
different and shifting identities according to the interviewees. Last but not the least, I detailed about the
analysis of my collected material where I applied the Grounded Theory.

However, this research process enabled me to find out the numerous ways in which I would have
improved my research. The overall purpose of my research is to analyze the different ideas of home
among the displaced persons and the degree to which they have the feeling of belonging towards their
homes and their negotiations with unhoming and displacement. Due to time constraints and security
issues, this study do not voice the opinions of the displaced persons from the Eastern provinces neither
portrays the opinions of the national or local government; thus resulting in a failure to offer any
comparative view. Most importantly, to visit the camps and welfare centers I solely depended on the
NGOs and local organizations. Due to this, it might be the case that the displaced persons could not
speak their mind out in front of them.

Keeping in mind all these shortfalls, I move on to the next chapter where I elaborate on the theoretical
and analytical framework. This is one of the most important chapters as based on this theories I will
analyze my empirical findings.
3.5 Concluding remarks
Chapter 4: Theoretical overview and analytical framework

This chapter portrays the theoretical considerations and the analytical framework based upon my collected data which will be further analyzed in the next two chapters.

How do the IDPs and the refugees construct the notions of 'home' and 'belonging'? What forms a home for displaced persons (DPs)? How do DPs negotiate with resettlement and home displacement? The answers to these questions are obtained by analyzing the relationship between DPs and their conceptions of home. By focusing on the notions of home and belonging, I applied these two concepts to analyze the relationship of DPs with their homes. Furthermore, when talking about the relationship between home and DPs, there is a spontaneous development of belonging with home and people. This is because each individual has his or her own kind of belonging towards their own home, be it positive or negative. Therefore, the crucial point is that every individual relates to home in his or her own different way. Thus, by comprehending belonging as an intersecting social positioning expressed as a commonality, mutuality, and attachment, as suggested by Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011), it provides a constructive tool for analyzing the relationship between the DPs and their conceptions of home as observed in post-war Sri Lanka.

This chapter is organized into three parts. First, I present an overview of the different theories of home developed by various authors. Their research allowed me to acquire the knowledge necessary to analyze the concepts of home and belonging of DPs. However, I did not use all the concepts that have been discussed. I selected those concepts which are relevant to the analysis of my data. My explanations for choosing the relevant concepts have also been elaborated in this part. In addition, I developed my own interest that has been pursued in this thesis in relation to Ur. The second part discusses the concept of belonging and its three dimensions: commonality, mutuality, and attachment. Special importance has been given to attachment because my collected data speaks more of attachment rather than commonality and mutuality. Thirdly, I present the different dimensions of attachment which acted as an analytical framework for my collected data. Finally, I conclude this chapter by explaining the relationship between the concepts of home and belonging based upon these theories.

4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

Home has a significant function in each and every individual's life. It is a location where one can be with his or her own people who share a common personality. Somerville (1992: 532) asserts that home is associated with shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode, and paradise. He explains the
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

selection of these signifiers, which also have been supported by the empirical findings of Watson and Austerberry (1986). Their findings claim that 'shelter' corresponds to decent material conditions, hearth to emotional and physical well-being, 'heart' to loving and caring social relations, 'privacy' to control, abode to living/sleeping place, 'roots' to a sense of individual identity and 'paradise' to a comfortable place (Somerville 1992: 532). Thus, all these signifiers construct the meaning of home.

In empirical research and theoretical concepts, it is described as conflated with or related to house, family, haven, self, gender, and journeying (Mallett 2004). Blunt and Dowling (2006) complement these findings and identify the geographical explanation of home with the notion of a physical place and a set of feelings as well as a sense of belonging which are relational. Additionally, Saunders and William (1988) assumes that home, which a combination of 'house and household', is a place of social interaction through which social relations and organizations are maintained (Saunders and Williams 1988: 82). Gender and age are the 'key dimensions' that differentiate the perception of the meaning of home. Geographical factors, like residential location, together with issues such as class, ethnicity and housing tenure, explain some of the variations (Saunders 1989; Saunders and Williams 1988).

Blunt and Dowling also insist that the definition of home is 'both material and imaginative' (2006: 22). They further highlight that home can be in several places. Altman and Gauvian (1981) propose a different perspective where the home is both a way of expressing individual identity and a way of belonging to a culture. Therefore, Al-Ali and Koser (2003: 5) positioned the home within particular social and cultural forces. Also, it is because of the great sense of belonging that an individual has to a particular place that they often try to replicate their old traditions and customs from their former homes to their new place. It is a national, cultural, social belonging and also a sense of self, of one's 'identity', corresponding to various conceptualizations of home.

Papastergiadis (1998: 2) states that, “the ideal home is not just a house which offers shelter... Apart from this physical protection and market value, a home is a place where personal and social meanings are grounded”. Furthermore, King's collected data on proves that one calls a place home through individual ownership which brings the freedom to stay at a place. His analysis of home, as an accomplishment that could occur in a range of accommodation types like public rental and non-private households as well as in the absence of family relations, suggests the existence of many meanings of
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

home (King 2005: 242). Similar to King’s argument, Al-Ali and Koser (2003: 6) also state different notions of home including an attachment to a territory, cultural ideas and values. Apart from the physical place of dwelling and shelter, ‘home’ has been linked to ‘family’, ‘community’ and ‘homeland/nation’.

Yet, all these traditional meanings of home, due to social, cultural, economic, and political changes have radically redefined the actual concept (Bammer 1992: viii). Rapport and Dawson (1998), when describing homes, stated that socially homogeneous, communal, peaceful, safe, and secure homes belong to the past. But, this statement is still valid for many people in present times. Sometimes, the home can be recognized in an abstract ideal, as a longing for a nostalgic past, or a Utopian future. Furthermore, this suggests that daily, the home becomes more tangible within certain routine sets of practices, specific ritual, and habitual social interaction (Rapport and Dawson 1998). Young adults conceptualize home as a part of their developing sense of self. This is also tied into the rules of the house they share with their parents. Thus, this cultural discourse is revealed when faced with understanding new household forms, such as sharers or friends living together (Jones 2000; cited from Moore 2007: 145). Moreover, the importance of home is brought to the forefront in instances of disruption, loss, upheaval, and trauma in people's lives which signifies the social dimension of the concept of home (Altman and Werner 1985).

The upcoming paragraphs will mirror the dimensions of home that I presented in relation to the empirical findings presented in the following chapters. First, I argue that home constitute a comfortable habitat, emotional attachment to territory, familial relations and nation, an own unique image, culture and values. This aspect of home remains the same for all the respondents I met. Second, there are multiple meanings of home due to factors like ‘gender’, ‘age’, ‘class’, ‘ethnicity,’ and ‘housing tenure’. This aspect is well researched in my research findings where the meaning of home changes with these factors. Third, the aspect that home can be in more than one place is also preferred which I show as I analyze my data. My data shows that home can be in several places provided it is a comfortable and safe place to live. Fourth, replicating old traditions and customs from the former homes at the new places because of the great sense of belonging is another perspective which I consider relevant for my analysis. I show that many Tamil DPs replicated the structure of their old homes, culture, and traditions while rebuilding their new homes. I apply this framework here. Fifth, home has been depicted as a
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

socially homogeneous, communal, peaceful, safe and secure place by my respondents as well. Finally, I chose the aspect which highlights the importance of home during situations of disruption, loss, upheaval, and trauma affect people's lives as it happened in the lives of the Tamil DPs due to the war.

Until now, I have portrayed the different concepts of home, in relation to ordinary lives, as described by various authors. Then, I illustrate the concept of home in relation to the DPs, which is the main focus of this thesis. I explain the questions on how DPs construct a new home and negotiate resettlement by relating these two concepts by analyzing their constructions of 'home'. Thus, it is assumed that the critical decision to return and reintegrate to the place of origin, or rather, integrating with the host community depends on a variety of factors where people perceive their home or their different conceptualizations of home. Hypothetically, the meaning of 'home' varies for each individual as in the case of protracted displacement. At the same time, these different meanings of home may have serious implications in regards to the return and reintegration or integration with the host community.

People migrate in order to attain a safe and secure livelihood. As a result of their increasing mobility, the meaning of home continues to change and evolve for the migrants/displaced persons. Al-Ali and Koser (2003: 6), in their work on transnationalism, migration and home, assume that “migrants and refugees develop new, globally oriented identities and pluri- or trans-local understandings of 'home'”. This reiterates Rouse's (1991: 14) argument about the Mexican migrants who also conceptualize home as a “movable concept, it is pluri-local”. Home became a space, a community created within the changing links between 'here' and 'there' (Rouse 1991). Al-Ali and Koser (2003: 6) show that together with transnational fields and practices, particular living conditions before and after migration in the country of origin and residence impact the conceptualizations of home. Moreover, homes are gendered spaces inhabited by people of divergent social classes, generations and political orientations with diverse experiences of previous and current homes and the movements between them. Also, conceptions of home vary within a specific group of displaced persons at any given point of time. However, the displaced persons express an uneasiness, a sense of fragmentation, tension, and even pain while conceptualizing their notions of home.
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

Previous research on the concept of home among displaced persons worldwide

Next, I examine the research findings that explore the varied meanings of home for the different groups of DPs across the world who have been displaced from their homes. I consider this part to be of immense significance because studying these findings allowed me to have a well-defined idea about the research done on home, elsewhere, by different groups of DPs. Also, this review reveals the various dimensions of home which are of utmost importance to the DPs. My thesis applies the relevant concepts developed by previous research to analyze the concept of home of the Sri Lankan Tamil DPs.

Armbruster (2002: 17-33), in her article on 'Homes in Crisis: Syrian Orthodox Christians in Turkey and Germany' provides an overwhelming picture of the various meanings as well as the complexities and ambiguities that the Syrian refugees associate with home. She argues that the Syrian refugees, in both Germany and Turkey articulate the notion of home in terms of identity and belonging. She points to the intersection of 'self-identification with hegemonic regulations of identity, such as nation, race, gender, class, religion or else' (2002: 23). Her arguments on the risk of unfolding the country not only focuses on the many differences among the Syrian Christians but also provides proof of a wide range of meanings attached to home, belonging and identity. The particular history of oppression and suffering, has influenced their ideas of home as they connected to a nostalgic and awful past. Yet, as Armbruster concisely states, home is also 'a universe of moral strength, a memory of a place and an imagination of a space where proper values and functioning social relationships can be found' (Armbruster 2002: 25).

Home can be in several locations, that is, either it can be in the country of origin or in the country of residence (ibid.: 26). In addition, Armbruster's statement reveals that the 'here' and 'there' alluded to diverse events that could have distinctive implications attached to them, contingent upon who talks and in which setting. She pays specific attention to generation and gender as crucial variables in influencing understandings of home. She analyzes home and community which brings about the focus on the subjectivities of the displaced persons, their individual sense of identity, and belonging.

In her essay on Moroccan migrant women in Italy, by looking closely at the consumption of commodities and the flow of goods between Morocco and Italy, Salih (2001: 51-67) proposes a unique way to analyze meanings and constructions of home. Notions of identity, belonging and culture emerge as key to the ways Moroccan women contest and negotiate meanings of homes. Like Armbruster (2002:
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

Salih stresses the ambiguities and tensions involved in the articulations of home. Home is understood as both 'the physical space women and their family inhabit and as the symbolic conceptualization of home where one belongs'. As Salih contends, objects of utilization are vital to making home spaces and are conveyed deliberately in-between Italy and Morocco to increase their sense of belonging in either nation. Yet her views leave us in no doubt that 'dual belonging' permitted by transnational practices does not merely result in 'pluri-local homes', but rather joins people by a feeling of brokenness (2001: 57). Furthermore, the meaning of home changes on the basis of one's particular location: when, some women might view Morocco to be their home, while women in Italy feel less 'at home' (Salih 2001). Salih's study reveals the ambivalence and contradictory feelings towards home, but it also shows how consumption is used as a tool to negotiate identities and establish continuities.

A rather different view has been put forward by Riccio (2001) who demonstrates that many of the Senegalese migrants in Italy are firmly embedded with transnational social fields and benefit from transnational networks. Yet they have not reappraised their definition of home. The migration experience reinforced their Senegalese identity and this identity draws strongly on specific symbols of home: 'The holy city, the post-colonial towns, the suburbs of Dakar- these are the homes which most of these Senegalese trans-migrants reproduce abroad, from which they set out and to which they want... to return' (Riccio 2001: 69).

I tied the conceptualization of home among the DPs with the discussion of the Greek-Cypriot refugees who define the home as a physical entity as well as the spatial setting—the fields, orchards and farmland owned by the household—and, significantly, the cemetery (Zetter 1999: 1-22). In their perspective, their home represents the loss of the history and life of the family due to their displacement in 1974 (see Zetter 1999 for details). Thus, returning to their homes will help them to regain their lost lives. Moreover, they differentiate between their present and past homes by referring to the former with a strict sense of entitlement and possession of the land registry stamp (voulla) while the latter is defined as “my own ('diko mou') house” (Zetter 1999: 12).

However, the second generation of refugees have different views of their homes from their parents. They are more likely to integrate at their present locales in the South of Cyprus because they have no
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direct personal experience. They lack any kind of connection with their past homes. They are
habituated to the lifestyle of the urban economy in the South of the island which makes their return to
the North difficult. Also, it would be difficult to integrate in an unfamiliar and probably unsympathetic
social structure. As a returning second generation, they become reverse refugees, resulting in a
potentially alienating and disjunctive experience. Nevertheless, the second generation shows the desire
to return to their 'homes' because of the strict sense of their house and not of the broader context of
space or location. They are motivated not just out of curiosity, but also because to return would express
a physical and symbolic entity of which they are only aware through their parents. A return to the North
of Cyprus, is not necessary for them, as they grew up with a wider world view. They are part of a newer
individualistic urban and industrial society within a spatially and metaphorically enlarged social
framework (Zetter 1999: 20).

Therefore, I applied some of the concepts that I found in commonality with my research. First, I found
that oppressions and sufferings of an awful past influence the ideas of home. The Sri Lankan Tamil
DPs, like the Syrian refugees, share a dreadful past that influenced their idea of home. For example,
most middle-aged and young generation Tamil DPs in India hate their homeland because of the
immense sufferings they experienced due to a bloody war. As a result they are reluctant to return to
their homes. Second, the Greek-Cypriot refugees' home represents the history and life of the family lost
to displacement. Thus, a return to their homes will help them to regain their lost lives. Similarly, the
IDPs at the welfare centers in Jaffna eagerly wait to return home to regain their lost lives seized by their
displacement. Third, both the groups of DPs differentiate between their past and present homes through
the passage of time. Fourth, both the second generation Greek-Cypriot and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees
are more likely to integrate at their present locations due to the absence of direct involvement, and the
lack of any connection with their former homes. They are habituated to the urban lifestyles that makes
their return to the rural areas difficult. Also, it would be difficult to integrate in a place that is
completely unfamiliar and strange to them. Returning would make them new refugees at their former
homes. Fifth, as Armbruster (2002) points out, generation and gender act as crucial variables that
influence the understanding of home. This is also true in the case of Tamil DPs where I show that the
meanings of home shift depending on the age and gender. For instance, people belonging to different
age groups view home differently, whereas the meaning of changes are based on male or female
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perspectives. Sixth, Armbruster's statement that home can be found in several locations, also holds true for some of the Tamil DPs who view home to be in different places and countries. Finally, there have also been cases among the Tamil DPs, like the Senegalese migrants, who want to return to their homes even though they are settled at their present locales in regards to their health and wealth.

The importance of Ur in the Sri Lankan Tamil context

Here, I examine the concept of Ur of the Sri Lankan Tamils as developed by scholars such as Azmi (2012); Shanaathanan (2011); Thiranagama (2011); Valentine (1984). I show the part that has already been researched in terms of theory and also point out the gap that prevails. Theoretically, this thesis attempts to fill this gap.

The following part deals with the diverse conceptualizations of home among different groups of Tamil DPs staying either in Northern Sri Lanka or in South India. Traditionally, to the Northern Sri Lankan Tamils, Ur is their native village where they were born and nurtured. It also acts as a determinant to their character. Moreover, persons belonging to the same Ur share similar characteristics through their “nourishment in the same soil” providing “collective identification of people from that Ur” (Thiranagama 2011: 18). This aspect has been well researched in Thiranagama's book as has been argued by Chattoraj (2015: 136). Furthermore, staying away from their Ur is considered to be a supreme punishment that is more severe than the death penalty (Cheran 2007: 151). The Northern Muslims, in post-war days, shaped their ideas of home through the ‘historical and political trajectories’ as argued by Thiranagama (2011: 19). Home, in this context, has been studied as ‘an everyday language of love, affection, sentiment and memory’ (ibid.: 19). Nevertheless, the war affected Northern Muslims in their displaced locations, and portrayed different meanings of 'home' that depend on diverse priorities and on 'generational divergences' as reviewed by Chattoraj (2015: 136-137).

The elderly people, due to their past memories, create a strong desire to return to their Ur. In contrast, younger generations are reluctant to return because of the painful memories they associate with their former homes during war times. But, the middle generations are stuck in between as they are immersed both in memories from their former homes, and from the bloody eviction. Also, Azmi, in her article, reflected on the different meanings of home depicted by the second generation of Muslim IDPs living
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in Kalpitiya, the Northwestern province of Sri Lanka (2012: 177-186). Homes in their perspective are many and varied. There have been mixed feelings on their conceptualization of 'home'.

Many view their place of origin as their Ur because of their fond memories of the past. The rest create their homes at their present locations because of the presence of their family relations and economic livelihood. Yet, the most important reason to integrate in their host communities is that none want to return to an 'unknown place' that they left decades ago (Azmi 2012: 185). Most of them have grown up in their present locales where the environment is different from their places of origin. So, for them, return would mean a 'new uprooting' (ibid.: 186). Yet, according to Shanaathanan (2015: 2), among the Northern Tamils, those who returned to their places of origin became strangers in their former homes because of the utter disintegration of previous social bonds and relationships. Furthermore, Shanaathanan (2011) in his book, 'The Incomplete Thombu', addressed the memories of home by the Tamil and Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka. Their memories include moments spent together as a family (document 1), the seashore, roads, temples, the occasional gatherings with the whole neighborhood (document 5), fragrance of flowers like jasmine (document 15), the toys, and the glass bangles (document 74) (see Appendix for detailed testimonies). Thus, home, for these IDPs are made up of their kith and kin, neighbors, objects, events, plants and smells. These nostalgic and poignant narratives, found in Shanaathanan's article (2015), exhibit all these distinctive pictures of home through empathetic identifications that highlight their sociological, historical and material realities.

Therefore, the concept of home in the Sri Lankan context has been addressed among the Northern Muslims across the rural areas of Puttalam district and in relation to different psycho-social feelings and behaviors. However, a considerable research gap still exists among the Jaffna Tamil returnees in conceptualizing Ur in post-return days. Also, there is a lack of concrete knowledge about how the Sri Lankan Tamil DPs in Tamil Nadu and Colombo conceptualize Ur and how they relate themselves with their home. In order to understand this undocumented relationship, I used the concept of home and attachment as analytical framework. Thus, it gave the opportunity to explore this area and to improve on the understanding of this relationship for DPs residing in both Jaffna, Colombo, and Tamil Nadu.
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Home and 'Ur' : their relationship

In this section, I have tried to relate home and Ur based on the discussion of the available literature and the collected empirical data. Available literature shows that on one hand, in the Northern districts of Sri Lanka, geographical location of the place of origin or Ur acts as the determinant of one's character. One the other hand, the Tamils consider their relationship with the soil of his Ur to be the most important as s/he was born and nurtured in that soil. In addition, persons belonging to the same geographical location share the same characteristics because of their nourishment in the same soil. Thus, most of my interviewees consider the meaning of Ur to be linked with identity. Therefore, it has been rightly defined by Daniel (1984: 63), that, Ur is a neighborhood where the residents share the same kind of soil and to which they are always emotionally attached.

According to my findings, the Northern Tamils believe that home is the place where they were born and brought up. They are so much attached to their Ur that they try to preserve the memories of their destroyed homes by replicating the old structures and traditions at the time of rebuilding or renovating their new homes. Consequently, the Tamils relate themselves to their Ur through the old customs, traditions and structures or in short to their places of origin. Moreover, they admit that their places of origin can only bring them freedom to stay through individual ownership.

In order to relate the two concepts of home and Ur, I address the diverse kinds of attachment that the displaced Tamils have to their Ur and how the meaning of home changes to different categories of persons depending on their priorities in life. To begin with, I start with the elderly displaced persons who consider their Ur or places of origin, situated in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka, as their homes. Though, they have succeeded to recreate new attachments and ties at their displaced locales, they are still fond of their previous Ur. The Tamils look back at the past days spent in their Ur which is a way of keeping alive the old memories and relating it to their present lives to maintain their sense of continuity, identity and protecting the self. They are emotionally and spiritually attached and want to breathe their last days at their Ur. In case of the middle-aged persons, their negative vibes about their places of origin could not make them to forget completely about their Ur. They are confident that returning to their Ur permanently is impractical due to the long spans of time being away and also the absence of basic socio-economic needs. Nevertheless, they view their Ur as a place of recreation from
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their hard toil days. The young generations have only heard stories of their Ur from their parents but could not recall anything. They hate their places of origin as it has taken away everything from them and they are reluctant to return. However, their parents are nostalgic about their Ur and keep telling stories of their past. Unknowingly, this in a way made them think about their Ur which instilled some kind of attachment towards their place of origin.

Apart from the displaced persons, returnees also look upon their place of origin in the North as their Ur. Among many other reasons, “love of Ur” was presented as one of the most important factors in the decision to return. To add, Tamils’ belief, that staying away from their Ur is a severe kind of punishment, also inculcates the idea of return. Even though return was inspired by, and connected with high expectations to acquire what has been lost, to regain a feeling of relief with the end of uncertainty, insecurity, fear and also terror, each of them was confronted with a deep sense of disappointment due to inadequate employment and lack of basic facilities for a comfortable living. Despite all odds, past memories and attachment to their Ur persuaded them to return with a ray of hope for a good living in near future.

Therefore, I conclude, among the varied aspects of home, Ur constitute a particular aspect which explicitly refers to the place of origin on the basis of social and geographical dimension. Accordingly, individual and cultural identity is expressed through Ur which holds true while conceptualizing home.

Building up the interest pursued in this thesis in relation to Ur

Simultaneously, the overview of the concept of home and the analysis of my collected data, shows that the concept of home can be defined broadly in two ways: first, as a place of origin where one is born and nurtured, and second, as a place where one can relax and feel free and comfortable. To add, this meaning of home reflects the choice of return to the places of origin. Yet, the meaning still changes in terms of social relations, identity, economic benefits, past memories, imprisonment, estrangement and a threatening place. Thus, it leads us to believe the coexistence of several meanings of home.

These statements paved the way for the development of the analytical approach that has been applied in the analysis presented in this thesis. My focus affirms that the elderly displaced persons conceptualize their places of origin as their homes. They feel emotionally and spiritually attached to them in many
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different ways. They view a return as nostalgic and consider that a return would help them revisit their memories of youth. Through their original homes, they identify themselves. Yet, return is not feasible for all of them because of personal and professional reasons. In this case, the dimension that home is ‘associated with shelter, hearth, heart, privacy, roots, abode, and paradise’ has been used. Also, there is another dimension used which highlights the fact that home expresses an individual identity.

In contrast, the second generation of displaced persons view their present locales as their homes while having little attachment to their place of origin. Their former homes are considered as an ‘unknown and strange place’ with no economic and social benefits. This is the main reason these group of DPs become hesitant to return to their places of origin. Also, a return in a post-war era means reconstructing a life in an environment which was once familiar, but now is a strange place. Most of them hardly know the present condition of their former homes. The civil war has changed the social meaning of the places where they once lived in. Thus, the dimension of home where it can be in several places is relevant here because the second generation DPs believe that both their places of origin and places of residence are their homes.

On the contrary, a different view has been put forward by the young generations. They were displaced at a very young age of three to four years old. This is why they have a vague idea about their places of origin as they are unable to recall their past days. They are completely new to the place; therefore, a return to them leaves the impression of a ‘new uprooting’. Also, the experiences gained at their present locales influence the meaning of their home. This plays a vital role in their decision to return. Here, integration is a “dynamic and multi-faceted two-way process”, as indicated by Azmi (2012: 188), that is preferred between the displaced persons and the host communities where they gradually became integrated legally, socially, and economically. Here, I use the aspect that home is a place where personal and social meanings are grounded. Home means attachment to territory, culture, values, family and nation. As the young generations fail to relate themselves to their place of origin, they feel their place of residence to be their home. The above three cases illustrate that generational differences influence the meaning of home. Thus, I took up this dimension to analyze all these three varied opinions.
4.1 The meaning of home: conceptualizing home

Furthermore, different views about home have been introduced by the female DPs. This shows that, 'gender and age' are crucial factors in determining the meaning of home. On the one hand, the meaning of home has changed from a luxurious, comfortable and structured place to a ‘safe and secured place with no permanent structure’. Home can be in several places. It is not the place of origin but is a place to relax and feel comfortable. Yet, on the other hand, home has been viewed as a prison due to the existence of rules and regulations. They have also conceptualized home as a place where there will be ‘freedom of self’ with no rules to follow. A significant percentage of women, children and young people who are subject to violence and sexual abuse in the home, find that home to be a site of fear and isolation. It is a prison, rather than a place of absolute freedom and ontological security as has been reviewed by Mallett in her essay on home (2004: 72). This proves that construction and reconstruction of the meaning of home depends on different priorities, experiences and actual situations. Even so, socio-economic and political dimensions also influence the meaning of home.

Finally, places of origin have been portrayed as homes by the grass-root people because they are considered to be the source of income and the place to regain their lost social status and identity. Here, I use several dimensions of home. First, I took a perspective that explains the home as a place where personal and social meanings are grounded. Also, home means attachment to territory, culture, values, family and nation. It also provides the sense of individual identity.

Detailing about the theories of home based on its different conceptualizations, in the following, I shall focus on the theory of belonging, which is the second theory I applied to analyze my collected data.

4.2 Belonging and its different forms

“Do I belong here?” is a common question that people have because there are many animate and inanimate objects in the world with which they cannot relate or do not derive a sense of belonging. Therefore, belonging to something means to be in relation with the objects or in close bonding with the same. Anthias states that people belong together when they share the same “values, networks and practices” (2006: 21). And, in the context of displacement, she claims that belonging has been used excessively. However, the term has not been adequately justified by theory (ibid.:19). Belonging, as analyzed by Anthias (2006: 21) is mainly concerned about following four elements: first, its
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

participation, rights and obligations as a citizen, second, its identity with groups or with other individuals, third, those social regions which has been developed by such participations and identifications, and finally, the various approaches where social place reflects its own stability in accordance to the feelings of being part of a larger whole and with the emotional and social bonds that are related to such places. She further states that in a society, the sense of exclusion enhances the feeling of belonging. Moreover, in the same society, an engagement and consent is devised and maintained through practicing and experiencing social inclusion. Thus, it is argued that belonging is centrally related to the experiences of both inclusion and exclusion (Anthias 2006: 21).

Pfaff-Czarnecka portrays another characteristic of belonging which highlights the opportunity to create new links with collective boundedness and interchange it with collective boundary-lines (2013: 18). Also, Lamont and Molnar (2002) and Wimmer (2008) defined belonging as an instrument that is used to report on the extension of the boundaries of togetherness to give room for debutantes on the expansion of shared ideas and values and on the expansion of an enlarged horizon revolving the life-world.

Yuval-Davis drafted the analytical framework for belonging, and developed the three analytical levels of the concept necessary for its understanding (2011: 5). These three levels are social locations which people judge their own and others' belongings: individual's identifications, emotional attachments, and ethics and political value systems (ibid.: 5). While systematizing and making the notion of belonging more coherent, Davis also claimed that people's self-identity dominates at a much larger rate when receiving threats or feeling less secure. Therefore, the analytical categories, identified by her, reflect the emotions and attachment of people to a place or a community.

In her writing, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013), distinguishes between 'belonging to' and 'belonging with'. She asserts that belonging to, “is experienced individually while affected by collective constellations. Hence, socially negotiated” and belonging with, “draws upon and results in both inter-subjectivity in the sense of a person’s feeling, enacting, and experimenting the sense of common belonging, as well as in collective practices and collective representations” (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 14). While distinguishing between the two, she further explains that belonging has been created by individuals who seem to explore the different patterns of this concept that they have experienced in their life (ibid.:
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

20). To add, what Strauss (1978) and Luckmann (1978: 285) have said, that an individual, while leading his life in different social worlds, also pursues belonging in different social constellations. They live in differently structured life-worlds ‘to each of which owing only partly allegiance’ (ibid.: 282).

In the second half of this chapter, to address the relationship and the degrees of belonging that the displaced persons have to their homes, I discuss the notion of ‘belonging with’. It is a combination of commonality, mutuality and attachment as has been propounded by Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011). This provides a useful tool to analyze the various forms of belonging, which I observed among the displaced persons in relation to their original homes in Sri Lanka and South India.

In the following, I briefly talk about the three different forms of belonging while emphasizing attachment which I have used as an analytical theoretical framework to analyze my findings. As a result, my collected data speaks more of the different kinds of attachment that they have to their homes in Sri Lanka or in India. In the following paragraphs, I provide a brief overview of commonality followed by mutuality, and finally discuss about attachment and its different dimensions which I developed. Also, I show the significance of attachment in my thesis.

**Commonality**

The state of sharing features or ‘Commonality’ is one of the dimensions of belonging. Pfaff-Czarnecka emphasized that it is a concept which means sharing everything in common like culture, language, religion, life-style, norms, values, experiences and memory developments (2011: 3). She also stated that commonality is a feeling which is, on the one hand, felt and embraced individually and on the other hand, it is discussed and executed as a group (ibid.: 3). Commonality, “a multi-dimensional phenomenon”, as termed by Pfaff-Czarnecka, is often identified as a means to detect the insiders and the outsiders (2013: 15). Thus, it relies on mental checkpoints (Migdal 2004), everyday life distinctions and public representations that often uphold collective boundary maintenance (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 15). Commonality has several different forms, among which the form of collective identity has been reached at this very stage (ibid.: 15).

In this thesis, I analyze the notion of 'commonality' so as to portray the images of the displaced Tamils sharing the same ethnic background and same cultural forms, such as language and religion, life-style,
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

values, experiences and memory constructions among themselves. I argue that different groups of displaced people experience commonality in their own different ways. For instance, IDPs in the Jaffna welfare centers share the common feeling of counting their days to return to their former homes to have a better future and living. The returnees of the North have returned for a good life; however, they are facing difficulties in coping up with the changed environment and the changed people. Also, life has become difficult after return as they have to start everything from scratch. The young generation returnees want to prosper in their lives. They are not hesitant to leave their homes and move somewhere else to have better opportunities to establish themselves in the future. Lastly, Tamils, living in Colombo and in Tamil Nadu, face discrimination on the basis of their ethnicity. They also experience commonality by sharing their common ethnic background in opposition to the majority of the Sinhalese, and contrasted with other minorities such as the Muslims, the Moors, and the Burghers. They always have to be careful when disclosing their identity so that it does not antagonize the opposite ethnic group. Commonality is also experienced when the “generalized condition of 'homelessness’” as discussed by Malkki (1995: 37), and the continuous feeling of threat and violence of getting uprooted becomes the reality of life for every Tamils in Sri Lanka. To add, violence, fear, and forced migration have stimulated Tamil nationalist feelings and struggles, mainly ‘over Tamil culture and 'Tamilness’” as shown by Schrijvers in her article (1999: 309).

In addition to the images of Tamil nationalism, the images of the war-ridden Sri Lankan displaced persons, living in the camps, that “We are all Tamils, We, together, want to return to our homes”, are perfect illustrations for practicing and experiencing commonality. 'Identity', according to Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin is the “major narrative for expressing commonality” (2011: vi), in this case, “we are all Tamils” lays the foundation for the existence of commonality. “We are all Tamils” and “We, together...” focuses on their feeling of togetherness with their fellow Tamilians be it outside or in the camps. Also, sharing the “common fate, mutuality and purpose” as emphasized by both the authors in their writings demonstrates commonality (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011). Residents of the camps in Tamil Nadu and Jaffna have experienced commonality over decades. These residents have been interrelated by cultural, social, and religious ties, shared daily sorrows and struggles in their neighborhood, engaged in similar occupations like daily-wage laborer, and masonry and have stayed alive with the hope of returning to their 'own homes' very soon. Their narratives show the struggles
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

they embraced when they experienced up-rootedness from their known homes and, at present, enduring a life full of uncertainties and pain at the camps explaining that “commonality is individually felt and embodied while collectively negotiated and performed” as stated by Pfaff-Czarnecka in her article (2013: 14).

Mutuality

Next, I move onto the second dimension, that is, 'mutuality'. Dictionaries define the notion of mutual relationship as 'possessed, experienced, or performed by each of two or more persons, animals, or things towards or with regard to the other; reciprocal' (Oxford English Dictionary, June 2003). Jordan (1986: 2) in her book, The Meaning of Mutuality, stated that, 'in a mutual exchange one is both affecting the other and being affected by the other; one extends oneself out to the other and is also receptive to the impact of the other'. Sociological literature, from different ages, proves that people begin relating to each other socially in short-lived situations “through fights, enmity, bodily love, friendship and market transactions, and in other ways” (Jordan 1986: 2). However, Weber warned that contrasting characters might pose different meanings 'on their social relations' and experience divergent 'mutual expectations' (1921: 13). Thus, Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin concludes that mutuality cannot be taken for granted in any social relations (2011: xviii). Furthermore, Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013) suggested that mutual expectations and obligations are driven by norms which create common horizons stabilizing the norms of reciprocity, loyalty, and commitment. Mutuality which means acknowledging the other (Weber 1921), results in compliance to rules ordering and sometimes very unequal social relations (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 16).

Attachment

Attachment, the third dimension of belonging, is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth 1979; Bowlby 1969). It links people to material and immaterial worlds (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 17) which makes people belong to spaces and sites, to natural objects, landscapes, climate, and to material possessions (bell hooks 2009; Appadurai 1986). These kind of attachments are produced through embodiment, resonance of smells and tastes as well as citizenship and property rights (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013). Additionally, the ownership of a land or a
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

house and growing up in a locality creates a strong sense of belonging to a place among individuals. Sense of attachment to a place is also reinforced sometimes with a small group of people who share the same knowledge, experiences and memories (ibid.). Attachments are intensified through material and immaterial possessions like fields, pastures, houses and ritual sites (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011: xxi).

Flinders (2002), in her book, “The Values of Belonging”, talks about the culture of belonging in which there is “intimate connection with the land to which one belongs, emphatic relationship to animals, self-restraint, custodial conservation, deliberateness, balance, expressiveness, generosity, egalitarianism, mutuality, affinity for alternative forms of knowing, playfulness, inclusiveness, non-violent conflict resolution and openness to spirit” (Flinders cited in Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011: xxi). Thus, most of the elements in her list echoes throughout the narrated experiences in this thesis along with different forms of attachment.

According to Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin (2011: xxii), people who have moved from their original homelands remain far away from their roots and attachments. They also stated that being preoccupied with their past memories of their original places, these group of people face extreme difficulties in developing new attachments with the new places. Nonetheless, they are left with no other option than to grow new kinds of attachments to their new locales. Though existence of different kinds of exclusion in the new places create hardships, they succeed in re-creating new relations and “new rootedness” with the help of religious sites, neighborhoods, public places, shops and “common performative acts” (ibid.: xxii).

In this thesis, the next couple of chapters analyzes the data collected during my field visit. Besides, the concept of home, I have used the concept of belonging as an analytical framework to develop my thesis. The three dimensions of belonging, commonality, mutuality and attachment are used for my analysis. The next few upcoming paragraphs examine the notion of attachment as an analytical tool as my data speaks of different forms of attachment and detachment that the Tamil displaced persons express towards their home. These range from closeness to detachment in their portrayal of attachment and in the descriptions of home from the peaceful abode to the intolerant one. I propose several dimensions that account for the individual differences in experiencing attachment which are revealed
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

through the interviews that I conducted while in the field. In this manner, I will present the theoretical overview and analytical framework of the different dimensions of attachment.

These different dimensions are:

- **Attachment to Ur**
  - through past memories and people
  - through broken memories
  - to regain past life
  - through Nostalgia and Ambivalence

- **Attachment becoming Detachment**

- **Detachment or Unhoming**

**Attachment to Ur**

Attachment to home is the emotional connection of an individual to a place such as his or her home. This emotional connection to the home is developed by the surrounding people, the neighborhood, the ambiance, rural places, and the length of residence etc. In the words of Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001: 1177), place attachment is a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place. In their opinion, their desire for proximity is the main characteristic of place attachment which allows to differentiate it from closely related concepts (ibid.: 1177). Riger and Lavrakas (1981) and Taylor et al. (1985) also identified the existence of two dimensions of attachment, namely, physical attachment and social attachment. Mesch and Manor (1998) found satisfaction with the physical characteristics of the environment to be a predictor of place attachment. Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) also reported empirical evidence that people feel attached toward the physical aspects of places. However, as in most research on the physical dimension of place attachment, one could assert that physical attachment is developed as a consequence of social attachment. Several authors (Marcus 1992; Low and Altman 1992; Chawla 1992) have claimed that the attachment to a place could be the result of the experiences and social interactions developed at that certain place.
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

Frequently, Relph points out that: "In our everyday life we may be largely unaware" of the existence of the attachment bond and "the associations and commitments that do exist between people and their homes may [...] become apparent only in time of loss and hardship" (1976: 40). The awareness of the bond may also derive both from the perception of the sufferings caused by the actual loss and from the mere idea of a possible loss (Giuliani 1991: 134). Furthermore, Relph (1976: 45) when exploring attachment to place, focuses on people’s identity of and with place. By the identity of a place he refers 'to its persistent sameness and unity which allows that [place] to be differentiated from other'. In a similar way, Mesch and Manor (1998: 505) argue that place attachment generates identification with the place and helps to further develop 'the social and political involvement' that is a prerequisite to retain the physical and social characteristics of a neighborhood. Relph (1976: 45) believes that the essence of the lived intensity, of meaning, and intention that a person has for a place is their identity with a place as defined through the notion of 'insideness'. This is the degree of attachment, involvement, and concern that one has towards his own place or home. His elucidation of insideness is perhaps his most original contribution in the understanding of attachment to place. He states that if a person feels inside a place then he is safe, comfortable, and enclosed, rather than stressed. He suggests that the more inside a person is in a place, the more attached he is with that place. Thus, attachment to a place is a bond developed between people and specific areas which are considered to be comfortable and safe places to live. According to Giuliani (1991), the feeling of attachment is related to attachment behaviors aimed at preserving the presence, vicinity, and accessibility of the object, as well as maintaining the continuity of the experience with the home. Behaviors sharing the outcome of maintaining continuity include residential stability, care for and improvement of the physical environment, and behaviors related to the social meaning of the home environment, such as community involvement and social ties (Giuliani 1991).

The study of Rossi (1980) and Michelson (1977), revolves around the concept of home as addressed through various kinds of behaviors related to attachment. The aim is to identify the characteristics of the environment and the people that affect individual differences in their decisions to remain in the same place or to resettle. Here, attachment has been sought and identified in combination with certain elements such as residential satisfaction (Fried 1982), territorial behavior (Brown and Werner 1985; Brower 1980), local ties, residential mobility (Shumaker and Conti 1985; Stokols and Shumaker 1981).
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

and the health consequences of relocation (Stokols et al. 1983). In addition, Shumaker and Taylor (1983) proposed an integrated model of attachment, operating at different level of analysis, individual, small group, and neighborhood, and suggest several factors that may influence the development of residential attachment at each level. It is beyond one’s scope to review these studies\(^1\). However, this affective bond has proven to be one of the reasons influencing the decision to resettle. And, the distinction between affective attachment and actual or expected stability is not always maintained in these studies (Shumaker and Taylor 1983). The very nature and essence of the home defines the emotional based relationship with the dwelling place (Dovey 1985; Relph 1976). In the modern world, historical and cultural conditions are eroding the experience of a profound form of attachment to a home place (Dovey 1985), and the association with the home most probably represents an intermediate stage between complete attachment and complete detachment, and 'places lie somewhere in the middle range of experience' between 'points in a spatial system' and 'strong visceral feelings' (Tuan 1975: 152). While recognizing a variety of stages of attachment, these studies have focused mainly on historical and cultural conditions affecting the experience of a profound form of attachment to a home place, rather than on individual differences.

The greatest insight into individual differences in affective attachment to residential environment is provided by Fried's study on forced relocation from Boston's West End. “The comparison between the answers given before relocation and after relocation reveals: a) that the affective bond with the place of dwelling is a widespread phenomenon and that the reactions to dislocation are comparable to mourning the loss of a dear one; b) there is a considerable variability in "the depth and quality of the loss experience" as well as the coping responses. Four 'grief patterns' were identified on the basis of prior relocation orientation to the local area and post-relocation grief reaction” (Fried 2000: 54).

Furthermore, Mesch and Manor (1998) argue that economic and social investments are also related to attachment to one’s home. They assumed that development of emotional and social bonding depends on the social relationships that one has towards his/her neighborhood. Nevertheless, attachment to home is perceived differently by different persons. For some, home ownership is only an economic investment which they are able to accumulate in their lives and become more socially involved and

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\(^1\) For a discussion of literature on attachment and satisfaction, and social networks, and on the impact of relocation, see Shumaker and Taylor 1983; Unger and Wandersman 1985, respectively.
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

attached to their neighborhood (Mesch and Manor 1998: 506). However, there is also a difference between homeowners and renters and in their degree of attachment to their homes (Logan and Spitze 1994).

Young children, as Mesch and Manor (1998) point out, have strong interests in their home as it is the home which acts as an important agents of socialization. They become attached to their neighbors as part of their family and develop local attachment. With the passage of time, they deepen their bonding with their homes and the people around. Here, length of residence also plays a central role in establishing attachment to home (ibid.: 507). The longer an individual lives in his or her home, the more likely he or she is to develop attachment (Beggs et al. 1996; Sampson 1988).

In the Sri Lankan context, IDPs, at the welfare centers in Jaffna, are completely attached to their former homes. Although they have been away from their homes for more than two decades, they retain the same kind of attachment that they used to have before displacement. They intend to return to their homes in order to regain their old lives and their lost social status. Similarly, those who have returned after 2010, have a strong sense of attachment towards their Ur in spite of being unaware in what conditions their homes are due to the war. They tried to reconstruct their (destroyed or semi-destroyed) homes in the same old pattern in order to develop memories and emotions attached to the old home. This is because they believe that growing up in Jaffna has given them the opportunity to get in close contact with nature, which has played a pivotal role in the formation of their self-identity. For them, nature, environment, culture, and people are the most important components for home-making that are only available in Jaffna. The returnees believe that childhood memories and emotional sentiments are also significant reasons which motivated them to return. In this context, I argue, that attachment to childhood memories and emotions are critical to the understanding of attachment to home. The development of emotions and memories towards their own home and people are mostly associated with the meanings and experiences that they enjoyed before. Supporting this argument, I show that a neighborhood, consisting of friends, relatives, and neighbors, often become family for many returnees. They developed a kind of emotional attachment to their homes since they were nurtured there when recalling old memories related to every corner of their homes and neighbourhood during their interviews such as a particular tree or other memories related to their daily livelihoods and people.
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

Besides the IDPs and returnees, there are another group of displaced persons who have the desire to return; unfortunately, due to personal and professional reasons they are not able to do so. The elderly group of displaced persons who are at present, either in Colombo or in Chennai, have been away from their homes for more than two decades. Among them, many are in a dilemma over whether they should return or to remain because of their nostalgic yet ambivalent position. One way of looking at this ambivalence is in terms of a class journey from the distinct traditional and rural lifestyle of Jaffna to the urban lifestyle either in Colombo or in Chennai. This kind of a class journey has created a feeling which makes them attached to both the rural and urban lifestyles simultaneously. This lengthy time span influenced their feeling towards their homes in both the places as well as have also influenced their way of thinking towards life. They enjoy the luxuries and the facilities that the city life offers but at the same time misses the quiet ambiance of Jaffna. This makes it difficult for them to decide which way to go.

Until now, I presented the positive feelings that the displaced people that they have towards their Ur. It is because of this attachment that many DPs have returned or are willing to return. However, not all the returnees are happy about their return. In the next section, I will discuss this change in feeling from attachment to detachment.

**Attachment becoming detachment**

Mesch and Manor argued that an individual’s attachment to his or her home depends on the degree to which it provides comfort and safety (1998: 506). Where, by failing to do so, the attachment becomes detachment in a physical, social and emotional manner (Kasarda and Janowitz 1974). Furthermore, age and duration of stay have also been noted as central to attachment to home². With time and age, individuals’ priorities in life change resulting in a transformation of attachment to detachment.

In Jaffna during a young age, one is strongly attached to one's own home. However by growing older, a better future is desired that can only be fulfilled by leaving the home and moving either to Colombo or abroad. This is true for the majority of the Jaffna youth who lack the possibility of a better future in their homes. The moment they leave their homes and become familiar with the outer world, they start

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2 Discussed extensively in the next two chapters.
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

feeling detached to their homes due to their rural backwardness. They become completely engrossed in
the city life and its luxuries. This fact also holds true for the DPs residing in Chennai or in Colombo. Because of the facilities and opportunities offered by the city-life, their attachment became detachment.

On the other hand, DPs who willingly returned to their homes in Jaffna are strongly disappointed with
the experience of return due to the changed environment in their homes they presently witnessed. Not
only did the environment change, but their people and culture also changed. Most of their known
persons are either displaced to other parts in the country, or migrated abroad. New and unknown people
replaced the old ones. Their communities also changed by becoming a mixed culture with the Hindus,
Christians and Muslims all residing at the same place. Moreover, the displacement not only changed
the social and cultural dimensions, but also changed the economic perspectives of these people. Before
displacement, most of them were residents of nicely built big houses with lots of plantations in front.
During the war, most of their houses were destroyed or partially damaged requiring reconstruction.
This requires a huge amount of money which is not feasible for them at present because displacement
snatched away their former professions. At present, many of them work as daily wage laborers and earn
a meagre income. As a result, they face difficulties in caring for their family with this money. Also, in
Jaffna, there are no opportunities for higher education and achieving better employment. Many young
boys and girls left their homes by pursuing higher education and pursuing better employment
opportunities.

*Detachment or un-homing*

The concept 'detachment' or 'un-homing' literally means staying away or fleeing one’s own home due to
'war, civil conflict, political strife, gross human rights abuse’ or natural disasters, or sometimes in order
to improve one’s lifestyle or to pursue higher education. One would be considered as un-homed or
homeless when he or she fails to belong or relate to the environment, culture, traditions, persons, foods
etc in which he or she resides or once resided. Therefore, homelessness, as put by Bramley, is a “lack of
a right or access to their own secure and minimally adequate housing space” (1988: 26). However,
Bramley neglects the emotive aspects of homelessness as identified by Somerville (1992: 530). Marx
and Weber place homelessness as total lack of property and powerlessness (Somerville 1992: 532).
Homelessness is also defined by fear, danger, the unknown, foreign places, traditions, unfamiliar faces
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

and habits. Like home, homelessness is a multi-disciplinary concept. In the light of migration, like the
notion of home, the concept of homelessness becomes radically changed and redefined. With the
passing of time, physical and cultural values prove to be inadequate in the transformations of homes. It
appears inevitable that past homes develop 'strange, unusual and alien elements' in the eyes of those
who have migrated abroad (Al-Ali and Koser 2003: 8).

Home, according to Watkins and Hosier, “permeates society, and evokes such feelings as belonging,
control, comfort or security whether it involves individuals or much larger groups of people” (2005:
197). While homelessness evokes certain emotions like despair, isolation, hopelessness, and grief, it
also presents images as poverty, alcoholism, mental illness and social deviance (Watkins and Hosier
2005: 197). Just as having and being at home equates with life stability and some measure of success,
being homeless translates into transience, turmoil and failure in life as argued by Watkins and Hosier
(ibid.: 197). Home and homelessness are addressed historically across cultures, across ages, within
cities, rural areas, and by gender in relation to psychological and social pathologies.

Similar to his argument of insideness in case of attachment to home, Relph (1976) stated that there is
also outsideness when individuals feel alienated from place. He further explained that a sense of
alienation and strangeness is often felt by individuals who are newcomers to their homes or those who
having been away from their birthplace, when they return to feel like strangers, as the place is no longer
what it used to be. He argued that in the modern era, an authentic sense of place is overshadowed by
'placelessness', 'the casual eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardized landscapes
that results from an insensitivity to the significance of place' (Relph 1976: 64).

In the Sri Lankan case, negative images have been presented by quite a few DPs who are completely
detached from their former homes and do not want to return. The foremost reason being their relocation
for more than two decades. Also, they have already asserted their own individual attachments to their
new locations diminishing their attachments towards their Ur. They are fortunate enough to have been
relocated which are the influencing factors for their return. Hence, the relationship between rural and
urban lifestyles form a point of departure for investigating social distinctions as portrayed by Wiborg in
her article 'Place, nature and migration: Students' attachment to their rural home places' (2004). The
value of having a rural background in an urban context can be analyzed in context of a cultural
4.2 Belonging and its different forms

hierarchy where the urban displays a hegemonic position even if the countryside retains an important position as a basis for central cultural values (Creed and Ching 1997 cited in Wiborg 2004: 431). Not only the urban lifestyle, but time also plays a vital role in influencing their decisions to return. Attachment to home in Jaffna has changed with time. With the long gap of two decades, as well as the love and fondness for Jaffna has diminished while the fondness for the city-life has increased to the DPs. Moreover, DPs are both socially and economically well-settled in the cities so they cannot think of returning to Jaffna where they will again have to start from the scratch.

There are even some young DPs in the refugee camps of Tamil Nadu who have not at all felt anything for their Ur as they were a very young age at the time of displacement. They hate their motherland because it has taken away everything from them. They have nothing to recall. For them, their present location is their home as they consider their Ur as a strange place and cannot relate themselves with that place. They have also decided to apply for Indian citizenship in order to stay forever in India.

4.3 Relating the two concepts: home and belonging (attachment)

In cases of internal and external displacement, as in this research, belonging (attachments) to ‘home or Ur’ bear a distinct quality. Due to the civil war, almost everyone in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka had been forced to move and abandon their Ur as well as their material and immaterial belongings. This loss in social terms characterized their state of being. Most displaced persons, as discussed in this thesis, long for their Ur, as to them, the idea of ‘home’ is a highly emotionally charged concept. They believe, as stated by Thiranagama (2007: 32), that their original homes not only remind them of their past memories but also paves the way in order to belong in the future where one can prosper individually and collectively. While portraying their traumatic experiences of war and displacement, the displaced persons tried to visualize their future at their Ur. Their Ur continued to provide with a feeling of homeliness and belonging. Attachment to their places of origin was not only about belonging to a family or household, but also about having ties to school, friends, and neighbors. Even the food provides nourishment, but its consumption is also a sign of belonging and socialization as observed by Gardner in her work on the concept of desh (home) and bidesh (abroad) for Sylheti migrants from Bangladesh (1993: 6). They could not belong to their present locales as they never felt like their own place mostly because of the absence of interactions between people. Exclusions experienced in their
4.3 Relating the two concepts: home and belonging (attachment)

daily life due to the locals or the surrounding environments reinforced a feeling of not being able to belong at their places of refuge. Thus, for these people, return not only means to acquire what has been lost but also the end of uncertainty, insecurity, fear and also terror. Returning 'home' means to make a fresh start especially for those who have not been able to acquire a better social status while being displaced. Return means to start a new life after having suffered endless hardships. In this way, the concept of belonging unfolds the potential to enrich both the perspectives of home and Ur.

With this theoretical overview and analytical framework on the concepts of home and belonging, the following section deals with the relation between the two concepts. Whenever, the concept of home comes up, it is accompanied by the notions of feelings, place, family, social relations and so on. Home is a place where one resides either permanently or temporarily as a member of a family or household. On one hand, it can be the place of origin and on the other it can be the place where one moves to fulfill ones dreams of a better future. Thus, when we talk about home, we undoubtedly talk of a person who owns or belongs to 'the' home. The owner or the people living in the home, generally develop some kind of emotional sentiments towards their home. This emotional sentiment, I argue, is an attachment which can be both positive and negative. Therefore, this part of the thesis relates the two concepts of home and attachment.

In Sri Lanka, the Tamils consider home to be one of their prized possessions. The home plays a vital role in determining their character, earning livelihood for those who are fishermen and farmers and retaining respect and social status. Therefore, I argue, that Tamils are deeply rooted to their homes. In this thesis, I show that they develop intense attachment to their homes through many different ways. Some of them are attached to their homes through the people living in and around it while some are attached to the material and immaterial objects of their homes like trees, furniture, paintings, toys, photographs, dresses etc. Furthermore, some are even attached to the environment and neighborhood. Attachment to home also develops due to the fact that home allows people to earn a living as well as sustain respect. Some of the elderly DPs, who are now away from their homes, are spiritually attached to their homes and want to breathe their last in their home. Unfortunately, due to personal and professional reasons they are not able to return to their homes. Hence, home and attachment, for the Tamils, are closely associated. However, there are also negative dimensions of attachment. Attachment has turned into detachment for most of the middle-aged group of DPs. This is because due to
4.3 Relating the two concepts: home and belonging (attachment)

displacement, they have been living in the urban areas for more than two decades and have become habituated to the city life-styles. Their home, being located in the rural areas, fails to provide a luxurious city lifestyle. Also, uncertainty in employment opportunities, security issues and loss in familial relations are the main reasons for their detachment towards their home. Aspirations for a better future is another reason why many of them have become detached to their homes. Apart from them, the young DPs of Tamil origin feel completely detached to their homes due to the insecurities, lack of opportunities and backwardness. Home is a strange place to them as they were very young at the time of displacement and have hardly any memories. Thus, it can be concluded that the Tamil DPs relate the concept of home either to the positive or negative dimensions of attachment.

In the following chapters, I discuss my empirical findings on home and attachment which I collected during my field-visit in Sri Lanka and India.
Chapter 5: Shifting notions of Ur/Home

Home has a significant function in people's lives. In the Northern districts of Sri Lanka, as Thiranagama (2011) observed, the first most common question encountered by a stranger is about his or her home or Ur, which according to Daniel in the South Indian Tamil context, symbolizes one's 'kunam' or character (1984: 102). Ur, an everyday and often-used Tamil word, which means natal village, forms the main basis of one's identity in the North (Thiranagama 2011: 18). Daniel's research on Ur in the South Indian villages establishes the fact that the Tamils get to know about their own identity only after being nurtured on their home-soil, eating food from there village and in-haling the air of the village (Daniel 1984: 62). Therefore, the relationship between a Tamil and the soil of his Ur is considered more important than all others. Thus, most of the Sri Lankan Tamils, whom I met during my field visit, consider the meaning of home to be linked with identity and belonging, as has been portrayed by Armbruster (2002: 18) regarding Syrian Christians.

The main concern of this chapter is with the notion of Ur amongst the displaced persons residing in the cities of Sri Lanka and South India. In particular, in order to identify the trajectories of 'home', I focus on the analysis of the shifting meanings of home to different categories of persons, as they emerged in both field sites, depending on their priorities of life in relation to resettlement, integration and return to their original homes in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka. Here, my aim is to emphasize that displaced persons, on the basis of their age, gender, caste and class, give contrasting meanings to Ur based on different factors and priorities in their lives.

I have split this chapter into three sections: The first section deals with the ethnographic accounts of Ur of the displaced persons and their families living in Colombo, Jaffna and Tamil Nadu. In addition, I locate the contrasting meanings given to home by them, in regard to return, depending on factors like time, socio-economic needs and 'aspirations to the good life' (Appadurai 2004: 10).

The second part reflects on the argumentation which is different for different categories of persons. I argue that elderly displaced persons in Colombo feel emotionally and spiritually attached to their original homes, through which they identify themselves. Yet, most of them residing in Tamil Nadu and Colombo do not intend to return because they want to have a good life and a better future. To add, the insecurity that prevails at their homes keep them from returning. However, they feel the spiritual attachment towards their places of origin and desire to die in their motherlands, whereas the young generations in Colombo and Tamil Nadu, are reluctant to return to an unknown and strange place. Return necessitates building up a life in an environment which was once familiar but now is a strange place as is the case with most of the second generation interviewees. Return means
Chapter 5: Shifting notions of Ur/Home

a 'new uprooting' for those who migrated to Tamil Nadu, as they were very young at the time of displacement and have hardly any memories from Sri Lanka; it is altogether a different and new country for them. Most of them are unaware if their former homes still exist or not. The civil war has changed the social meaning of the places where they once lived. In addition, the experiences gained in their present locations, in Tamil Nadu and Colombo, influence the meaning of their home which plays a crucial role in their decision to return. They prefer integration which is a “dynamic and multi-faceted two-way process,” as indicated by Azmi in her writings (2012: 188), between them and the host communities where they gradually become integrated legally, socially and economically. In contrast, the displaced persons in the camp in Jaffna view their home as a 'source of income' and 'identity' due to which they are counting their days to return. This section shows home as a safe and secured place with no permanent structure. Instead of a single home, many seek for several homes in several places where one can be happy and at ease as is evident from one of the narratives. Home is also viewed as a prison which is also elaborated in the third section.

Finally, the conclusion highlights the different conceptualizations of home and presents that Ur refers to the place of origin where the Tamils were born and brought up. It also relates the different concepts with regard to resettlement, integration and return.

5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

Time, socio-economic needs and aspirations to the good life

“I am from a wealthy family in Velanai. My parents built our home. Our home consisted of two halls, four bedrooms, a long corridor and a kitchen. It was built on a large stretch of land with so many trees (49 coconut trees, ten Palmyra\(^1\) trees). It was 50 feet from the entrance to the main door. Behind, there was the farming land. We were not real farmers but still earned a lot from farming. Our mother took care of everything as my father was in Colombo for business. We had paddy fields and tobacco fields. From these crops, we annually earned millions of rupees. On the other hand our expenditures were very less, as we only had to buy fish and some vegetables if required. All other things were grown in

\(^1\) The Palmyra is the famed symbol of the Jaffna Peninsula, a familiar sight to anyone who has grown up there and its symbol most often is used to represent the peninsula (Thiranagama 2011: 146).
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

our field along with the fire woods. We also had cows, goats and hens in our home with whom we also played around. It was a pure, honest and free village life, a totally different life. I was so close to nature as if we were friends...”.

Rajesh\(^2\), a 37-year-old unmarried Tamil-Hindu man, shared the memories of his former Ur in Velanai\(^3\). Rajesh spent his entire childhood in his village close to nature, away from a city life. He grew up amidst the paddy and tobacco fields, playing with the pets, eating the home-cooked foods and leading a life centered in the village. To him, nature was the central element that linked him to his home in Velanai. He was born and brought up in this village, which has created a strong sense of belonging. The closeness to nature meant that he feels free to use nature whenever he feels like. Rajesh loved living in a place where he enjoyed freedom. Again, his parents have built their home with so much love, affection and care that their home has become an object of longing. Rajesh did spend “a pure, honest and free village life...”. Attachment to his village and the ownership of his home made him belong 'to spaces and sites, to natural objects, landscapes, climate and to material possessions' as is reflected in Pfaff-Czarnecka's writings (2013: 17).

But with the bloody civil war, things started changing. “My family experienced displacement for the first time in 1987 when the IPKF came in Sri Lanka. But it was within the village... But the main displacement took place in 1991. From then, we faced several displacements until we decided to come to Colombo in 1996 as my father was there...”.

His happy days in Velanai soon came to an end with the arrival of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in 1987. They were forced to leave their homes and move to another place within their village. After a few days, they were fortunate enough to return to their homes, but this return was temporary. Since then, they started facing continuous displacement within their village, and in 1991 the main displacement took place. They had to move not only from their homes but also from their village leaving all their belongings, even their pets, behind. They kept on taking shelter in different parts of the

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2 Rajesh was interviewed in his apartment in Colombo on January 19, 2013. He is presently employed as an accountant in one of the leading NGOs based in Colombo.

3 Velanai is a small village in one of the seven islands, i.e., Velanai Island which is off the coast of Jaffna Peninsula in the Northern province of the country. This village is situated roughly 6 Kms from Jaffna town.
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

Northern province until they finally reached Colombo in 1996 and settled down. Initially, Rajesh came across many problems regarding the language, culture and environment, since Colombo is Sinhalese dominated. With the passing of time, he became well acquainted with the new life, finished his studies, got a job and decided to settle there. At present, he is in close contact with the Northern districts, as his job demands so which is evident in the next part of his narrative.

“Due to my job, I visit other parts of the country quite often. But things have changed from then and now...In my times, Jaffna used to be a safe and closed place where people respect each other and are unaware of any evil deeds. Now, people are looking for scope to fight with each other, no one trusts anyone in his surroundings. With the opening of the A9 road in 2009⁴, technological advancement has opened room for heinous crimes, especially among the young generations who have become involved in all sorts of misdoings like drug and alcohol addictions, watching illegal websites, raping and murdering innocent teenagers and so on”.

Since 1996, Rajesh is settled in Colombo and often visits the Northern and eastern provinces of the country for work purposes. In the following lines, I show the differences that he witnessed in the Northern provinces, especially in Jaffna, with the opening of the A9 road. This opening has been termed by Gerharz as 'opening to the world' (2008: 173) because this road opened Jaffna to the rest of the world. Until then, Jaffna had remained 'isolated in terms of infrastructure' and 'inaccessible' to the world (Gerharz 2008: 173). Furthurmore, Gerharz shows (2010: 157) that with this reopening, Jaffna became integrated into the global and the national economic exchange networks. Supermarkets, previously unavailable in Jaffna, emerged and started selling luxurious and branded goods. This created a huge change not only in the economic sector but also in the local consumption patterns. The town regained a connection to global mediascapes as is reflected in Appadurai’s writings (1996: 33). Mobile phones, satellite TV and Internet cafes became a very common all over the town. This helped the Jaffna Tamils to maintain easy contact with their relatives abroad. Also, they are now able to keep themselves updated with recent happenings around the world. In addition, there increased a massive movement of people from the Southern parts of the country who wanted to visit the devastated peninsula. In addition, Rajesh stated that people have become selfish and dishonest, always finding excuses to fight each

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5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

other. The faith and trust in others are completely lost as a result of the war. Suspecting each other as spies of the government has come into prominence these days. He believes that, at present, Jaffna has became technologically developed, but this proved to be fatal for the young generations because they started getting involved in felonious crimes like robbery, rape, murder and so on. This present condition played an important role in Rajesh's decision to return to Velanai. The next part highlights the factors determining his decision.

“I do not want to return. My life's changed now. I just can't go back and stay in Velanai. I need the AC, TV, computer as they are part of my life now. Also, I am getting a good salary here in Colombo. Why should I leave it when I know I can't get this much salary in my home? Displacement has become a blessing to me. If I return, I will have to lead a village life again which is not possible for me. Also, there are no job opportunities. Security is very bad in Velanai. I keep on telling my mother to come to Colombo because of the lack of security...Relatives and friends have all left our hometown and settled in Colombo...”, replied Rajesh when I asked him if he wants to return to Velanai.

Not only has society in Jaffna changed since Rajesh settled in Colombo, but transformations have taken place in his own life too, both socially and economically. His present living conditions do not match with the conditions in his home in Velanai. For his survival, he needs the basic necessities as well as the luxuries, such as access to technology including air conditioning, refrigerator, television, washing-machine, computer and other electronic gadgets without which he cannot think of leading a decent life. In Colombo, he is earning a satisfying salary and leading a luxurious life which would never have been possible in the Northern provinces. Rajesh needs a decent earning to afford these luxuries and thus shifts “from a subsistence system based on the satisfaction of relatively fixed needs, to one based on the maximization of income” as has been shown by Nathan in his article 'Capabilities and Aspirations' (2005: 37). Rajesh is well aware that to maximize his income, he has to settle down in Colombo, as Velanai lacks all the developmental aspirations. And because of these above reasons, displacement has come to him as a blessing.

Experiencing these social and economic changes over the last two decades, Rajesh's feeling towards his home has changed from attachment to detachment which is evident when he showed his reluctance to return to Velanai. If he returns to Velanai, he has to leave behind all the luxuries that Colombo offers
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

and has to lead a village life again. This seems impossible to him now as he has become habituated to
the city life. Moreover, Velanai will not be able to provide him the kind of job and the amount of
money he is earning presently. But most importantly, his decision to integrate in Colombo is mostly
influenced from the uncertainties that Jaffna offers now. He considers himself lucky to have been
displaced to Colombo, a sophisticated urban area, which is the influencing factor for his return. Hence,
this relationship between rural and urban lifestyles, as observed by Wiborg (2004), forms a point of
departure for investigating social distinctions. The value of having a rural background in an urban
context can be analyzed in context of a cultural hierarchy where the urban displays a hegemonic
position even if the countryside retains an important position as a basis for central cultural values
(Creed and Ching 1997 cited in Wiborg 2004: 431). He is economically and socially well-settled in
Colombo and if he returns, he has to start again from the very beginning. Except for his mother, there is
also no one in Jaffna. All of his friends and relatives have migrated elsewhere. Though it is really
difficult to form new attachments in new places, but Rajesh has formed these attachments over time.

His childhood memories are entirely positive when he spent his days happily with his family and pets,
but as he left, he distanced himself from his home and everything it represented. The distance in time
and space has enabled him to differentiate the positive and negative experiences from childhood by
cultivating feelings of belonging to his home represented by the people and nature. Gradually, Rajesh's
attachment to his home decreased with time, socio-economic needs and aspirations to a good life.
Urban life-style has greatly influenced his self-image and identity and has distanced him from his rural
life-style. Therefore, here, he presents a negative image of his hometown and does not feel like
associating himself with either Velanai or with its people. After more than two decades, he has become
detached from what he was attached in the 1990s. Besides, security issues is another reason for his
unwillingness to return. Generally, people look for the three most important values that constitute their
homes: identity, seclusion and security, and if any of these goes missing, then home does not remain a
home as in this case.

Despite the transformation of his own life, still now he considers “Velanai to be my home and Colombo
the second one” due to the emotional attachment at personal-level relationships. This is what Daniel
states that Tamils distinguish between their real home or the place of origin and their current location
(1984: 67), as seen in this case. Rajesh considers Velanai to be his first home. It is the place where he
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escapes during weekends far away from his daily, routine life in Colombo which is evident when he says, “...but whenever I go there, I feel relaxed I keep aside all my work loads and tension and enjoy every moment staying in there”. Velanai, being his birth-place, holds special meaning in his life which also connects him to his childhood memories. He has his roots in Velanai. Unfortunately, due to displacement, Rajesh had to opt for a second home in Colombo and after almost two decades, he decided to settle there. This decision is influenced by the “growing societal affluence, an increased prevalence of the aged within society, as well as by technological and transport advances and the economic restructuring associated with globalization.” as has been observed by Quinn while conducting research in Ireland (2004: 2). Here, the concept of second home comes into existence in Rajesh's life, which, according to Quinn, “is viewed as something of a release valve, providing a temporary escape that enables people to return to their routine lives having been revitalized and restored by their second home experiences.” (2004: 2). In addition, Rajesh's escape from his everyday life in Colombo supports Chaplin's (1999) argument, where he comments that the second home is a place where people can regain control over their lives and escape from their routine situations where the demands of work and responsibilities can threaten to overwhelm. In Colombo, he is always surrounded with work-loads and tensions related to work and other things. So whenever he visits Velanai, he feels completely relaxed with no pressure and tensions. Home in Velanai, to Rajesh, has become a place where he can 'relax and retreat', as has been said by Moore (1984). This also portrays 'personal relations of reciprocity, in a new space of belonging by choice', as stated by Pfaff-Czarnecka (2013: 16). The environment in Velanai continuously balances the relation between Rajesh and his home by mutuality as well as by ties of reciprocity that bind them together. Rajesh's relation to his home is guided by 'mutual expectations and obligations' towards his mother which 'create common horizons, stabilizing them to norms of reciprocity, loyalty, and commitment.' as can be found in Pfaff-Czarnecka's writings (2013: 16).

As already mentioned, Rajesh's mother has returned to their ancestral home in 2011 and since then she is living alone. “Every weekend either me or my brother visits her and spends time with her. We continuously ask her to come and stay with us because there is no security in Velanai but she will not listen to us. We, all the time feel the threat to leave our mother all alone there. We also have no other option than to come back as we can't go and settle there”.
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Rajesh is obliged to visit Velanai every alternate weekend because of his personal attachment to his mother and expects that his mother and village would give him enough freedom to relax after a hard, toiling week in Colombo. However, it becomes obvious from Rajesh’s statement that if his mother has not returned to Velanai, by now he would have lost all ties with his place of origin. Therefore, to Rajesh, his mother embodies Ur which is an example of mutuality.

Thus, Rajesh took the decision to stay away from his Ur in Velanai, but still has varying degrees of attachment to it through his mother. However, home to him is now in Colombo where he can lead a luxurious life and can fulfill his dream of having a better future which is impossible to achieve in Velanai.

Father versus son: conceptualizing Ur from two different age groups

“I belong to a well-to-do family in Mannar. Our big house is situated just at the entrance of the Mannar town. We were among the few respected and influential families, we were responsible for looking after the residents of the town. We had our own identity. Life was good then amongst our near and dear ones. Everybody in the town used to know each other and spend a happy and content life. Those days are lost”.

69-year-old Mr. Kalam in his Colombo residence, spoke of his days in Mannar with affection and sadness, reflecting on the status that they enjoyed in his ancestral home. The way of living in Colombo is recreated by reminiscing on the former life of Mannar with special reference to life-styles, livelihoods, customs and social relations. His Ur and his own people hold the deepest meaning which is the focus for a very strong emotional bond. As put by Relph: “There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security” (1976: 43). This can be related to Mr. Kalam’s personality which ascribes a strong Mannar belonging despite spending two decades in

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5 Mannar is a big town of the Mannar district in the Northern province of Sri Lanka. It is located in the North-West of the island. A large number of Tamil-speaking Muslims resided in this district until the 1990 eviction. At present, few number of Muslims are there while Christian-Tamils and Hindu-Tamils are increasing in number. Mannar is also the area from where Sri Lankan refugees used to migrate to India by boat as it is about 50 Kms from mainland India.
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Colombo. Moreover, according to Daniel (1984: 63), Tamils consider the relationship between them and the soil of their Ur to be one of the most important, which is also reflected here. Being from a well-to-do family, Mr. Kalam’s Ur provided him with his own individual identity which granted him respect in his community. This indicates that his social status and place of origin are related to each other. However, he has inherited this position from his forefathers who enjoyed their higher position in the town. Therefore, his social status is an ascribed status, that is ‘assigned to individuals without reference to their innate differences or abilities’ (Foladare 1969: 53), which he has inherited depending on the social hierarchy as has been presented by Foladare while defining the concepts of ‘ascribed’ and ‘achieved’ status (1969: 53). Colombo fails to provide him the status that he used to enjoy in Mannar as he is new to the place and new to the people. His duties and responsibilities have also changed. In Mannar, being from an affluent family, he was responsible for the well-being of his fellow neighbors. Both Mr. Kalam and his people maintained their relationship by mutuality and “by ties of reciprocity” that bound them together as has been again shown by Pfaff-Czarnecka in her article (2013: 6). But the eviction took away everything from him, his home, his identity, his position and his own people. Now he is left alone amidst strangers in Colombo.

Furthermore, as shown by Wilson (1994), Sri Lankan Tamilness is divided into three regional centers, namely, Jaffna, Batticaloa and Colombo. The Vellalars of Jaffna are known for dominating the peninsula as they constitute about half of Jaffna’s population and are the greatest owners of agricultural land. In addition, they predominate in the commercial affairs and maintain a near-exclusive monopoly of professional, administrative, and political roles (Pfaffenberger 1982). However, neither Batticaloa nor Colombo are dominated by the Vellalars. So it can be argued that Vellalars who dominate Jaffna, lose their status and position if moved to some parts other than Jaffna. In this case, Mr. Kalam’s situation is also similar to that of the Vellalars as he also lost his social status and position after going to Colombo.

In contrast, his, 31-year-old, son Sihaan⁶ is neither involved in his ancestral home ‘with the same intensity and frequency’ as his father, nor is he that much influenced by his birthplace values and practices as has been predicted by many scholars according to Levitt (2009: 1225). He conceptualizes

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⁶ Sihaan is a higher ranked officer in one of the renowned Telecommunication sector in Sri Lanka. I conducted the interview on the same day I did with his father at their home in Colombo.
home as a place surrounded by family and friends, along with the economic and educational benefits necessary to lead a happy and decent life. Thus Sihaan's feelings about home are similar to what Mallett (2004: 74) reviews about home, “Without the family a home is only a house’. To him, “though Mannar is my birthplace but returning and resettling there is a big challenge now because of very less job opportunities and also education has not yet reached upto that level as we have in Colombo. Moreover, I was eight years old when we came here, so my memory of Mannar is very less. Also most of our relatives and friends are well settled in Colombo and are also reluctant to return to Mannar. We hardly have anyone there. So no point in returning...”.

Though he believes Mannar to be his birthplace, his home is in Colombo where he has been brought up and has established himself after struggling. His decision to stay in Colombo is, thus, mostly influenced by the economic benefits which he believes he will not be able to have in Mannar. Educational opportunities also play a pivotal role in influencing his decision-making process. Simultaneously, time is a crucial factor which has influenced his decision to return. Similar to Rajesh, the rationale behind Sihaan's reluctance to return is his aspirations to a 'good life about health and happiness' which is only available in Colombo (Appadurai 2004: 10). Sihaan's meaning of home has changed because of the displacement he experienced. This is analogous to the argument of Brun (2001) about the Northern Muslims of Sri Lanka who were displaced to Puttalam. Displacement affects individuals in subtle ways which often leads to changes in the meaning of home.

Another reason which Sihaan presents is that his close kins do not live in Mannar anymore; Most of them are well settled in Colombo. So to decide on return, besides focusing on his personal reasons, it is also necessary to include his everyday interactions with his friends, family and others as has been said by Azmi while talking about the second generation Muslim IDPs in Sri Lanka in post war resettlement (2012: 181). These meanings are constantly being evaluated and redefined in the light of changing social and physical relationships with home. For Sihaan, one of the main reasons to consider Colombo as his home is the fact that his near and dear ones are also living there. Unlike his father, he does not feel like a stranger in Colombo. To him, home means friends and family along with the economic benefits necessary to lead a happy and decent life.

*Days of hardship*
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

“We were asked to leave our home and belongings (in 1990) within 24 hours by the LTTE (We could carry only 1000 SLR but I had 12000 SLR which I took along with me). Came from Mannar to Kalpitiya (80 miles from a shallow sea to the Indian Ocean) in a boat (with my wife and four children) and then went to Colombo as I already had a rented house there (otherwise I would have also landed up in Puttalam in the refugee camps). I did have the scope of migrating to India as it is so near but in order to retain the integrity of my own nation I did not leave my country. This is the reason why most of the Muslims did not leave the country and settled in Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Kalpitiya and even in Colombo. I believe that even if I migrate to other countries, I will not have the peace of mind that I have while staying in my own country. I stayed in Colombo for a pretty long period as I studied (from school level) there and was always in contact with Colombo for business purposes. This is the reason that I had a rented house (6000 per month rent) in Colombo where we settled after being evicted from Mannar. Those were the days of real hardships and struggles. During that period (90s) the government was providing 1500 SLR per family but in order to get the money one has to go through various hard processes to prove that he is a refugee. I took the money for a couple of times and as I was facing problems so I stopped to take it. The government did not provide any other help. As I belonged to a well to do family I could not just simply go and ask for help... We asked for aids a couple of times to the government but were neglected so we also stopped for asking aids. We survived on only water... In order to survive in Colombo and also losing all hopes of returning to Mannar, in 2004, I sold my shop for only four million Sri Lankan Rupees and our own house (11 perches of land, 2000+ sq ft) for only 7.5 million Sri Lankan Rupees (real value per perch is at least 1 million)”.

While recalling his days of eviction, Mr. Kalam briefly mapped his journey from Mannar via Kalpitiya to Colombo with his family. It was not at all a smooth one as at every moment they had life risks either from the LTTE or from the Sri Lankan army. After facing severe difficulties, they succeeded to reach Colombo and started their new life in the already rented house that Mr. Kalam had. In the initial days, they not only had to cope with the pain of leaving their homelands but also had to confront the resentments of a hostile Sinhalese population in many cases in the 90s.

Mr. Kalam's narrative reflects his sense of belonging not only towards his Ur but also towards his country Sri Lanka. After being evicted, he had the opportunity to migrate abroad and lead a peaceful and happy life. Still, he chose to stay back in Colombo and kept on trying to adjust to the new culture.
by adopting various strategies like learning the language and getting used to the culture. The
government provided only a meager amount of money to the evicted within the country, but in order to
receive that amount one has to undergo enormous hardships. He received monetary help from the
government a couple of times, but finally ceased to do so as he was facing troubles. Coming from an
affluent background, his conscience did not let him ask for further help from the government when they
faced negligence quite a few times. With the aim of making a better life and after losing hope of
returning to Mannar, Mr. Kalam sold his own shop and house at a very small amount compared to the
original price. Moreover, as they had shifted to Colombo, so his belongings in Mannar remained
abandoned and no one was there to look after them. Taking this opportunity, many unknown people
started occupying their homes. Even the LTTE insisted on having his shop for their personal use. Afraid
of losing his properties, he decided to sell them off and use the money to make a good life in Colombo.

From his statements, it is evident that he values integrity which it would not have been possible to
retain if he had migrated outside the country. According to him, most of the Muslims did not leave their
motherland after being evicted with the hope of retaining their integrity. While the Tamils deserted the
island with the desire to have a good life abroad. Muslims, stayed back and endured all kinds of
hardships and settled in different parts of the country mainly in Puttalam, Anuradhapura and in
Colombo\(^7\). From this, it is revealed that Mr. Kalam refers home as his 'home nation' which is similar to
what Armbruster argues in her article regarding the migrant Syrian Christians as to them “home
frequently means the home nation” (2002: 18). Thus 'home', here, symbolically represents 'the nation',
and hence, is connected to a sense of national identity. Literature on citizenship and national identity
reveals the potency of the concept of home, as it complicates the relationship between national identity,
citizenship and belonging. An important contribution to literature on this aspect is Arnold’s (2004)
work on home, homelessness and citizenship. He discusses the ways in which the link between home
and homeland is the cause of both physical dislocation and political exclusion. It is precisely due to
perceiving the nation state as 'home' and ascribing citizenship to those who 'belong' to the nation state
\[^7\] However, there is a contradiction to his view that Muslims did not migrate abroad. According to the data
collected during my fieldwork, there have been quite a number of Tamil-speaking Muslims from the country
who migrated abroad due to the civil war to have a safe and better future. There are also Muslims among
refugees in Indian camps. But they constitute very little. For example, there is only one family among 390
families at Keezputhupattu camp, Viluppuram district in Tamil Nadu. But, most of the Muslims voluntarily
migrated to the Middle-East as migrant workers for economic reasons (Sriskandarajah 2002).
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

that homelessness for the 'other', which includes immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, occurs. In addition, belonging to the nation is an example of mutuality where Mr. Kalam shares in a given polity's well-being, accepts some of the cultural and traditional norms and values, enjoys the civic rights and performs his duties, such as, by paying the taxes as has been put by Pfaff-Czarnecka while analyzing the concept of mutuality (2013: 6).

Being a hard-working person, gradually Mr. Kalam succeeded in establishing himself. His children were also lucky as he said, “I was lucky enough to send my children to one of the best schools in Sri Lanka. Although the schools were Sinhalese but they were sent to Tamil Mediums so they did not face any problem to communicate”. After years of struggle, at present his children have also established themselves and are currently leading decent lives among the different ethnic groups.

**Urge to return**

“Government has assured us that we will be given back our homes and I am waiting for that day when I will be able to go back to my ancestral home (in Mannar). My days are almost now counted but I repent that my children are unable to know about our home. In Colombo, I cannot feel at home. Mannar is my home, where I have my own area, my own people, my own neighborhood. This is the place where I want to breathe my last. Although all our family members are now well established in Colombo but still I long to go back. I feel to be a stranger here. I do not really get the scope to interact with my neighbors, only have a formal interaction with them (like hi, hello)”.

From the above statement it is clear that though he strongly desires to return, Mr. Kalam will only do so with the proper consent from the government. The government has promised to provide help in order to return to his motherland. He is almost at the end of his life, so before he dies, he wants to familiarize his children with their motherland, their birthplace, of which they have a very little idea. His desires are so strong that he is even ready to repay the amount to the new owners of his properties and settle there peacefully and happily which is reflected in his statement, “Still now I have some bare lands and paddy fields left in Mannar. If government helps me to get back to my place, then I would be happy to return to my own home (in Mannar) by repaying the amount to whom I sold my properties”.

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The 1990 Muslim Eviction marked a turning point and rupture in his life which forced him to leave his Ur and move to the capital city of Colombo. However, the memories of his Ur always overwhelmed him which became visible during our conversation in his Colombo residence. The way he talked and described his Ur in Mannar gave me a clear picture of how happy he was while recalling his past days. This is mostly because of his familiarity with the place, his own people and his own neighborhood. As Bourdieu gives salient importance to the familiarity of a place, he writes: “The agent engaged in practice knows the world... He knows it, in a sense, too well..., takes it for granted, precisely because he is caught up in it, bound up with it; he inhabits it like a garment or a familiar habitat” (1999: 142-143). This is reflected in Mr. Kalam’s story as well. His new life in Colombo was always full of uncertainties and doubts in a strange neighborhood. It always casts a pale shadow whenever he recalls his Mannar days. As stated by Thiranagama, the crucial material and affective relations that he has built up in his life, through neighbors, schooling, marriage, and business had been primarily conducted in his former Ur (2011: 172). Living in Colombo for Mr. Kalam was an aftermath; it was a struggle to survive that intimately recalled loss in every possible way as has been expressed by Thiranagama (ibid.: 172). Furthermore, Colombo does not give him the feeling of home because he feels marginalized and threatened by the other ethnic groups. The nostalgia for the past (in) Mannar, the hope of return and the feeling that his present dwelling is a temporary shelter influence his perception of not being ‘at home’ in Colombo. He experiences a feeling of belonging only when he feels safe and secure, when he is with his own people and in a familiar surrounding which is hardly available in Colombo. Also, contact with his neighbor is usually limited to saying “hello” and to brief chats on the street. It is due to this unsafe and insecure feelings that he failed to develop meaningful contacts with his neighbors and other locals. According to Duyvendak, as an intellectually disabled man misses ‘a friendly, sociable atmosphere’ in his new home, so is the experience with Mr. Kalam who also feels the same at his present locale in Colombo (2011: 71). He feels to be an 'outsider'.

Case (1996: 1) points out, “By being away from home, the things, places, activities and people associated with home become more apparent through their absence” which is also the case with Mr. Kalam who calls Mannar his home despite being away for more than two decades. Because, he was born and raised up there, his home-environment gave him a sense of attachment that resembled a sense of belonging. His words, “Leaving Mannar was extremely hard for me even though I stayed in
5.1 Shifting meanings of Ur: different tales to tell

*Colombo for a pretty long period...*, highlights that loss of home tends to provoke strong social and emotional responses precisely because it involves a loss of self. He did visit his home even during the war because of the bond he had with his place of origin. Although this bond came under threat during the war, the end of the war has provided him with the possibility of returning to Mannar.

Thus Mr. Kalam conceptualizes home to be his own root where he wants to breathe his last. For him, the relationship with *Ur* is his relationship with the past which includes both nostalgia and tragedy. Home, to him, is the realm of proper Sri Lankan-Muslim values, functioning social relationships and religious virtues. Also, it is a place with which Mr. Kalam has strong social, psychological and emotional attachments. His narratives also reveal an interesting facet of the link between the individual and the place, that is, people and communities in situations of displacement can still ascribe to their place identities and lay claim to their homes in the places of origin while physically inhabiting other places.

**Son’s identity: factor determining his decision to return**

“In 2009, I alone drove to Mannar for the first time after 1990 and the first question I encountered was why are you here? I was really astonished hearing this as Mannar is my hometown, my birthplace, I have the right to come... I have lost my identity in Mannar, now I am a stranger to them so they ask me all kinds of rubbish questions...”.

After almost two decades, Sihaan drove to his birthplace to get the glimpse of their home and neighborhood after the end of the war. As soon as he reached the town, his identity was questioned. None of the persons whom he knew were there. Everyone was unknown to him and as they also did not know him, he was asked about his identity and the reason for his visit. During the war, most of his neighborhood had either shifted to Colombo or to other parts of the country. Thus, most of their homes have been occupied by Tamils displaced from the North in 1995. Sihaan is a stranger to the new residents of Mannar as they have not seen him in all these twenty years. Neither the buyers of their home are known to him so he could not go and see his former home. This identity problem influenced his decision to return to Mannar a lot along with the other factors (as already discussed). Whenever he thinks of his home in Mannar, he remembers his family, friends and neighborhood. Unfortunately, at present, everybody in his ancestral home has become a stranger to him. Those he could recognize have
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too become strangers due to the long gap of more than two decades. Relationships changed over time as they were magnified in imaginations unmatched by the experience of his visit. Sihaan was disappointed that relationships were “not what they used to be”. This also means that he would not be enjoying his family's former status as they are 'new' to all. Therefore, his first visit, which was supposed to be the first physical and emotional connection with his place of origin, a meeting of past and present, of imaginations about his Ur and the reality of the present, turned out be disappointing and painful. However, a complexity of feelings exemplified within him when he faced comments just entering the town: “…you are a stranger to us”.

If at any point of time, he manages to get his home back from the government, then he would surely be visiting there but during vacations or special occasions. His dissatisfied first visit shattered his perception of 'home' and he continued to view Colombo as his Ur. Colombo became the sole option of a place to call home: Sihaan applied for naturalization after his first visit, as he realized that he did not wish ever to return to Mannar. This visit also gave him the scope to examine the aspects of life he would be having if he returned in terms of his career which is totally uncertain as there is nothing compared to his present job in Mannar.

Thus two different conceptualizations of home have emerged from two different generations of the same family. Mr. Kalam is a retired person who views his home in Mannar as his root whereas his son Sihaan, a middle-aged man, views the same home as a strange and unknown place. This is similar to what Brun says in her article about refugees and displaced persons' understanding of their places that “different groups relate to the same place with different meanings, uses and values” (2001: 20). The difference between generations, here, presents a confusing picture with regards to identity and aspirations to a good life as Sihaan, who has grown up in Colombo, has less interest in his ancestral home in Mannar, while his father is totally engrossed in the memories of his place of origin which he symbolizes as an indicator of his social status and is both emotionally and spiritually attached to it. With all his heart in an alienated present locale, he is counting his days to return to his Ur. Unfortunately, he is also aware of the certain obligations he has towards his family in Colombo. His children do not want to return and this is the reason why he might also have to drop his idea of return as he is growing old and his children will not allow him to go and settle in Mannar all alone.
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From Mannar to Chennai: shifting meaning of Ur

In his article, 'Senegal is our home: the anchored nature of Senegalese trans-national networks', Riccio argued that though the Senegalese migrants live and flourish in Italy, most of them “preserve and contribute towards shaping a strong sense of identity that reinforces rather than undermines the concept of Senegal as their homeland” (2001: 68). I second this argumentation while speaking about my next interviewee Mr. Anthony⁸, a 67-year-old Tamil-Christian from Mannar, who has migrated to India from Sri Lanka during the ongoing civil war with the aim of having a better and secured life for his family. He migrated because his hometown had ceased to offer him the feeling of safety, security and privacy which are among the main 'elements of home' as summarized by Duyvendak while elaborating about the meanings of home (2011: 38). Truly speaking, home is conceptualized as a combination of place and feeling where 'person-environment relationship creates feelings of well-being' (Watkins and Hosier 2005: 198). However, according to Rowles and Watkins (2003), adjustment is required in this relationship to have the feeling of home. And when this adjustment fails, it results in 'homelessness' or 'unhoming' together with an associated “existential despair for the individual”, as stated by Carboni (1990: 33), which took place in the case of Mr. Anthony during the mid 1980s forcing him to leave for India.

Struggling hard during the initial days in India, Mr. Anthony eventually managed to establish himself in Chennai and, gradually, his three daughters also succeeded in creating their own identities at the new locale. However, at times, he regrets his decision of migrating to India as he still identifies Sri Lanka as his homeland and misses the respectable position that he would have earned while in Mannar. His narratives, which I document now, reveal his construction of identity in Tamil Nadu and the shifting meaning of Ur with socio-economic needs and aspirations to the good-life:

“I am from an Indian origin family, who came and settled down in Sri Lanka before my birth...My father was a wealthy fisherman and his network helped us to migrate to India in boat in the mid 1980s. Though, it took us a bit to settle down in Chennai, yet I managed to do well and gradually my daughters also succeeded to prosper in their lives. Now, two of them are abroad, well-settled with their

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⁸ Mr. Anthony is a retired officer in a Chennai based NGO. I met him during my internship and got the scope to talk to him at regular intervals in April-May 2013.
own families and we are looking for a perfect match for our youngest daughter... Many a times, I regret my decision of coming here... I was a bright student in Mannar, if I was still there, by now I would have become the collector. I cannot get that respect here which I am eligible for at my hometown. I came here only for my daughters to make their lives better. At that time, there was no scope in Mannar. But now when I see my brother’s children doing quite well in their lives, I regret...!!.”

Born and brought up in Mannar, Mr. Anthony originally belonged to an Indian origin family who migrated to Sri Lanka in the 1950s\(^9\). Until the 1980s, he lived quite a modest life in Mannar with his family. Nevertheless, with the outset of the civil war in 1983, he started facing difficulties and with the passage of time, the difficulties became oppressive: “Sounds of bullets and bombings became very common. It was not possible to get out from our homes as it risked our lives. Schools, colleges were closed until an uncertain period of time…”", uttered Mr. Anthony in a painful and lost voice. Amongst the several difficulties faced by his family, Mr. Anthony believed education of his three daughters (who were aged 12, seven and four at that time) suffered the most due to the ongoing circumstances. They had to discontinue their education because the schools remained closed and were taken over by the LTTE for their meetings and other purposes. Mr. Anthony and his wife became really worried speculating about their daughters’ futures. Here, the aspiration of the parents towards their daughters’ higher education acted as the key factor which compelled them to migrate to India. Appadurai, while theorizing aspiration as a cultural capacity in his essay, 'The capacity to aspire: culture and the terms of recognition', describes the capacity to aspire as the ability to read 'a map of a journey into the future' (2004: 76). A map, as Bok (2010: 2) defines, is simply “a document covered in unfamiliar symbols and words unless we are supplied with the information and experiences required to read it”. Moreover, according to other researchers, aspirations are complex understandings of the future pathways available to people (Prosser et al. 2008; Watts and Bridges 2006; Ball et al. 2002). In order to develop their capacity to aspire, parents should be aware of the benefits of higher education in this case, Mr.

\(^9\) There are two groups of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan and the Indian Tamils or Hill Country Tamils. The Indian Tamils are descendants of skilled and unskilled labors sent from Tamil Nadu, South India to Sri Lanka in the 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) century to work in tea, coffee and rubber plantations. The Hill Country Tamils largely live in the central highlands. However, following episodes of violence in the hill country in 1977, most of the Plantation Tamils sought refuge in the Northern provinces of Vavuniya and Mannar. Mr. Anthony’s family is one such family who migrated to India as plantation workers and thereafter moved to Mannar during the 1977 violence.
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Anthony, being a highly educated person himself, is well aware of the usefulness of higher education. Because of this, he, too, wants his daughters to prosper in their lives so that they can also lead a respectable life.

Another factor which enhanced their decision for migration, was that they had many relatives in India who would help them in their initial days of hardships in the new country. Additionally, Mr. Anthony had confidence to his ability to find a good job within few days of their arrival. Therefore, in 1985, along with his three daughters and wife, he sailed for India. They did not face problems with acquiring boats as his father was a well-known fisherman who had contacts in Mannar with persons who owned boats. With their help, Mr. Anthony safely reached Rameswaram after a journey of three to four hours from Talaimannar. They were taken to the transit camp of Mandapam where they stayed for two weeks. Madurai camp was the next one where they were shifted. Belonging to a wealthier section of the society and also having relatives in Madurai, Mr. Anthony managed to move out from the camp and started staying in a rented place within a few days. His daughters were admitted to one of the renowned schools in Madurai. Until 1987, he received government assistance as a refugee outside the camp. But after the Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord in 1987, monetary help from the government ceased and days of hardship began. Mr. Anthony got financial support from his brother-in-law who was abroad. He also

10 Rameswaram is a town in the Ramanathapuram district in the state of Tamil Nadu. It is located on Pamban Island separated from mainland India by the Pamban channel and is about 50 kilometres from Mannar Island, Sri Lanka. It is situated in the Gulf of Mannar, at the very tip of the Indian peninsula. Rameswaram is the closest point to reach Sri Lanka and geological evidence suggests that the Adam's Bridge was a former land connection between India and Sri Lanka. The town is in news over alleged attack by Sri Lankan navy for alleged cross border activities by fishermen, Sethusamudram Shipping Canal Project, Kachchatheevu and Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. It is the important port among all the ports in the district, having a ferry service to Talaimannar of Sri Lanka, which enabled the Sri Lankan refugees to travel by boat to India within a very short time. From Rameswaram, refugees were taken to transit camp in Mandapam.

11 Talaimannar is a settlement in Sri Lanka located on the Northwestern coast of Mannar Island. It is about 18 miles East of Dhanushkodi. The Adam's Bridge, a chain of sand shoals between Talaimannar and Danushkodi, has been the only land border between India and Sri Lanka, which is the smallest in the world, being just 50 yards in length on a sand dune. It is the terminus of a ferry service to India across the very shallow Palk Bay. The ferry service was part of the Indo-Lanka Railway service, where passengers were ferried between Talaimannar and Dhanushkodi on Rameswaram island in India. This is the place from where Sri Lankan refugees from the Northern provinces sailed through boat in order to migrate to India during the civil war of 1983.

12 Categories of Refugees in India have been extensively discussed in Chapter 2.
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tried to look for jobs but did not succeed in getting one that suited his desire and qualification. So, he started working in a small firm with a very small salary and kept on struggling with his family. Eventually, in 1993, he got a higher ranking position in a Chennai-based NGO where he is currently employed. Apart from his own success, his daughters also found their own success. The eldest received a Doctorate in Biology and is settled abroad with her own family, the middle is a software engineer who is also settled abroad, and the youngest has just completed her master's degree.

Despite his family's success, Mr. Anthony regrets his decision to leave his home and migrate to India. As Lewin states "...home as personal status indicator can be an important factor underlying how people from distinctive class societies assign meaning to the home" (2005: 145). Similarly, Mr. Anthony considers Mannar as a status indicator where he enjoyed a completely different status. He claimed himself belonging to a 'privileged rank' in the town's social life as has been interpreted by Pfaffenberger while analyzing the Sudra caste in his book on the Tamil culture (1982: 10). Being a part of the privileged rank-holders, Mr. Anthony had the power to dominate the weaker sections in his town. Nevertheless, after his migration to India, he lost his 'privileged rank' as India is a new country for him with new people where hardly anyone knows him. Thus, he experienced loss in social status, much like Mr. Kalam in Colombo. The hierarchy in society that Mr. Anthony enjoyed in Mannar is reflected in his statement:

“In Mannar, I belonged to an affluent family and also enjoyed a higher social status. I was also among the few who were highly educated at that time there and it helped me to earn a respectable and distinctive identity for my own. In the 1980s, I was the only one to drive a foreign car in the whole town

13 The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was an accord signed in Colombo on July 29, 1987, between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene. The accord was expected to resolve the ongoing Sri Lankan civil war. Under the terms of the agreement, Colombo agreed to a devolution of power to the provinces, the Sri Lankan troops were to be withdrawn to their barracks in the North and the Tamil rebels were to surrender their arms. Importantly however, the LTTE had not been made party to the talks and initially agreed to surrender their arms to the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) only reluctantly. Within a few months however, this flared into an active confrontation. The LTTE declared their intent to continue the armed struggle for an independent Tamil Eelam and refused to disarm. The IPKF found itself engaged in a bloody police action against the LTTE. Further complicating the return to peace was a burgeoning Sinhalese insurgency in the South.
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area. But we have to sell it for 23,000 SLR (the original price being 1 Lakh SLR) as we migrated. We also sold all our properties at a very cheaper rate. Now, we have nothing of that stature”.

In Mannar, he was counted among the highly educated and respected figure who was the sole owner of a foreign car. When he decided to migrate to India, all his belongings were sold in order to pay for a new start in India. They had to sell all their possessions at a very cheaper price as they lacked the time and scope to wait for the right buyer. They sold everything at whatever price they were offered as at that moment leaving Mannar was the primary task for them. Therefore, they arrived in India empty-handed and stayed in refugee camps with others and thereafter shifted to a rented home. In this regard, Anthias’ concept of, ‘translocational positionality’ which “addresses issues of identity in terms of locations which are not fixed but are context, meaning and time related and which therefore involve shifts and contradictions” is very much applicable as Mr. Anthony’s identity and status have changed due to the shifting of locations from Mannar to Tamil Nadu (Anthias 2008: 5). Thus, Mr. Anthony has a feeling of exclusion in his new locale which has activated the notion of belonging to his former home. He believes if he had stayed in his hometown, he would have become the collector of the town. To him, his home can only provide him with that ‘identity’ and 'status'. After looking at his brothers' children doing well in their lives, his regret increases a lot more. He keeps on thinking “Why did I come to India?”. In Mannar, too, his daughters could have prospered in their lives and he could have retained his status and identity.

Mr. Anthony has also experienced sharply contrasting living conditions in both countries. During his childhood and youth, he lived under more traditional conditions, characterized by joint families and a hierarchical family structure. After he went to India, this structure totally changed and he became separated and lived only with his daughters and wife. To add, his eating habits and speaking style have also changed while in India. He can feel the presence of a social boundary between him and his former place as things have changed within him too. He, no longer, relates himself with his past habits and for the last 28 years, he has been trying to get habituated to the Indian culture, their ways of living and habits, which has diminished his urge to return to his home in Mannar:

“I do not want to return. I do not have any connection to Sri Lanka now. Also, after staying here for so long, I just cannot go back and start a new life again at this age, things have changed there too... But
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my wife wants to return. She misses her past days in Mannar along with the relatives those are still there. She does not consider our house here to be her home. She believes her home to be in Mannar only...”.

Despite repenting his decision to migrate, he is reluctant to return to Mannar and re-integrate at this point in time. There are several reasons influencing his decision to return, most important being the duration of his stay in India. He has already been in India for almost 30 years and has habituated to the Indian lifestyle which is a lot different from that of Sri Lanka. Having acquired a new lifestyle in the city, from rural-to-urban, Mr. Anthony has become 'urbanized' and for him return means to relearn the old or traditional way of life that he used to lead in his rural hometown. Additionally, he has his relatives, too, in his present locale. All these years have also given him a lot of friends and colleagues in India with whom he has assimilated quite easily. He has earned for himself a new position in Indian society. At this point of time if he returns, he will again have to start from scratch. Everything has been sold out in Mannar so he has to either buy or rent a new house and look for ways of survival. Only a small plot of land is left but a legal case is going on so it is of no use to him. Moreover, none of his relatives or friends are there and Mannar has become a new place to reside which will cause acute problems of reintegration and social adjustment, ranging from joblessness to boredom and frustration. He also tends to encounter problems of adaptation with his new surroundings and new neighbors once he returns to his former place.

In contrast, his wife wants to return to her motherland. Though she has also been living in India for same number of years as her husband, she longs to return for her relatives who are still there. She misses her home as well as her own people which signifies the importance of social relationship. In addition, she misses her former days in Mannar. This suggests that Mrs. Anthony gives importance to her former home which acts as a 'storage and display of valued belongings, a place for self-expression, locus of activity, privacy and control, familial linkage and emotional freedom’ as Watkins and Hosier have conceptualized about the construction of home in their article (2005: 199). Mrs. Anthony has developed a geographic affinity towards her former home particularly for its older established neighborhood. To her, home is not only about feeling safe and comfortable but also the people that stay around with whom one feels comfortable and at ease. Home in this case as well, according to Mallett, symbolizes 'the birth family dwelling and the birth family or family of origin (2004: 74)’. It is the
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dwelling where Mrs. Anthony has spent most of her days with her own beloved family and people thus symbolizing the family relationships and life courses enacted within those spaces. She does not feel 'at home' in her present locale as revealed by her husband. Here, I argue, she spiritually attaches herself to her former home where she wants to breathe her last. She relates herself with the soil of her former home in Mannar, as Daniel (1984) has found that Tamils consider their relation with the soil to be the most significant of all.

Thus, another contrasting conceptualization of home has been presented from the same family between husband and wife. On the one hand the husband, with the aim of leading a better life wants to remain in Chennai whereas he is well-settled. Like his past days, he still has the same feeling for his Ur in Mannar, however, the uncertainty in life, as already discussed, is preventing him from risking his life once again. On the other hand, the wife spiritually and socially attached to her home in Mannar wants to return to her own home and her own people. She is well aware of the difficulties that they would have to face if they returned, but still she wants to go back in order to feel 'at home'.

Therefore, place of origin is home for the wife whereas the present locale which offers better opportunities, is home to the husband.

Ur as a source of income: regaining lost status

Peter De Silva\textsuperscript{14}, a Christian-Tamil (43-yr-old) resident at the Gobindpur welfare center in Jaffna, spoke about his attachment to his Ur in Myliddi, its fertile soil, its sweet water and the whole landscape. For him, the landscape, which he knows and appreciates, represents home. It means a place where:

“I know people who are around and share the same dialect and the culture… This is how I feel to be attached to my home”.

Peter is not allowed to return to his Ur even after almost three decades because of several reasons. He is eagerly waiting to return to his own place as he conceptualize it to be the source of income. Also, because ‘factors like home ownership, length of residence, stages in life-cycle and social relationships’, as argued by Mesch and Manor, have ingrained in him an immense sense of attachment to his Ur

\textsuperscript{14} Mr. Peter De Silva was interviewed on February 16, 2013 in Jaffna. He is the President of 9 such welfare centers in the Jaffna District.
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(1998: 505). Therefore, this story depicts his attachment to place as has been rightly put by Hidalgo and Hernandez in their study on 'Place attachment: Conceptual and Empirical Questions', as 'a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place' (2001: 274).

In addition, I got the opportunity to listen to the stories of a few other IDPs housed in the same welfare center (around 10 of them including both male and female, aged between 35 and 50 years old with whom I conducted a focused group discussion). They, too, are emotionally connected to their home and consider their Ur to be amongst the first pieces of information, as having been pointed out by Thiranagama, that they think of introducing themselves to an outsider in terms of their homeland origin, which would reveal their status, character, culture and identity (Thiranagama 2011: 18).

At this point in time, Mr. De Silva is not even sure if his home is still there or if it has been destroyed by the war. Yet, they are ready to take the challenge of returning and starting from scratch. This proves their determination and also their faith in their land. The government has offered them relocation to another area with the same landscape but they refused as they do not want to get to a new place that will not be their own and someday they will be again asked to move. So they want to return to their own home, their own land.

“We don't know precisely what the land is being used for…” he stated in a curious voice. “We are told by the local government officer that the land is being used for a public purpose by the military”. From social media, “we have come to know the existence of the 'Thalsewana Holiday Resort' within the region which is functioning under the Security Forces Headquarters. ...we have filed petition to the Sri Lankan High court in order to return to our homes but till now have not got any response”.

Peter's home falls under the HSZ area which has not yet been opened for the original residents due to several political and economic reasons. However, to a report submitted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)\textsuperscript{15}, the government states that the military's acquisition of the HSZ region, encompassing 6,381 acres, or 25 square kilometers of land, is being used for public purposes. Also, the AAAS analysis confirmed the existence of "Thalsewana Holiday Resort" (formerly

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the Harbour View Hotel) within the military zone which is "functioning under the Security Forces Headquarters." Thus, the government is fooling around by using the name of HSZ to keep the IDPs away from their places of origin. Though the resort ensures local tourists, from other districts, visiting the area quite often, the IDPs cannot gain access into the area to check on their former homes.

Being afraid of losing their homes, IDPs have filed petition to the Sri Lankan court in order to get back the land, but have not yet received any reply. At the time of displacement in the 1990s, they were told that their land would be given back with the end of the war, but it has already been more than four years that the war has ended, still there is no sign of getting back the land. Therefore, I argue, as did by Thiranagama that, “For Tamils, 'home', ..., was not always synonymous with a Tamil homeland...” (2009: 138). Home is the place of origin where one was born and nurtured. This is true for IDPs like Peter who are staying in their homeland but still are eagerly waiting to return to their original places.

Besides, he emphasized on the economical dimension also:

“We are confident enough, if we return, within a year we will regain our old lives that we enjoyed 30 years back. Also, we will help the government to help the poor with our money. That is the kind of (fertile) land we own. We do not feel hungry at our place. If you sow a seed, within 3 days it will convert into a tree and you start enjoying its benefits. And our water was like a sugar cane juice, it was that much sweet. From the sea, we had so many different kinds of tasty fishes”.

Peter and his fellow neighbors romanticized on the sense of attachment they have to the fertile soil and sweet water, and the degree to which their land meets their needs. The land in Myliddi has been referred by them as 'Uri land' meaning 'diamond land'. 'The most common profession in our area was farming of 'thodi or Palmyra', fish mongos etc...". They identify their lands as being their sole source of income and are confident enough that within a year of their return they would be successful in regaining their lost lives that they enjoyed 30 years back. They believe that their lands are so fertile that within three days of sowing seeds they can start their earnings. They would help the government to help the destitute with their money. This expectation represented something that he was confident about. It is only because of these expectations that, people in the camp, are willing to return to their Ur. Their expectations of leading a good life are totally dependent on their own place. Their place is perceived as meaningful because it offers various kinds of opportunities to earn a livelihood by
performing certain activities like farming or fishing, to experience something desirable and also for personal development, which is similar to what Gustafson observed while conducting his own research on the meaning of place in Sweden (2001a: 11). Their land provides them with different kinds of tasty fishes and vegetables which are enough for their daily diets. They need not have to spend money on food at their homes. Thus return will help them to prosper economically as well as. Attachment to his Ur, thus, concerns “the relationship between self and environment” which is based on the interviewees knowledge of the place (Gustafson 2001a: 11) that is so evident here.

“Life is rather difficult here...we are forced to work as masons or daily-wage laborers...!” said Peter.

Presently, Peter is involved in the same struggle with the same kind of jobs of either masonry or daily-wage laborers with his neighbors in which he is highly unskilled. Common acts performed at the welfare centers like sharing the same occupation, is a good example of experiencing commonality. Also, their shared aspirations to have a better future are another way of expressing commonality.

Peter’s narrative showed his feeling of 'collective identity' with his fellow neighbors at the welfare center where he mostly used the term 'we' instead of 'I'. He always represented a group of persons who always feel a sense of belonging to their former homes and wanted to return to regain their old lives and social status. Due to this loss in social status, Peter often experienced harassment and discrimination from the locals. “We are recognized as mukam pille by the locals”, said Peter angrily, but with a grief. Appadurai, has explicitly discussed about the problem of losing social status as a symptom of ‘deprivation and desperation. It is lack of security and dignity. It is exposure to risk, high costs and for thin comforts. It is inequality materialized’ (2004: 64). The locals, according to Peter, look upon the camp people as lower caste or 'untouchables' (Pfaffenberger 1981: 1149) even if they used to share the same background of either fishermen or farmer. Their cultures are considered as bad and it is not advisable to the local children to play with the camp children. They fear that playing with the camp people will also make their children ill-cultured. Thus, the camp people see themselves as a group isolated from other locals who are staying either at rented places or at their own houses. In this context,
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I argue that the local-camp people relationship are very much similar to that of the Vellalars\(^{16}\) and the untouchables. Vellalars, being landholders or farmers, dominate the peninsula's land, economy, political affairs, educational opportunities, foreign exchange remittances and jobs; while the lower caste people are hired to work under their command (Pfaffenberger 1981: 1150). In addition, the locals speculate that the camp people resent them because of their 'well-off status' as Thiranagama observed in case of the locals and the ahathis (refugees) in Puttalam but in the opposite way (2011: 149). Therefore the existence of an ethnic boundary between this two groups comes to the forefront. These boundaries, as according to Barth (1998: 15), are mostly the social ones that 'defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses'. In addition, Barth explains that, 'if a group maintains its identity when members interact with others, this entails criteria for determining membership and ways of signaling membership and exclusion. Ethnic groups are not merely or necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories; but by the different ways in which they are maintained, not only by a once-and-for-all recruitment, but by continual expression and validation...' (Barth 1998: 15).

Peter complained of continual discrimination in the administrative and bureaucratic structures in their area. Thus, identity plays an important role in their life. Their new identity of 'mukam pille', which can be compared to the status of the untouchables, makes them devoid of many opportunities from their surroundings. Like, when they go to the market to sell their vegetables or fishes, locals avoid buying them because they are bad-cultured people. They are always engaged in fighting and drinking. Also, while filing petitions to the local governments in order to get back their lands, Peter, on many occasions, faced discrimination due to being a camp person. Nobody is ready to listen to his pain and sufferings. This specially made him aware of his loss of social status and identity from being an ordinary local to now being from the camp. Therefore, losing his social status made him to feel more attached to his home in Myliddi which can only help him to regain his lost self-esteem.

\(^{16}\) By the 20\(^{th}\) century, the Vellalars emerged numerically as the caste with an absolute majority in the Jaffna peninsula. None of the other castes with any significant numbers was in a position to challenge this numerical preponderance. They control a large share of the resources in land and other economic activity in the Northern province. Under British rule, they have avidly patronised English education and moved into the clerical, professional and executive positions in the bureaucracy. After independence they have added another prop to their power through electoral politics and a share in political office (see Arasaratnam 1981; Pfaffenberger 1981).
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Nevertheless, they aspire to have a good life in their future which is possible only after returning to their homes. Here, Hage’s argument, “…home has to be a space open for opportunities… so that one can perceive opportunities of ‘a better life’: to develop certain capacities…personal growth… the availability of opportunities for ‘advancement’” (1997: 103) fits well with the aspirations of the IDPs, like Peter, in the welfare centers. Aspirations form parts of wider ethical and metaphysical ideas which derive from larger cultural norms. They are always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life. And aspirations about the good life, about health and happiness, exist in all societies though they might vary from people to people.

Besides, Peter also gives salience to having space around him, and that is an important reason why he wants to return. The use of space connects him to a traditional way of using it, but often gets transformed into a leisure activity and symbol of lifestyle. He remembers his own good childhood at his home and wants to give his children a similar one, but “Alas..!”, murmured Peter as he knew that it is not possible.

“We owned a big one-storied house with a huge lawn in front. The lawn was so big that two volleyball grounds could be set up together... Hundreds of coconut and Palmyra trees were there in front of our house... But now 146 families live in 70 perch\(^1\) of land... so you can well imagine how small is our habitable place now”.

His Ur forms the basis of his identity. In his native place, individuals claim to own huge acres of land where they own big house along with enough farming land. Together with his neighbors, the landscapes have been shaped through their farming activities and by their “neighborly care, assistance and control” as discussed by De Sales in her article (2011: 4). Here, Peter’s social ties to his neighbors and friends living in the neighborhood are critical to the understanding of his attachment to home. This development of attachment towards his home is also the result of the relationships with other people in his neighborhood. As according to Low and Altman (1992), places are the circumstances where interpersonal relationship takes place and people gets attached to those social relationships. Supporting this argument, Mesch and Manor have shown that 'local social involvement, in particular with friends and kin, is the most consistent and significant source of attachment to place' (1998: 507).

\(^1\) Perch=0.00625 acres.
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The links to his homeland exist in the appreciation of the surroundings, in the experiences of shaping the natural environment, in the legal entitlements to land, in the imaginations of being shaped by the local topography and by the natural set-up as well as by the many experiences of performing commonality and mutuality through local practices. All these have become past tense as it has already been more than three decades that he has been away from his home and been displaced. The suffering caused by the displacement has developed the sense of attachment even stronger. In this scenario, the agony of losing his homeland becomes all the more unbearable as displacement not only meant abandoning possessions and the relationships, but also losing “dense social ties, solidarity and support” (Mesch and Manor 1998: 507). Ur, to him, has become “an object of longing (inherent in 'be-longing')” (ibid.: 507).

In addition, according to Peter and his fellow neighbors, their camp-life has become even worse in the last four years with the end of the war. The camps are very densely populated thus creating poor sanitary conditions. The extreme overcrowding, together with lack of access to clean water, sufficient food and health care services, had a considerable impact on their health. They also complained about the very little scope of education for camp children, the prevalence of harmful diseases due to the presence of different kinds of insects, drunkenness and lack of privacy for young girls. Despite the deployment of the military to provide protection, the IDPs, as jointly stated, commonly experience violence and abuse at the hands of the military forces who are supposed to protect them.

To add to their difficulties, the government and the NGOs have ceased to provide, since 2011, dry food rations and other basic supports: “Government has asked the Government Agents of our regions not to provide any kind of help to us”, uttered one of the displaced in total dismay. “We cannot live a decent life in the camps, cannot bring up our little children in a good way. With the transformation in status, our culture has also changed. All have become selfish”, said Peter in a very depressed tone. In addition to these, “With the opening of the A9 road, consumption of alcohols, drugs have increased. Mostly, young generations, in between the age of 15-25 are addicted towards these habits. Main reason is that they want to lead a jolly and entertaining life”. Because of the poverty, unemployment and lack of proper guidance, young boys and girls are taking the wrong path. “Do they have any other choice?” angrily shouted the whole group. Similar to Rajesh's opinion about the opening of the A9 road, they also showed the negative impacts that, once quiet and peaceful, Jaffna has been witnessing at present.
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“Most of the parents work outside leaving behind their daughters in the camps. This gives room to outsiders to come and spend time with the young ones which many a times leads to unwanted pregnancy, kidnappings. Also, young unmarried couples within the camps, wishing to have fun, leads to unwanted pregnancy. We can do nothing”, said Peter in a shaking voice. Peter’s statement proved to be correct when I visited a couple of welfare centers in Jaffna, and often came across young girls aged between 14-17 years roaming with their kids. It took me by great surprise to see these girls, instead of going to schools, are raising up their children. Among them, most are unmarried which is considered to be an uncultured practice in Jaffna. Adults also expressed their concern about these uncultured practices by their children. They further added that the basic relationships that used to hold families and villages together have been totally lost in the post-war days.

Children are being left alone in the camps by their parents as both the parents are going to work outside with the aim to earn some extra money in order to lead a decent life. This negligence was described, by the parents, in material, social and emotional terms. Material neglect occurs due to parents’ poverty and a number of interviewees said that children do not benefit from the parental care and guidance they would have received prior to displacement. The quality of the education children receive at schools has gone down and many are unable to pay the fees to send their children to school. Some even talked about a decrease in respect for traditional practices and behavior, and difficulty in finding ways to pass their culture onto the youth. This is mostly because, as shown by Pfaffenberger (1981: 1147) in his essay on the culture of Tamil separatism, the Ceylon Tamils, particularly those from Jaffna, consider themselves to be a unique people, differing in their customs and their heritage from the other group of Tamils. Therefore, they believe that it is their responsibility to preserve and protect their ancient culture and traditions. On the other hand, young generations are said to suffer from idleness and lack of constructive activity, related to both a lack of access to the education system, and a lack of space for children and youths to engage in leisure activities, such as sports and traditional dance. Idleness is perceived to contribute to sexual promiscuity, criminal behavior and alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse is believed to have serious consequences, including promiscuity and violence (e.g. fighting, domestic violence, sexual abuse and assault). Interviewees complained that young people are sexually promiscuous due to factors such as population congestion, poverty and parental neglect. This, in turn, has health consequences in terms of sexually transmitted infections, and unwanted pregnancies.
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Nevertheless, it is only because of the expectation of leading a good life, Peter and his fellow neighbors, are willing to return to their Ur. Their expectations can only be fulfilled after returning to their own place, as they believe home is made up of a nice environment and a good and respected life. In this context, their place is perceived as being meaningful because it offers a respected life with various kinds of opportunities to earn livelihood by performing certain activities like farming and fishing, experiencing something desirable and also opportunities for personal development. Attachment to his place thus concerns “the relationship between self and environment”, as stated by Gustafson, which is based on the interviewee’s knowledge of the place that is so evident here (Gustafson 2001a: 11).

Thus his decision to return to his Ur is influenced by the socio-economic needs and aspirations to the good life.

The idea of home changed with time: Shaliny’s story

“The concept of 'home' kept on changing with time. There was a time when I actually dreamt to have my own home, my own family. At a certain age I am going to get married have children, was all that I dreamt of. This was the time when I was a growing girl. At that point of time, I had a definite idea of the notion of home by looking at my parents and their livelihoods. As I grew up, while the war was going on, I did not have much fascination for material things but still dreamt of having a house with a piece of land all by my own. During my childhood, I did not have the luxury to have expensive materials all around, but did have the basic furniture and other necessities. With the passage of time, my idea of home changed to 'safety' and 'security'. Experiencing displacements, I started believing that home cannot be in one place. 'Home', to me, has to be safe, even without permanent structures and which makes me feel comfortable, happy and content and be by myself. And definitely a place where nothing can be abused, ill treated or misused...”.

When she was young, Shaliny\(^\text{18}\), a Tamil-Hindu woman, dreamt of having a home of her own with her own family which would have been a definite structure including specific kind of furniture and

\(^{18}\) Shaliny, in her early 30s, was interviewed in Jaffna fort on February 9, 2013. She is a Women Activist as well as a researcher who spent most of her teenage days alone being out of Jaffna.
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decorations. As she grew up amidst the protracted civil war and experienced violence and displacement, the idea of a material home slowly evaporated. As Ahmed (1999) asserts that home is not necessarily a singular place, Shaliny started believing that home could be in several places where she is totally safe and sound and could be thoroughly at ease and all by herself. In this context, Kimberly Dovey’s statement about home is most appropriate, she states that “home is a place of security within an insecure world...” (1985: 10). Here, Tucker's comment on home being a place where one feels at ease and is able to express and fulfill his or her unique self should also be taken into account to explain Shaliny’s concept of home (1994: 184). She does not believe in permanent structures so as to call a place home. In order to conduct the interview, we chose to sit under the shed of a tree in the Jaffna fort which was looked upon as home by Shaliny, because it is safe and secured. The idea of a concrete home, therefore, does not exist in her mind now. This resembles to Duyvendak arguments about home, which according to him, does not necessarily need to be “a material and geographical place, {since} feelings of home can also be attached to a virtual place” (2011: 36). Also, being a woman activist, Shaliny conceptualizes home as a place where none should be abused or ill-treated.

“I have spent most of my childhood and my teen days looking and experiencing the war. Since my childhood, I stayed in a rented house in Jaffna so did not have the idea of a fixed place. But due to the war, we kept on shifting from house to house. I was displaced more than five times within the Jaffna town area and also to other districts. In late 1989, I, along with my family, was first displaced but that was within Jaffna... At night-times, we had to sleep in the temples with other hundreds of people from my neighborhood. At that point in time, I even considered that temple to be my home. The reason for sleeping in the temple was mainly because of security and safety. Staying in certain areas in the town was not considered to be safe. There were times when it was heavily bombing all around, then we used to stay back at the temples. When situation would calm down, certain members from the family would go to their homes to fetch clothes, food and other necessities. Being the youngest in the family, I was always taken care of. My family did not share too much responsibilities with me. It was mostly my elder siblings who would fetch clothes, food from our home... During the time of temporary displacement within the town, no matter for how long it would be, I, being a teenager, always want to go back to my own home, to my own bed. But in 1995, when the mass exodus took place, all of us knew that we are not going to return to our homes anymore”.

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Shaliny, unlike other kids in different parts of the world, grew up at war times. Her family was first displaced from their hometown in Jaffna in 1989, when she was very young. They took shelter in temples and after a couple of days, they returned. While they were being displaced, Shaliny always aspired to return to her own home, her own bed, as she had been familiar with those places since her birth. At this age Ur to Shaliny, is the language of expectation, love and sentiment as stated by Thiranagama (2011: 151). However, the 1995 mass exodus of Tamils initiated by the LTTE, left no scope for return.

They moved from Jaffna to Chavakachheri then to Vanni, Vavuniya and finally reached Trincomalee. In each of these places they stayed for a short while before continuing their journey. In Vavuniya, conditions worsened when they were housed in refugee camps with thousands of others. Her father was a well-known person who stayed in Trincomalee at the time of displacement. Eventually, with the help of his strong networks, he managed to take out his family from the camp and moved to Trincomalee. Due to professional reasons, her mother and sisters returned to Jaffna after a few months but Shaliny continued to stay with her father.

“Since late 1990s, I am on a continuous move, sometimes for my studies, sometimes for my job. I have spent a few years in Delhi and in different parts of the world too. I have developed friendships with people from different countries like India, Bangladesh, Netherlands and many more. I try to visit them at least once a year as I feel at ease at their places. I consider these places to be my home. Finally, I returned to Sri Lanka in 2008 and stayed in Colombo until 2011 and then returned to Jaffna”.

Nowicka argued, “Social theorists… have made an attempt to break with the idea that home must be a fixed location” (2007: 70). Likewise, Shaliny, being a 'mobile person', believes home to be at several places. In the late 90s, Shaliny shifted to Colombo with her job. In 2002, she went to Delhi University in India to complete her masters degree. She returned in 2008 and stayed in Colombo until 2011. Meanwhile, she has also been to different parts of the world and has established several homes in many of these places. This fact has been rightly pointed out by several authors who believe that 'mobile people' often have the feeling of home which is attached to several places at the same time (Anderson

19 “Mobile people are rootless, have no bond to any particular place and their identity is apparently de-territorialized” (Ferguson and Gupta 1997: 39).
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2006; Gustafson 2001b; Hannerz 1996). The homes, Shaliny referred to, belong to her friends’ where she feels at ease. Colombo is also one amongst her several homes where she has spent a sufficient amount of time and become familiar with the city. Her self-reliance does not demand to have ‘a permanent’ home on her own so she tries to make home the places she visits. Her notion of home is built upon Massey's notion of place which is, “formed out of numerous social relationships stretched over space” (2010: 69). As Nowicka finds from her own interviews, conducted with mobile professionals that “individuals adapt to new situations and new places very quickly…” (2007: 70) which is also the case with Shaliny as she also adapts easily to her friend’s places, giving her the feeling of home. Shaliny, like other mobile people, as pointed out by Ferguson and Gupta, does not feel to have bond to any particular place and, also, her identity keeps on changing due to her frequent movement to different countries (1997: 39). Shaliny spends quite a large amount of time away from home. Therefore, Shaliny's 'home' neither has the power to bind her with the past or the present, nor does it provide any emotional relationship and identity. Such homes can be referred to as ‘non-places’ which are created for the mobile people as they live in the 'absolute present' and their past, present and future do not get mixed up (Heller 1995: 2).

Finally, in late 2011, Shaliny decided to move to Jaffna to spend quality time with her elderly parents who now require somebody to look after them. In this context I argue, as did Daniel, that Shaliny returned to her Ur in order to know her identity (Daniel 1984: 62). In addition, her attachment with her parents also brought her back to her past Ur portraying the association between family and home as illustrated by Mallet (2004: 73).

“Though I am from Jaffna, after coming back, I could not relate myself to the town anymore. I could not relate myself to the way the society functions, its cultural traditions”.

With the aim of reliving her past days, she returned to Jaffna but to her surprise everything has changed from the society to the culture. Truly speaking, home is both a way of expressing individual identity and a way of belonging to a culture (Altman and Gauvian: 1981). Since her return, Shaliny has neither been able to belong to her known culture nor relate herself with the changed environment in Jaffna. Her known Ur has changed with time. She felt alienated in her homeland which is similar to the feeling of alienation amongst the diaspora Tamils, when they traveled to Jaffna after 15-20 years, as has been
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observed by Gerharz (2010: 157). Her alienation is blamed on the transformation of the society and culture.

It does not bother her much as she has always been moving due to her studies and her job. She has the capability to adapt herself with any kind of environment. This has led her to feel no kind of attachment with any material things. She is used to accepting life as it comes without relying on any permanent structures.

The conditions under which she left her home, her journey beyond and away from home and her destination are all regarded as the determinants for the changing meaning of home.

Ur as a prison: Padmini’s accounts

“Though my home is in Jaffna, but I do not have that much belonging to my own home. In the past days, I considered my home to be a prison because I cannot do this, I cannot do that and so on...At present I am enjoying most of it as no old relations are there. I am living alone with my two sons, have so many friends around...To me, any place could become my home if I feel happy and free”.

As has been reviewed by Mallett, “... for a significant percentage of women, children and young people who are subject to violence and sexual abuse in the home environment, home for these people is a site of fear and isolation, a prison, rather than a place of absolute freedom and ontological security” (2004: 72). Similarly, during her childhood days Padmini, a 42-year-old Tamil-Hindu feminist, presently living in Jaffna with her two sons, identified her home as a prison because the memories from her childhood were not entirely positive. Local traditions and embedded social practices limited her activities, especially as a girl, and there were few leisure activities which she could enjoy. In the early 1990s, when she was in her 20s, she left her home in Jaffna as the LTTE were asking for her recruitment. She moved to Colombo, managed to acquire a job and started living there alone. There,

20 Padmini is a free lancer and is an active member in the group fighting against Gender Based Violence in Jaffna. She is considered as a feminist by her fellow colleagues as she advocated the rights and equality of women in the Northern part of the country with special emphasis on Jaffna. She represented Sri Lanka’s Northern women in several discussions and meetings held by the UN and other national and international agencies. She attended one such meeting organised by UN (in Nepal) held in February-March 2013 (during my stay) where she represented the Northern women. She was interviewed on February 26, 2013 at her home in Jaffna.
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she met a man, her Muslim landlord’s son. They fell in love and she married him against her family's wishes. Soon after they started a new life. Padmini made her husband's house her own home. However, their marriage did not work out and Padmini’s home turned into a prison. Since 2003 she has been separated from her husband, leading the life of a single mother in Jaffna with her two sons.

“... from the very first day I faced trouble. My husband was a very insecure person, always doubted my character. He always suspected me of having affairs with my colleagues and even believed that I was sleeping with them. Due to this, I left my job. My sisters-in-law, also, were not at all understanding and friendly. They had entered my name in the police station as I am a Tamil from the North. The police arrested me, I was in police station for nine days and imprisoned for three days. You will not believe that I was pregnant during that time and my husband did not bother about it. From this time I faced real discrimination being a Tamil. After I got out of the prison, I had to abort my first child due to unwanted circumstances. In a way, my marriage ruined my life”.

Instead of having a fairytale marriage as she dreamt of, her marriage turned out to be a nightmare. Padmini experienced all kinds of violence and sexual abuses from her husband and in-laws within the supposed safe haven of the domestic home. Her new home turned out to be 'a site of oppression, tyranny and patriarchal domination of women' as identified by the second-wave feminist writers of the 1970s and 80s, and as discussed by Mallett in her article on home (2004: 75). Thus Padmini became 'homeless-at-home' as has been described by Wardhaugh while referring to the homeless women in her research project (1999: 92). Wardhaugh identified the misery of homelessness with a sense of alienation and exclusion. Despite having a well-earned income, Padmini had to quit her job due to her husband’s continuous mistrust of her character. She was consigned to a life of reproductive and domestic labor in which she lacked authority and space at home. Furthermore, being a Tamil from Jaffna, she had to face serious consequences. She was imprisoned by her sisters-in-law at the time of her first pregnancy and had to abort the child after her release because of some personal and familial issues. Afterwards, she began to face real hardships in the city from the armed forces due to her ethnic identity. They had a 'baseless misconception' about the Northern Tamils, whom they judged to be associates of the LTTE as has been found by Sidhартан while trying to find out the reason for choosing predominantly Tamil areas by the Jaffna Tamil migrants in Colombo (2003: 311). Therefore, ethnic
boundaries developed among Padmini and the armed forces ‘through everyday interaction’ as has been emphasized by Wimmer while analyzing the concept of ‘ethnic boundary making’ (2008: 1027).

Padmini regrets her decision of marriage as she said: “I became homeless since I got married as it was not really a home. A home, I think, comprises of caring and beloved family members, a good atmosphere and where everything is done together...”.

Home, according to Padmini, is a familiar space where particular activities and relationships are lived. It offers ‘complete familiarity and comfort’ as has been portrayed by Taylor in his article (2013: 397). Padmini believes home is made up of loving and caring family members who try to engage in almost everything- giving the feeling of togetherness. Similar to the suggestions made by traditionalists, Padmini also assumes that the strong link between family and home makes the two notion synonymous (Crow 1989; Bernardes 1987; Oakley 1974).

However, since she got married, she started feeling homeless. She was considered an unimportant person in the whole family. Everybody ignored her existence. No one was there to care or look after her. This feeling of homelessness aroused within Padmini emotions of despair, isolation, hopelessness and grief. Because of this, many times she thought of fleeing but concerns for her little son's future compelled her to stay and tolerate all sorts of violence and abuses. After some years, her younger son was born and her situation started deteriorating as her husband increased all kinds of violent acts. Eventually, in 2003, Padmini decided to leave him and return to Jaffna. Her family respected her decision to return and they started staying together.

But these days of togetherness did not last long for Padmini. As the war started again with the end of the Ceasefire Agreement, her family members moved to Australia and settled there, while her brother and sister went to Singapore. They asked Padmini to join them but she refused: “... after returning from my husband’s house, I felt that somewhere deep in my heart, Jaffna, being my motherland, is truly heaven. All those years when I was away from Jaffna, I faced so much trouble. And now returning to Jaffna, I have got my happy days back. I could feel the existence of my rights and ownership which is absent in any other parts of the country or the world... Jaffna is Life to me 'now'... Moreover, I am alone in Jaffna and can do whatever I feel like with the support of my new group of friends which I will not enjoy abroad”. This statement again proves what Daniel has said in the Tamil context, the
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relationship between a person and the soil of his or her home is one of the most important relationships (1984: 63). All the years that Padmini had been away from Jaffna, she could hardly feel 'at home'. She began to experience some of the benefits attached to home once she returned to Jaffna. At present, she is working as a feminist focusing on gender based violence in Jaffna. She lives with her two sons and is surrounded by new, broad-minded friends. Her family and most of her relatives have moved abroad which has resulted in complete freedom from social control. Now, she is free in all her movements and dressings. Though she has received several marriage proposals, she has consciously and consistently refused them to maintain her freedom. Presently, she considers Jaffna to be her home. It offers her freedom as has been rightly put by Darke (1994: 26): “The private realm of the home is typically understood as a space that offers freedom and control”.

Additionally, Padmini has the right and ownership of the place which will be absent if she travels elsewhere. Also, according to Jaffna culture as stated by Daniel, knowing someone's Ur reveals the person's character which is another reason behind Padmini's return to Jaffna. Belonging to an affluent family and having her home situated in one of the sophisticated areas in Jaffna, she is seen among the respected persons in the neighborhood. Therefore, home to her is also regaining of social status which she lost while in Colombo. At present, 10 years after her return, she has succeeded in earning enough respect for herself amongst the population in Jaffna. She is a well-known figure and is responsible for the well-being of the women in the town. Padmini is not ready to leave her position at any cost “It took me almost 10 years to get to this position which I am not ready to leave. I am not ready to leave my new and happy life. If I shift abroad, then I would not be able to enjoy all the freedom, respect and dignity that I am enjoying here. Also, there I have to adapt to that new culture which is difficult at this age”. She knows that she can lead a luxurious life with her family in Australia. But she is not prepared to leave her new life which is full of freedom, happiness and respect. Again, if she moves then she has to start from scratch, adapting to the new culture, which will not be possible for her at this phase of her life. In addition, she will also not get the respect and honor that she is entitled to in Jaffna. Moreover, she is afraid to lose her freedom which she has achieved after all these years. Shifting to Australia would mean becoming imprisoned, surrounded by restrictions like in her childhood days.

Padmini has refused to move and settle to any other country as hinted in her quote: “Many organizations ask me to move abroad in order to work for them but I refuse. I believe I know my Jaffna,
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*its culture and society and I need to stay here for the betterment of the women who are victims of gender based violence*”.

A staunch feminist, Padmini has refused all offers to move abroad as she wants to remain in Jaffna in order to help the women who are victims of gender based violence which includes cases of sexual abuse and domestic violence that have cropped up in huge numbers since the end of the war. She also claims to know the culture and society of Jaffna which will help her to improve the conditions of women in her place.

Padmini is a very daring woman who is least bothered what others say about her. Dressed in Western attire, she enjoys her life with her friends which include many men as well. This is reflected when she says, “... although I have changed myself a lot from the typical Jaffna culture, but still I know I am carrying my own culture at some part. In this phase of my life, I have also got so many different minded people with whom I feel at ease and get lots of support”.

In Tamil culture, a woman's appearance and dress are seen as symbolizing her community or nation. Tamil-Hindu girls and women traditionally wear ‘pottu’\(^{21}\) as a symbol of auspiciousness, a custom which has also been adopted by many Christian-Tamil women at present. Married women wear a red pottu, which connotes active sexuality, and which should be ritually removed if they are widowed (Thiruchandran 1998: 18). Therefore, according to Schrijvers, in Sri Lanka, where one's ethnic background has become a primary means of identification, the pottu has become an ethnic marker (1999: 312). Wearing a saree or salwar kameez along with the pottu is the traditional way of dressing in Tamil culture. However, in contrast to the traditional Tamil culture, Padmini, has stopped wearing the pottu since she has returned to Jaffna as an act of defiance. She wears only western dresses instead of ethnic clothing. It is not that she does not want to draw more attention to her 'Tamilness', but it is because she does not like to wear the traditional dresses anymore. She feels more comfortable in jeans and T-shirts rather than wearing saree or salwar kameez, which makes her life more easy-going and comfortable too.

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\(^{21}\) Pottu is an auspicious adornment worn on the forehead by Tamil girls and women (Thiruchandran 1998; Schrijvers 1999).
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In Tamil culture, the idea of 'womanhood' is complete dependency either on parents or on husbands. As Schrijvers puts it (1999: 316): "girls are expected to be obedient daughters to their parents, wives have to obey their husbands, and widows their brothers and adult sons. They should be chaste, caring and self-sacrificing, and this should be symbolically expressed in their body language and way of dress. They should move around in a chaste manner, keep their legs together, and cover their bodies decently. They should reserve their sexuality only for their legal husband, and bestow on him respect and procreation. If possible, they should display their husbands' affluence by 'the wearing of rich sarees, brilliant jewelry, flowers in flowing hair, silver anklets, a silver toe ring and a red pottu on the forehead'".

Thus, I argue that Padmini has not only changed her dressing style, but has also changed her attitude towards her culture and society. She is friends with people irrespective of their class, caste and gender. She has so many male friends who often visit her at her home which is very unusual for a single Tamil lady in Jaffna. Her neighbors doubt her character but she is not bothered about it. She enjoys her life which she has not been able to do during all her past days. She also feels blessed to have her ‘new and broad-minded friends’ around her with whom she feels at ease and also gets full support in things that she wants to do. Nonetheless, somewhere deep in her heart, she still feels like she carries Tamil culture with her. In spite of changing herself from a typical Tamil woman to a transformed lady, she has a strong attachment to her own local culture, and she is unable to overlook this culture.

Therefore, Padmini presented her home in Jaffna as a source of identity and an essential element in the maintenance of social status. However, this realization dawned upon her several years after she returned to Jaffna from her husband's house, in Colombo. Her husband's house, which she initially considered her very own home, gradually turned to be a prison. The feeling of being 'homeless-at-home', as termed by J. Wardhaugh, in Colombo made Padmini cry out for her own home in Jaffna (Wardhaugh 1999: 92). Nevertheless, her childhood home in Jaffna was also like a prison as she was under the control of her family. She discovered the joy of being independent and free only after returning to Jaffna, once her family left the town. She is the now the controller of her own life, and during this phase she is enjoying her life to the fullest. Her new friends help her feel happy and content, at home. In a way, home to her also means freedom and friends.
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**Ur as a strange place**

“I hate my country Sri Lanka. It is not my motherland. It has taken away everything from me. I have nothing in my memory about my home as I was only four years old when we came to India in 1990”.

Jacob is originally from Mullaitivu, which is situated on the North-Eastern coast of the Northern province. In 1990, he, along with his parents and two younger sisters boarded a truck from Mullaitivu and reached Mannar. From there they went to Talaimannar and got a boat and reached India after 15 days of travel. It was not at all an easy journey as fighting was taking place between the army and the LTTE. While in Sri Lanka, his father was a fisherman by profession but in India he was engaged in daily labor work, masonry and whatever other work he got. After reaching India, they were housed in Mandapam camp and after a couple of days were shifted to another camp in Thirunelveli. In 1992, they were again shifted on the basis of the districts they came from. In 1996, Jacob's father departed which forced his mother to face a set of choices and dilemmas about the future of her family. His mother tried to support her family with her sewing work and after Jacob grew up, he supported his mother too. At present, he is happy with his family, one of his sisters is married and the other one is a lecturer while he is also working at a Chennai-based NGO and simultaneously pursuing his higher studies.

Jacob is a Sri Lankan by birth, but he hates his country because it has taken away everything from him.

Though Jacob was born in Sri Lanka he considers himself Indian. He has adapted to the Indian environment and prefers to integrate. This is evident from his statements: “I do not want to return as I consider myself to be an Indian and am waiting to have Indian citizenship All of my Sri Lankan friends who are in India are of the same opinion. But my mother wants to return to her home in Mullaitivu. She wants to stay with her relatives. Our home is still there, but after so many years we do not know in what condition it is in. We surely have to renovate it in order to live in”.

Jacob does not even bother about his home anymore. He is reluctant to return to an unknown place which he was forced to leave at a very early age, while his mother dreams of rebuilding it and staying there again. She is still hoping to return and settle there when the right situation arrives, as her relatives

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22 Jacob is a Tamil Christian man whom I interviewed in Chennai in May 2013. He is 27 years old and works in an NGO based in Chennai. Also, he is doing his M. Phil at one of the renowned colleges in Chennai.
are asking her to return. However, Jacob believes home in Mullaitivu has become his past and cannot be his future. It reminds him of everything he has lost, his family, his belongings, the coconut and Palmyra trees and the nicely built house. Jacob, who left home at the age of four, represents a transition towards the new young generation that has no memories of home but knows the poignant stories of displacement, loss and pain. Without the memories of his former home, he is pulled towards the future and towards discovering home and belonging in radically different ways than his mother. Unlike his mother, who views her home as a real place, Jacob visualizes home as an “unknown past and a potentially deferred future” as has been observed by Thiranagama while talking about the young generation in her book 'In My Mother's House' (2011: 175).

To Jacob, return to Mullaitivu would mean a new uprooting as he would have to adapt to the new environment. In addition, staying away for more than two decades from Mullaitivu, they have no idea what condition their home is in now. They are quite sure they would have to spend a lump sum amount to rebuild their Ur, and Jacob is unsure from where they would get that money. Again, similar to Rajesh and Sihaan, he would also have to start from the very beginning, as he is totally unfamiliar with the place. So, what he has achieved in India these last 23 years would be lost and he would have to achieve it again which seems quite impossible at this stage in Sri Lanka. Therefore, he is not ready to risk his career and start all over again from scratch.

Yet, staying in India does not solve their problem when it comes to future prospects:

“... here we are refugees. Refugee life is temporary; one day we all have to go back. Even if we do not want to return from the core of our heart, but the government will compel us to return. Our future is at stake in India but it's even worse in Sri Lanka. So I plan to go to Sri Lanka, obtain my passport and then go abroad to do my PhD. But that is also not an easy task to get through the Indian immigration and the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission. The Sri Lankan people are always discriminating the Tamils. They do not consider us to be their people”.

The futures of Jacob and his fellow Sri Lankan friends are uncertain in India. While, India has hosted refugees from neighboring countries over the years, it has no law in place to define refugees. As a result, refugees have no legal status and are treated on an ad hoc basis. The refugees lack access to employment in the private as well government job sectors. The MNCs are afraid to hire them as they
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do not have a fixed place to stay, and government jobs are not offered to them because they are not
Indian citizens. Some small private companies do hire them but if any problems occur then they are the
first to get fired. Jacob aspires to do higher studies 'abroad' with the aim of establishing himself in his
future so that he could support his family. However, it is not possible to fulfill his dream of going
abroad if he stays in India. So, in order to travel abroad, he needs a passport which is not possible to
acquire from India as he is a refugee. So he has planned to go to Sri Lanka first, get his passport and
then travel abroad to accomplish his dreams. Nevertheless, acquiring a passport from the Sri Lankan
Authority is not an easy task either. He believes, being a Tamil, he would have to face discrimination
from the concerned authority as Tamils are not considered Sri Lankan citizens, even five years after the
end of the war.

5.2 Concluding remarks

This chapter deals with the diverse conceptualization of home among different groups of displaced
persons staying either in Sri Lanka or in South India. The analysis of my collected data shows that the
concept of home can be defined broadly in two ways: firstly, it is defined as the place of origin or Ur
where one is born and nurtured, and secondly, it is defined as a place where one can relax and feel free
and comfortable. Looking across the interviewees' accounts of home, it is possible to see that the
meaning of home gets reflected with their choice of return to their place of origin. They construct and
reconstruct the meaning of home depending on different priorities and experiences. The narratives also
show the co-existence of different meanings of home. Though the concept of home can be broadly
defined in two ways, these two definitions present varying meanings of home depending mostly on
terms of social relations, identity, economic benefits, past memories, imprisonment, estrangement and a
threatening place.

23 USCRI (US COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS) indicates that Sri Lankans are not
entitled to residence permits, but the Indian government issues them identity documents (July 29, 2009).
According to OfERR India, Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu are issued a family card that includes a family
photo, names of the family members, their age, relationship, gender, date of arrival in India, location of
arrival, education, as well as their address in Sri Lanka. The refugees also have individual identity cards that
carry their name and address, which are useful when authorities verify identification outside of the camp.
Additionally, some Sri Lankan refugees are able to obtain a driver's license, due to a shift in government
policy (JRS 11 2010). A December 2009 article in The Hindu reports that Sri Lankan refugees would be able
to obtain driver's licenses if a designated camp authority approved it (December 25, 2009).
5.2 Concluding remarks

As the narratives vividly show, older generations of displaced persons conceptualize their places of origin as their home or \textit{Ur} and feel emotionally and spiritually attached to them in different ways. It is through this that they identify themselves but not all of them want to return because of personal and professional reasons. Yet, analyzing the interview shows that the meaning of home differs under certain circumstances as elaborated in the chapter. The second generations view their present locales as their homes while having a little bit of attachment to their \textit{Ur}. However, they are reluctant to return as they now consider their place of origin an 'unknown and strange place' with no economic and social benefits. Narratives presented here show how they view return and integration with the host community through the concept of home. Post-war return necessitates building up a life in an environment which was once familiar but now is strange as is the case with almost all of the interviewees except a few (like Mr. Kalam and Mrs. Anthony). To them, return means a 'new uprooting' as stated by Jacob. Most of them are uncertain whether their former homes still exist or not. The civil war has changed the social meaning of the places where they once lived. \textit{Ur}, to them, means a place to lead a decent life, although the meaning of decent life varies from person to person. Peter is aspired for a good life but the picture of his good life lies at some distance from Rajesh and Sihaan. Good life for Peter means leading a decent life with his family, with his own identity and freedom and, most importantly, at his own place, while for Sihaan and Rajesh, good life means not only leading a decent life but also a luxurious life with all the electronic gadgets around. Education and job opportunities are also crucial factors that determine a good life for these two men. In addition, the experiences gained by Rajesh, Sihaan and Jacob at their displaced areas persuaded them to integrate with the host communities. In contrast, Mr. Kalam, has integrated in Colombo but still wants to return home to die in his motherland as he is spiritually attached to his \textit{Ur}. He maintains ties to the people in Mannar so that if he gets the scope to return he can live there happily and peacefully. He views return to be nostalgic and about returning to memories of youth. Mr. Anthony, like Mr. Kalam, is almost of the same opinion regarding his home in Mannar but does not want to return to ‘an unknown place’ because of the uncertainties. I have attempted to present through this chapter that members belonging to the same family poses different opinions about their decisions to return as found in Mr. Kalam and Sihaan’s views and also in Mr. and Mrs. Anthony’s opinions.
5.2 Concluding remarks

A rather different view has been put forward by Shaliny who used to dream of having her own concrete structured home with luxurious and comfortable furniture along with her own family. With the passage of time, her definition of home changed and she started believing home to be a ‘safe and secured place with no permanent structure,’ and she now claims to have several homes in different places. To her, home is not the place of origin but is a place where she can relax and feel comfortable. On the other hand, Padmini initially considered her home a prison due to the rules and regulations, however, this changed when she started to live alone and conceptualized home as a place where there could be ‘freedom of self’, with no rules to follow but her own. Her place of origin offers all the freedom she wants, so her home is her place of origin. Nevertheless, the meaning of home kept on changing to both ladies due to socio-economic and political dimensions.

In contrast, the IDPs at the camps in Jaffna, view their places of origin to be their homes as they believe them to be the 'source of income' and 'identity' to which they are eagerly waiting to return.
5.2 Concluding remarks
Chapter 6: Attachment

The upcoming sections of this chapter evaluate and explicate how the notion of 'belonging' influences the ideas of home offer the Sri Lankan displaced Tamils. It also addresses the relationship that they have to their homes. And the degrees of belonging that they have from them. To understand better this relationship between the displaced Tamils have with their original Ur and their negotiations dealing with displacement and resettlement, I propose to analyze the third dimension of belonging, that is, attachment.

In the forthcoming sections, I address how the displaced Tamils show their diverse kinds of attachment to their native homes or Ur in the rural areas of the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka. In these cases, their attachments to Ur bear a particular quality. People had been forced to abandon their Ur, as well as their material belongings, and also endure a loss in social terms, all this loss characterizes their state of being. Most of them long for their Ur, a highly emotionally charged idea, and their return is viewed as a means to acquire what has been lost, and regain a feeling of relief, bringing an end the current feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, fear, and terror. Nevertheless, the meaning given to attachment to Ur in the Tamil context, needs to be seen in the light of how the relationship between the rural and urban lifestyle is symbolized and discussed. Thus, this chapter elaborates on the notion of attachment (to Ur) from its relatively close to its relatively weak forms to which my data is linked. This elaboration is done in order to discuss the mutual process of identity formation and meaning ascription regarding places. Furthermore, this discussion plays a fundamental role in influencing the interviewees' decisions to either return to their Ur or to resettle and re-integrate in their present location.

Based on the analysis of the empirical data, this chapter seeks to unravel the ways in which people relate to their homeland from where they were forcefully displaced many years back. Therefore, I concentrate on both Tamil-speaking Hindus and Muslims who had been evicted from the Northern provinces of the island. Such narratives are used as a means to understand how they ascribe the meaning of attachment to their homes and how their feelings are related to the negotiations for displacement and resettlement in today's world. The migration of Sri Lankan Tamils from their places of origin is an age-old phenomenon as has been depicted by Daniel (1984) and Thiranagama (2011), but the context and meaning attached to their displacement and to their homes have changed over the ages. This change is connected to both structural and economic aspects, as well as to the cultural values ascribed to their places of origin. Accordingly, the relationship they have and the degrees of attachment they ascribe to their homes remains an under-researched concept to date. In
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the subsequent paragraphs, this issue will be addressed and will be used to investigate how people’s attachment to their Ur can be best understood.

Finally, after portraying the different narratives, I argue that people from different age groups, genders, classes, and castes have different kinds of attachments to their homes which are elaborated in this chapter. I show further that most of them, presently being resettled elsewhere, feel an intense attachment to their Ur through past memories. Being displaced, their new locations appear to be the “reverse of belonging: abandoning roots and attachments is its pre-condition” as stated by Pfaff-Czarnecka (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011: xxii). In contrast, the returnees have returned for a better life; however, they are facing difficulties in coping with the changed environment and the changed people. Life has become difficult after return as they must start everything from scratch.

Initially, many of the older adults experienced different forms of exclusion at their present locales in Colombo or at Tamil Nadu in South India. However, they succeeded to recreate a kind of attachment while still having a longing for their past life at their Ur. Compared to the kind of attachment that the original places used to have, there are more challenges to have new attachments and ties at the new locations. Religious sites such as temples, places of socialization like neighborhoods, public meeting places, shops as well as private homes, brought back the feelings of attachment to past experiences and give way to future expectations. For them, their home is related to their experience of their life course as well as in the formation of their self-identity. Remembering their former homes is one way of keeping alive their past memories and relating it to their present lives, maintaining their sense of continuity, identity while protecting the self.

In contrast, there are few middle-aged persons, discussed, who have negative feelings about their Ur where they once lived and who are emphatic that they will never return there due to being away for such long spans of time. And the absence of basic socio-economic needs there. There are even some people, mostly the young generations, who hate their homeland, because it has taken away everything from them. Moreover, they were very young at the time they were displaced and have only heard stories of their homeland from their parents, but have nothing or little to recall themselves. For them, their present location is their home and they consider their former Ur as a strange and unknown place. Moreover, they want to prosper in their lives, so are hesitant to return to a place which cannot offer
them any kind of opportunity. However, their parents are nostalgic about their Ur and keep on telling stories to their children so that they know who they are and where they belong, with the hope of instilling in them some kind of attachment to their homeland. But they are ambivalent about whether to return or not. They understand that if they return, their life will be steeped in uncertainties because they must start from scratch, because things have changed there. The prospects of their children are very minimal there, compared to their present locales. Yet, many people dream of returning to their Ur, as they are emotionally and spiritually attached to their homes or places of origin. At the same time, it also occurs to them that their children will never return which means they must remain alone there. On the other hand, the displaced persons at the welfare centers in Jaffna, where I interviewed them, believe that their return will help them to regain their lost social status and their lost life. This reason is one of the most important ones that they have been motivated to long for their return. They are counting the days to their returns to their former homes to have a better future and living. Whereas refugees in the camps of South India are most likely to get rid of their 'refugee status' but are not much in favor of return due to emotional attachment to the present land and the concern that future prospects are unavailable in their homes.

In the following section, I highlight four different cases of Muslim returnees who had been evicted from Jaffna in 1990, the place known for being the heartland of Tamil nationalism. Most scholarly accounts have overlooked their cases. However, the cases are particularly insightful because their sense of 'home' relates to a specific neighborhood: Moor Street, located in the semi-urban town of Jaffna, where the Muslim population was concentrated. Through investigating their cases, I show that return was inspired by, and connected with, their high expectations. But each interviewee was confronted with a deep sense of disappointment, which urged them to reconsider and to renegotiate their relationship to the place. Like the Yugoslav migrants. As pointed out by Jansen (2011: 145) the Muslim returnees believe, “home is not home anymore… homeland that was left, forever lost, survives only in traces and memories ...”. In particular, I will show that the emotional attachment to home is structured not only in spatial but also in temporal terms. Memory, as well as future perspectives and aspirations, determine the ways in which people relate to their homes. The collected material shows, that for the displaced, the return is a necessary step in order to develop the capacity to formulate perspectives and aspirations about the future.
6.1 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get related with past memories and people

“In 2010, after almost 20 years, I returned to my homeland (Moor Street in Jaffna)... a place where I belong to, though my parents stayed back in Colombo. I knew return would not be easy as there is very little opportunity in Jaffna. Still, I believe that I have to perform certain duties towards my homeland, towards my own people... Also, in Colombo, I used to feel like a stranger...After returning, I am totally surprised with the changing culture, changing attitude of the persons”.

This statement was made by a 33-year-old Tamil-speaking Muslim man, Mr. A. Rahman\(^1\), who had been forced to leave his home during the ongoing civil war. Finally, after 20 years of displacement, he returned to his (partially damaged) home at Moor Street in Jaffna. The narrative reveals much about his sense of belonging to his place of origin, and it signifies the existence of an “intimate connection” to the place. Mr. Rahman was born and brought up in his place of origin, and he spent his entire childhood amidst his own environment and people. being a young child, he was allowed to play and socialize with only his immediate neighbors. This centrality of place in the process of socialization developed a strong interest in his neighborhood and nurtured his attachment to his home.

In addition, a decisive aspect relates to his obligation to certain duties towards the people of Jaffna: which hints at the social dimension of belonging: It is not only the place in the physical sense but the connection with the people living there which serves as the basis for his ‘longing’ for the place of origin. These connections to people are something he is not able to find in the country’s capital, Colombo, where he had spent a large part of his life. Moreover, Moor Street used to be a place where he knew almost everyone and vice versa. This naturally earns him a specific status in the society there which he lost after displacement. Therefore, regaining lost social status is also another reason for his return.

In 2010, when he returned, he reconstructed his home in order to make it a habitable place and “unknowingly it resembled our old one”, said Mr. Rahman astonishingly. This activity rebuilding the home in the same pattern as the old one has also developed a new attachment to him. Simultaneously,

\(^1\) Mr. A. Rahman was interviewed on February 22, 2013 at the University of Jaffna.
he joined one of the NGOs in Jaffna to survive as well as to help the Tamil-speaking Muslims to return to their places of origin. He set his example in front of them and tried to convince them about their return. According to my informant in Jaffna, around 950 Muslims returned to their original homes in Jaffna from Puttalam until mid-2015.

Despite the joy and happiness which marked the moment of his return, he was upset to see changes in the locality which had emerged in his place of origin under the conditions of war-related displacement – a pattern which is quite common among displaced persons who return after a lengthy period, including Tamils who sought refuge abroad (Gerharz 2010). Adding to the general feeling of alienation, he pointed out that the availability of land was a major problem. The Government refrained from offering land for purchase and development to the returning Muslims. Also, they did not receive the rations that the repatriates usually got, because their registrations were not finalized by the Government Agent (GA)\(^2\). After anticipating a return to be a pleasant experience indulged with coming 'home', he expressed his disappointments over how difficult life was. They had been under constant suspicion by the Sri Lankan military. Also, job opportunities seemed to be far less in the Northern region. Yet, this uncertainty and military control could not hold him back from returning as he prioritized the intimate connection to his own surroundings, the relational and friendship ties that he remembers even after two decades and the urge to do something for his own small world and his own people (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011: xxi). In this scenario, I argue, as did Relph that this intimate connection between my interviewee and his home 'became apparent' only when he experienced displacement and the hardships which followed thereafter (1976: 40). His awareness of this bond derived mostly from the sufferings caused by displacement and from the mere idea that he might lose the ownership of his home, in Jaffna, if he integrates into Colombo. His remarks also prove his strong sense of belonging not only to his place and to his people, but also towards the ownership of his home. Though, it has been stated by Giuliani (1991: 141) that ‘the longer the residence, the stronger the attachment’, yet Mr. Rahman always “felt difficult to be permanent in Colombo, and so did not actually get attached to my house there as a home as I always believed it was a place to live in for the time-being and sooner or later I shall be returning to my homeland’. Thus, the relevance of the length of residence has been examined

in this case with the contradictory result which shows that staying in one place, i.e., in Colombo, for almost two decades, has not made the attachment stronger instead it has always made him feel detached.

“At the time of displacement, I was only 11 years old. In 1988, when the IPKF came to Jaffna, we were displaced for the first time. We went to Chavakachheri and to Vavuniya but returned soon in early 1989. Little clashes started to take place between the LTTE and the IPKF. Finally, in the morning on October 30, 1990, LTTE asked us (all the Muslims) to leave Jaffna within 2 hours. My father was standing outside the house, hearing this he started weeping. My family along with others left thinking that after some days we would return. At that moment, we did not have the idea that it would take us so long to return. As we had no other place to take refuge, we went to Anuradhapura as one of our relatives was staying there. For three months, we stayed there. Though it was a big house, the owners could not afford to let us stay there for very long. So, we went to Colombo and rented a place. It was like a store room with two bathrooms. We were 8 families with children. It was really getting difficult for us, due to lack of privacy especially for the women to survive in that place. After few months, we managed to buy a small plot of land in Negombo and built 8 rooms of teen sheets with bathrooms and a common kitchen. As most of my family members are tailors so we did not find that much problem in getting jobs in Colombo. My mother was a government teacher, so she also got her job back in Colombo. This was how we managed to earn money and bought a plot there. After a couple of years, my cousins started going abroad and money started to come in. My parents again bought a small plot in Colombo and built a house”.

While talking about the challenges of return, he also enlightened us about his past experiences of the eviction of the whole Muslim population from the North. All of them, were forced to leave Jaffna on October 30, 1990 with a very short notice. Most of them went to take refuge in Puttalam, while Mr. Rahman and his family went to Anuradhapura then to Negombo, followed by Colombo. They had to struggle hard to survive in the first few months. Soon after, his parents succeeded in establishing themselves in Colombo and bought a plot of land and settled down there. Mr. Rahman finished his education and joined in a small business but could not concentrate at all, as his mind was brimming with the thought of his hometown. For almost 15 years, he stayed in Colombo and enjoyed most of the luxuries and comforts the city offered. Yet he could not relate himself to the city. Also, he resists being
6.1 Attachment to Ur : (actual) return to get related with past memories and people

associated himself with his fellow Sinhalese and Tamil neighbors. He felt like an 'outsider' in Colombo. Here, this feeling of his, acts like a determinant to distinguish between insiders and outsiders in boundary mechanism. This sense of an ‘outsider’ developed because he was discriminated against because of his language, religion, and the “so-called traditional Tamil” habit of wearing the pottu. This follows Wimmer's (2008: 1028) arguments on dividing the world, on the basis of race, language and religion. The civil war marked a turning point and created a rupture in his life, yet his memories of home overwhelmed him. Life in Colombo has always been a pale shadow of what he experienced in Jaffna. His initial days were spent in his homeland, where his character was formed and affective relations were built. Settling in different areas, like Negombo or Colombo, was not a choice but a compulsion to survive in the destructive civil war. No doubt, these new places offered a good living and a good life for him and his family; however, as has been narrated by Mr. Rahman, it brought to mind loss in every possible way. This reason is the main purpose for his decision to return to Jaffna, leaving behind his whole family in Colombo.

In his case, attachment to his place acted as the driving force that motivated him to return to Jaffna. ‘Place attachment', as stated by Low and Altman (1992), is a positive emotional bond developing between individuals and their environment, as can be observed here. According to Mesch and Manor, place attachment is important “… because it generates identification with a place and fosters social and political involvement in the preservation of the physical and social features that characterize a neighborhood” (1998: 505). As the authors found in their study that both social relationships and environmental satisfaction are required to develop place attachment, (Mesch and Manor 1998: 517-518) which is also true for Mr. Rahman. Therefore, according to him, neighbors, friends, relatives the environment and the past memories are the basic ingredients which make home/Ur.

The next section elaborates on the story of Samara, who has returned with high expectations even though she knew her former home had been totally damaged. The attachment to her home through the memories along with the mutual interest of leading a good life in Jaffna brought her back. As my interviewee narrates her experiences of return, she portrays, in detail, the reason for her return, the dilemmas she is having at her home now and also the survival strategies she uses.
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“I am originally from Moor Street in Jaffna. It has been 30 years that we have been living here. All of a sudden in 1990, we were asked to leave and displaced to Puttalam… In 2010, my family returned to Jaffna. As we visited Jaffna 2-3 times while in Puttalam, we were aware of the fact that our home has been totally destroyed, nothing was left. After returning in 2010, we lived in a rented room and started rebuilding our home… it has been partially rebuild and finally shifted there last year (2012). While rebuilding it, we kept the old structure as it reminded of my old home. I have the same feeling of home now which was not there in Puttalam or in the rented room”.

Samara, a 50-year-old Tamil-speaking Muslim lady, returned to her place of origin even though she was aware that her home does not exist anymore. Therefore, her return is due mainly to her attachment to her home through past memories and aspirations for the good life.

Samara highlights the notion of attachment to her home even after staying away for more than two decades. Prior to the displacement, she had spent 30 years amidst her own environment and people. This long-duration stay created a very strong attachment to her to her neighborhood. This fact is also demonstrated by Giuliani in her essay when she describes the attachment of a 34-year-old woman who was moving to a larger house with the aim of having a better living. She did not have any kind of attachment to her small home; however, at moving she felt intense attachment as she dealt with her past memories. “... it was my first house, I came here soon after I got married, my children were born here, and so I have a certain emotional bond… now I realize the longer the residence, the stronger the attachment” (1991: 134-141).

Also, this feeling of being at home in Jaffna developed with the connection of her life in the past. Her past life was characterized by peacefulness, stability, sufficient food to survive, a place in society, and a future for herself and her family. This almost duplicates to what Maalki reviewed about the life of refugees before their displacement (1995: 509). Unfortunately, due to the 1990 Muslim Eviction, Samara and her family were forcibly displaced to Puttalam. In 2010, when they returned, they stayed at a rented place near their land. Her family started rebuilding their house, trying to retain the structure of the old home, which actually reveals the significance of memorizing the past. Finally, in 2012, Samara’s family shifted to their newly built house. Samara describes this as a turning point: In the new/old house, she feels the same comfort that she used to feel:
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“Jaffna, being the source of good life, provoked us to return. Two important things that made ‘me’ to return was the sweet taste of water from the well and the few neighbors those who are still here…”.

Despite having knowledge about the condition of their home in Jaffna, Samara’s family decided to return, for their aspirations for of a better life which was impossible in Puttalam because of inadequate opportunities. They have also developed the economic means to have improved medical facilities, higher education and entertainment which are not available at Puttalam, but in Jaffna. Therefore, the only way, to enjoy such improved facilities according to Samara’s family, is to shift to Jaffna. The idea of return and resettlement offers a ‘sense of possibility, with opportunity for change, improvement, and the unexpected—that is, room for dreaming and imagining’ as has been articulated by Hage (1997: 102–108). However, the idea of resettlement does not automatically deliver a new sense of home. Rather, it offers hope that the prerequisites to construct a new home, such as physical security, a sense of self and inclusion, will be met (Boer 2015: 501).

Furthermore, Samara’s attachment to her home is depicted through her past memories. Home is recognized as ‘a longing for a nostalgic past…’ (Al-Ali and Koser 2003: 7). She romanticized her memories by emphasizing the local traditions and social practices that she enjoyed. Like Mr. Rahman, she was very interested in her neighborhood, where she used to socialize during her childhood. The socialization is one of the main reasons for Samara’s return: She used to feel rooted in the geographical location as demonstrated by her relationship to her neighbors. Another dimension of her attachment to her place of origin she refers to is the sweet water that she used to have from the well at her home. For her, this sweet water represents home. Her statement reveals that the sweet water of the well is a symbol of nurturing energies for Samara. Attachment to her home through these memories makes her “belong to spaces and sites, to natural objects, landscapes, climate, and to material possessions” as articulated by Pfaff-Czarnecka in her article while explaining attachment (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013: 17):

“Howeever, after return, we are disappointed...! Things have changed which we never thought of. Our culture and community have changed. Hindus and Christians are sharing our locality which was

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3 The taste of the water in Jaffna is a common feature in Tamil and Muslim people’s narratives and entails enormous symbolic power.
6.1 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get related with past memories and people

*previously a Muslim-only locality. To add to our difficulties, we cannot find jobs here. Life is full of uncertainties now...”.

The actual experiences of return failed to meet the expectations of Samara and her family. She was disappointed to see the changes that took place within their culture and, among their community. The demographic composition of her locality, which used to have Muslims only, has now been inhabited by both Hindu and Christian Tamils often leading to community tensions. Now, this contradicts Thiranagama's suggestion that in other contexts, ‘the formerly Muslim areas became Muslim areas again […] Tamils did not want to live there any longer’ (Thiranagama 2013b: 109). Adding to this problem, the lack of job opportunities in the Northern part seemed to make the conditions even worse. Yet, she decided to stay amidst this uncertainty and tension as she prioritized her attachment to her own surroundings, to the relational and friendship ties. This is evident from her statement:

“All these difficulties are temporary, I know. We would soon be having our past days back. Just we have to be patient...”.

The intimate connection that Samara has with her home is mostly derived from the sufferings caused by displacement and from the mere idea that she might lose the ownership of her home in Jaffna, if she integrates in Puttalam. This basic idea also proves her strong sense of attachment to the ownership of her home. For Samara, the alienation from the place of her origin does not question her deep sense of belonging. Despite the initially ambivalent feelings, she claims to be confident that the dreams she relates to return will become true – the difficulties are only temporary. Patience and hard work will help her and her family to regain the status-quo ante.

Next, I examine the story of attachment to Ur of a middle-aged Muslim woman, Farzina⁴ who has returned to her homeland in 2010 after almost two decades. She describes the story of her return which has an influence on her life. Like Samara, her story also reflects the kind of attachment she has to her home after two decades:

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⁴ Farzina was displaced to Puttalam in the 1990s when the LTTE asked all the Muslim populations to leave Jaffna. In 2010, almost after two decades, many of the Muslim families including her family returned to their original homes in Jaffna. I interviewed her on March 7, 2013 at an NGO in Jaffna.
“I returned to Jaffna in 2010 and am living in the same area nearby to our original home but in a rented place. Although, we are staying in Jaffna but still I do not feel to be at home. I am not at all trying to make this rented place to feel like home. I know this house is temporary, so do not want to relate myself with this house. Often, I feel like homeless. I still now consider my past home to be my own as we were surrounded by our relatives. My current location is a strange place for me. I cannot do whatever I feel like. I have limitations here as it is a rented house. My relatives have moved and I am alone here. I do not know anyone here. If I get a scope to buy my own land I shall definitely do it. For the time being, I cannot afford to buy any land due to financial problems, but still hope someday I shall have my own home on my own land”.

Farzina’s return to Jaffna not only meant to acquire what she has lost but also provided an end to the feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, and fear as she stated that ‘everything I did in Puttalam seemed fake… Returning to Jaffna gave my identity back. I love to be here, I grew up here, Jaffna gave me everything. I feel like belonging to this place…’. To Farzina, Jaffna presents itself as a choice, a desire, or an identity. It centers on a community and a society. She has been raised up in the town which provided her with physical comfort and with a sense of connection and belonging not only to her family and household but also with her friends and neighbors. In Puttalam, she never felt like she belonged to anything.

However, her return to Jaffna has not fulfilled her wish of staying at her own home, as it does not exist anymore. Since her return, she has been staying in a rented place which is nearby to her place of origin. Also, her current location does not deliver the same kind of feeling that she used to have in her ‘own home’. Most of her old relations have either integrated into Puttalam or have moved to some other place in the country. She is left alone at her new locale in Jaffna. Farzina believes that home is not only about a place but also about the people through whom she feels ‘at-home’. And these experiences generate within her a constant shift in her understanding of ‘home’ and ‘homeliness’. Thus, the idea of being ‘homeless at home’ evokes certain emotions in Farzina like despair, isolation, grief, and hopelessness. The new location has turned into an estrangement, as she neither knows her neighbors nor is she acquainted with the place. Her rented place fails to provide the material and immaterial comforts that she expects from her own home. In addition, she cannot live freely and independently because she has to follow certain rules and limitations prescribed by the owner of the house. She is
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not even interested in making her new place like her own old home as she expects to rebuild her own home on her own land in the nearby future. She lacks sufficient income to buy land which she can claim to be her own, where she will have no limitations and can do whatever she feels like. Home is a combination of a place and a feeling where the "person-environment" relationship creates feelings of well-being (Watkins and Hosier 2005: 198). To make things acceptable, adjustment is required to the new relationship between the person and the place. When this adjustment fails, people start feeling homeless as Farzina is feeling in her new place. To her, the definition of home is rooted in physical comfort and in the personal history which has developed out of cumulative experiences through life and enduring memories. She used the space at her owned home, as she wished which is not possible now. She felt the loss of emotional privacy at her new domain. Though she is not technically homeless, yet she feels that she has been without a 'true home' since she was forced to leave Jaffna in the 1990s. Thus, her narrative reflects the attachment to her Ur which compelled her to return despite all the uncertainties. In addition, her narrative also presents a picture of the difference between 'owning a house and renting a house'. Though she is staying near to her place of origin, she still cannot make it as her Ur because it fails to provide her physical comfort and privacy, which according to her, are the most important components in making a home.

With the aim of continuing this sub-section, I narrate the story of a Muslim couple in Jaffna who returned with aspirations for a better future. For them, return also proved to be disappointing because everything has changed at their home. They are now in-between states of high expectations and disappointment. Yet, they decided to resettle for their love of their homeland which I have analyzed in subsequent paragraphs.

“I am originally from Jaffna. The conflict forced us to leave Jaffna and move to Puttalam in 1990. We stayed there for over a decade. In 2002, I returned to Jaffna after the Ceasefire Agreement had temporarily ended the civil war and settled down here...Life became indeed difficult upon return as we lost almost everything, we had a house and we had everything. At the same time, I now had to start from the very beginning to earn my livings here. No one helped me to rebuild my home. Government only provided the dry rations...Yet after returning, we are totally surprised with the changing culture, changing attitude of the persons around. There are many differences from 1980s. We used to have huge number of coconut trees at the entrance of our house which are missing now. That kind of feeling ‘at
home’ is not there at present...still Jaffna is my home. I have come here to protect my land, my mosque. I cannot run away from my duties. I was born here; I have also some duties to perform for my motherland. Whatever happens I am not leaving Jaffna. All the time, I was in Puttalam, I wanted to return...My wife also is of the same opinion. Presently, I am working as a daily wage laborer, but if I find a good job outside Jaffna, then I shall go but will come back after saving some money and establish my own business in Jaffna only. We pray to God to give us peace and a good life. No matter what struggles we have to face, we already faced a lot and lost a lot, so we do not fear of losing anything now than our own homes”.

Mohd. Abdullah⁵, a 56-year-old Muslim and his wife, in her early 50s, were also victims of 1990 Eviction. The family was forced to leave Jaffna and landed at the welfare center in Puttalam. After spending more than two decades at the welfare center, in 2010, the couple returned to their fully demolished home in Jaffna. Even though Mohd. Abdullah was ecstatic about his return, he was upset to notice the dramatic transformation his home has undergone, over the past few years. Changes took place throughout his home area as has been shown by the other Muslim respondents. Upon his arrival, he was surprised to observe the visible changes that have taken place in his area that has become unrecognizable: most of the houses are broken and abandoned; trees have grown all around them; fields are overgrown. The old mosques are all demolished. There are no places where they can go to pray. In his memory, only Muslims inhabited Moor Street in Jaffna. In his narrative, his return is inevitably nostalgic and is about returning to memories of youth, which contrasts with the present social structure of the multicultural neighborhood he has returned to. Initially, he reports, he was fearful of both his new Tamil and Sinhalese neighbors. Gradually, neighborly relations started to establish. Though he has succeeded in developing a relationship with his new neighbors, the kind of affinity that he felt towards neighbors in the past is still missing. Also, relationships to those he knew before have changed over time because they were magnified in imaginations and unmatched by the actual experience of visiting. He was disappointed that old relationships were “not what they used to be. There is a huge gap to fill on both sides”. We pretend to know each other, but we don’t’. The parody of being close to someone, having imagined that person for years and built up a picture and then being worried about holding a

⁵ Mohd. Abdullah was interviewed on March 7, 2013 at an NGO in Moor Street in Jaffna. He was displaced in 1990 from Jaffna and stayed in Puttalam with his family. In 2010, he returned to Jaffna.
Mohd. Abdullah is trying hard to re-establish 'a sense of normal life, which in turn is defined by three issues: creating sustainable livelihoods, finding a place of relational identification, and developing a site of cultural attachment' as has been observed by Stefansson while working with the Bosnian returnees (Stefansson 2004: 174). In his writing about the Bosnian returnees, the author argues, that despite the radical wartime changes, many of them are strongly motivated to return to their homes. Similarly, my findings about the Jaffna returnees demonstrate their strong yearnings to return to their homes as is found in this case. Mohd. Abdullah, who used to be a painter. Presently he is working as a daily wage laborer, he has not been able to lead the modest life he is seeking. He has sought out financial help from many organizations, so that he can start his own business. He has faith in God and hopes to return to a good life soon. He is also trying to develop a place which is governed by the security to have a better future, as proposed by Turton (1996) about Mursi refugees in Ethiopia.

Bauman in his book, *in Search of Politics*, uses the German term 'Unsicherheit' to denote three dimensions, that is, insecurity, uncertainty, and unsafe environment, in order to analyze the decision of displaced persons who are reluctant to return (1999: 17). I found an intensifying version of this in Jaffna, where there is a widespread fear of living under political control and enduring militarization, even after five years have passed since the war has ended.

Mohd. Abdullah feels the difference of living in post-war Jaffna than in pre-war days. He was more oriented to the past, to his own lost properties and to his own people. Despite his dire living presently in Jaffna, he compared his current situation favorably to the ‘awful’ years of displacement in Puttalam. No place other than Jaffna could tempt him as he and his wife were amongst the few first who moved from Puttalam to Jaffna. When describing that day, Mohd. Abdullah exclaimed, “I was so happy to return home. This is mine! This is where I belong! This is where I want to be”. Thiranagama suggested about the return of the minorities to their home 'that the relationship of the two, what was once home is not just one about relationships to the past, but about the possibilities of belonging in the future, the
6.1 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get related with past memories and people

possibilities of finding a future in which one can flourish personally and collectively’ (2009: 130). I concur with her suggestion as Abdullah’s attachment to his home is both with the past and with the future in which he can establish himself. For him, Jaffna, is a 'home' which offers a story about former social and emotional and spiritual sustenance.

The next three stories, that I present, show the attachment of the young generations towards their own Ur. However, there are also aspirations for the good life which Ur fails to provide. In the upcoming narratives, I justify the reason behind why almost all the young generations are moving outside of their homes to establish themselves. Also, I examine their feelings of happiness about being back in their places of origin, which is reflected in their statements about having obligations within themselves to perform some kind of duty for the development of their motherland.

6.2 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get connected with broken memories

“I miss my neighbors, I miss one of the tree (Annamunna in Tamil) in my home. It was a small tree. My friends and I used to climb that tree and plucked up the fruits. Those fruits were really tasty but a bit allergic. We also used to play under the shed of that tree. Unfortunately, the tree is now broken during the war. And the soil is not that good to grow such a type of a tree again”.

In the case of young Sangeetha, attachment to her home is an attachment through her childhood memories. The memories from her childhood in Kilinochchi, a town in the Northern province of Sri Lanka, were entirely positive. She romanticized her childhood memories by emphasizing the local traditions and social practices that she enjoyed a lot. She had strong interests in her neighborhood as that was the place for her to socialize as a child. She attended school and played in her neighborhood and made quite a number of good friends. There were many leisure activities which the children used to enjoy like climbing on and plucking fruit from the trees. Playing under the shade of the tree was another leisure activity for Sangeetha and her friends which she misses a lot presently. Her statement

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6 Sangeetha, student in the Jaffna University, is a Tamil Hindu woman (in her mid 20s) interviewed on March 21, 2013 in Jaffna.
reveals that, for Sangeetha, the *Annamunna* tree is a symbol representing nurturing energies from her childhood days. Attachment through these memories makes her belong to her home.

“I am originally from Kilinochchi. I was first displaced at the end of 2007. In total, we were displaced six times from one camp to the other. Finally, at the end of 2009, I returned to my original home. Though we had rebuild our home, but we do not have the same feeling that we used to have before...Our ancestral home was a really big one consisting five big rooms with one big hall and dining room. We had huge balcony in front of our house. We also owned a big garden where usually all the vegetables were harvested. But due to lack of money, now though we have rebuild our homes, it is like a small cottage with only two rooms in total. For others also, their big homes have now converted into small cottages. Those homes which have been totally destroyed received 3-5 Lakhs SLR but as our homes were partially destroyed, so we received 1.5 Lakhs SLR but in installment”.

During the final stage of the Vanni war in late 2007, Sangeetha and her family were displaced. After taking refuge in six different refugee camps within Kilinochchi district, her family returned home in December 2009. Now, after returning, everything that she considered valuable to her is either destroyed or gone. Her return has failed to provide the same kind of attachment to her home that she used to feel previously. Her home is partially damaged, with only two rooms in a habitable condition, instead of the seven big rooms from earlier. The house needs to be repaired which requires a whole lot of money. Although the government has provided a certain amount of money, it is not sufficient to rebuild their house. For them to arrange the rest of the money is very difficult, because there are fewer opportunities to earn money now. It is assumed that if Sangeetha and her family succeed in rebuilding the house to resemble the same old one then there is a scope of a new attachments growing up within Sangeetha. Furthermore, all of her relatives and friends have migrated elsewhere. “*We also thought of going elsewhere but could not because of our land and home. We (especially me) have so many memories attached to this place, how could we go elsewhere?*”.

The distance of time and space have enabled her to differentiate the positive experiences from her childhood that cultivate feelings of belonging to her place of origin. Her attachment to her home is losing its strength, because she is alone now. Her neighbors and friends, their pet animals, and her beloved possession, the 'Annamunna tree', are all lost. She is facing strong disappointment after her
6.2 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get connected with broken memories

return. The experience of her return has let her down because she is not able to relate her present home with the past one where she had spent most of her childhood.

Yet, home, in this case, often has highly personal meanings, like where Sangeetha lived since her birth, to which she has returned after displacement, are associated with roots and continuity. It is often linked to important life stages like childhood, adolescence, or parenthood and is expressed in terms of experiences and memories. Sangeetha associates her home with security and safety as well as the place for her work and leisure activities. Often, she uses her sense of place to answer the question, “who are we?” depicting her identity and her Ur. For her, a vivid childhood recollection is the pain of leaving behind her past home, her own neighborhood, friends and, most importantly, the tree and what it symbolizes.

The degree of meaning that people like Sangeetha derive from childhood experiences and memories, “translates into the degree of attachment to the place itself” as put by Milligan (1998: 2). On one hand, the memories of the childhood home are ingrained with fuzzy feelings of security and comfort, fixations of happiness (Bachelard, 1964) while, on the other hand, the traumatic events, like war and displacement penetrate the dreams from childhood homes. Thus, Sangeetha feels that childhood memories, friends, family, and her very own Annamunna tree are the factors that make up ‘home’.

“I am originally from Naval in Mullaitivu district... Since October 2012, I am living in a Paying Guest in Jaffna for my higher studies. We do not have scope for higher studies in our hometown, so everyone of my age has to move out either to Jaffna or in the South. After losing so much, I really want to support my parents, and to do this I have to establish myself first. This is not possible if I confine myself to my hometown as there is no opportunity. I want to earn enough money and do not mind if I have to leave my home...”

Sheila, a 25-year-old Tamil girl from the North of Sri Lanka described her bitter experiences of the civil war, poignant stories of her displacement and her return. Also, she highlighted the life after return in her former home. She is originally from Mullaitivu district in the Northern part of the country, and completed her schooling there. In order to pursue studies in higher education, she left home and moved to Jaffna in October 2012 and stayed as a paying guest. Aspiring to have a good life for both herself and her family, she shifted to Jaffna while visiting her family during the weekends. Her aspirations are
6.2 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get connected with broken memories

mainly ‘associated with the family’s socioeconomic status’ as has been also revealed by Mau and Bikos in their study on educational and vocational aspirations while talking to high school students (2000: 187). Because of the war, the family have lost almost everything, so Sheila intends to support her family with the income that she will be earning after she finishes her studies. She wants to earn a good amount of money which will help her family to relive some of the life they lived in days before the war. She is more likely to place importance on having a high-status job which will enable her to earn enough money to support her family. For Sheila, higher education is considered as desirable and increasingly necessary for fulfilling her ambition to earn money. Unfortunately, this ambition is not possible at all if she remains at her hometown in Navaly, in the district of Mullaitivu, because there are no opportunities to do higher education there. They can study only up to the Advanced level or A-level\(^7\) in her hometown. Because of this reality, most of the young generations, people her age, are leaving their homes and moving to either Jaffna, or to the South, where they have ample opportunities to establish themselves, and in turn, can support their families because each of them shares the mutual experience of losing their belongings.

Sheila’s parents also play a significant role in this scenario, because they have allowed her to move out of their home to study elsewhere, irrespective of her gender. Kahl (1953), in his study on educational and occupational aspirations, first suggested the importance of parental encouragement for their children’s aspirations for the good life. He also pointed out that one of the main factors was the attitude of the parents regarding the importance of their children’s occupational success for personal happiness.

In addition, she also explained her feelings of attachment to her home, through memories:

“I miss my rural environment, good relaxed conditions. Sometimes, I get fed up studying all day long and then wish to relax and do practical things such as cultivating a potato field or going out fishing or playing with my friends as I did before. I also miss the freedom to do whatever I want outside my house without anybody neither noticing nor interfering…”

Here, the positive aspects of her rural home are closely related to different aspects of nature. Cultivating nature represents a link to her social and cultural background. But when cultivating

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\(^7\) Advanced Level or A-level is the selection examination for University admissions.
potatoes turns into a leisure activity, it also becomes a break with this kind of background. For Sheila, nature is also associated with the space connected to independence and freedom. In natural environments, she can be alone and be outside of social control. Nature is also important as an arena for outdoor life and playing. In addition, some of the value she connects to nature is related to her childhood experiences. She has appreciated growing up in a rural area all throughout her life. Sheila presents childhood in rural areas as being idyllic in contrast to the town-life in Jaffna. Having freedom and living close to nature as an arena for physical activities are important aspects of what she thinks of as a good childhood.

“But moving out from my home is also very important for establishing myself…”.

Sheila expresses her disagreement about staying with her parents in her own home because of the lack of opportunities. There is no future for her in Mullaitivu, so she has to move out, keeping aside her strong attachments to her home and to nature. Her rural background and the nature near her home are important, but she is ambivalent about how to incorporate these aspects in the formation and management of her desired future. She also has the desire to come back and use her education to start up some development in her home area, but for that she needs to establish herself first.

Another example, is portrayed below which shows attachment to Ur as well as aspirations for a better future, with the aim of doing something good for one's homeland:

“I am originally from Mullanganavilai in Kilinochchi. After getting displaced in 2007 and experiencing all kinds of sufferings, finally, my family and I returned to our original home in late 2009, after the war came to an end… We were not aware of the condition in which our original home was in. It was only when we returned; we saw almost everything has been destroyed. Nothing was left. The government and the NGOs provided help with some temporary sheets in order to rebuild our house. But as our house was not fully destroyed, so we did not receive any monetary help from the government. Like our relatives and neighbors those who have migrated elsewhere, we too had the scope of moving somewhere else than returning to our native place, still, my parents thought of returning as it is our own land. We do not have to pay money for the land, only we had to rebuild our house. My father could also resume his farming gradually”.

6.2 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get connected with broken memories
Tariqur\textsuperscript{8}, a 20-year-old Hindu-Tamil boy narrated his story of displacement from his home. Unlike my last interviewee, he was one of those who were displaced during the last phases of the civil war or a shorter period of time. He is also lucky enough to return to his own home within two years of displacement. While they were away, his family members had no idea in what condition their home is and what kind of struggles they would have to face once they return, yet they chose to go back to their own land. They have an intimate relationship with their land. It is the place where Tariqur and his family have been nurtured, taken in the air and properties as has been observed by Daniel (1984) in his book, Fluid signs: Being a person the Tamil way in the context of South Indian Tamils and their conceptualization of \textit{Ur}. Home as a place and a feeling, in general, conjures the sense of belonging, control, comfort, and security. The foundation on which the notion of home has been built up is on 'the importance of shelter, storage and display of valued belongings, a place for self-expression, locus of activity, privacy and control, familial linkage and emotional freedom along with habituation in place and memory of personal history' (Watkins and Hosier 2005: 199). Individuals develop their definition of home based on the memories of their personal history and experiences throughout their lives. Normally, Tamils believe that home or land reveals a person's character so it is very important for them to start a conversation with a stranger by revealing one’s home that makes room for further interaction. As Thiranagama, in her work on the concept of home, assumed that 'because one is a person, one has an \textit{Ur}, and because one has an \textit{Ur}, one must either love it or feel obliged to love it. \textit{Ur}… became… an everyday language of love, affection, sentiment and memory…' (2011: 19). So, unlike their relations, Tariqur and his family decided to return to their original home instead of migrating elsewhere. This choice will help them to save a bit of money as they do not need to pay rent for staying. Also, because his father is a farmer, he could start farming on their land fairly quickly and gradually they will be able to reconstruct their home to make it a habitable place. However, they were not at all aware of the destruction that took place after they left. Only after their return, did they discover the loss that they had to endure. The government and NGOs provided little help by supplying temporary sheets for rebuilding their homes. But not a single penny was offered to them because their home was only partially damaged.

\textsuperscript{8} Tariqur was interviewed on February 11, 2013 in Jaffna.
Nevertheless, soon after his return, he was disappointed with the changes in attitude from the people around him. Though he has the same people in his neighborhood, with the end of the war their attitudes changed totally. This drastic change is mainly because of the loss that each family suffered in his neighborhood. One or two members from each of the households are either dead or are missing. He cannot find anyone his own age to spend time with. He expressed his disappointment as:

“Since we returned, there is no one in the neighborhood with whom I can feel at ease and spend some time. The neighbors are the same, but from each house, one or two members are missing. All are in utter grief, their attitudes have changed. Mostly, the boys belonging to my age are missing, either they are killed or have fled somewhere else in order to survive from the hands of the LTTE or the Military. Many of the neighbors or relatives are resentful or intolerant towards me as I am doing well while their children are missing or dead. Thus, our relations have changed. Everyone has become individualistic. They have become concerned about their well-being only”.

Their economic condition also deteriorated as a result of the displacement. Their main source of income was farming, but after return, their land is not that fertile to harvest a huge quantity of crops, like past years. Although, his father has restarted farming, he can only earn a small amount from it. One of his elder brothers works in masonry factory from which they earn a bit as well. Together, with this income, they are trying to survive. Tariqur and his two other brothers and a sister are still studying with the hope of supporting their family as soon as they finish their studies.

They used to live in a bungalow type of a house which had 7 rooms in total with a huge balcony and a garden. Because of the war, their house has become a small cottage with only 2 small rooms. It is very difficult for the 6 members of his family to survive in such a small house when they were used to staying in such a big mansion: “Our ancestral home was a really big one consisting 5 big rooms with one big hall and dining room. There was a huge balcony and a garden in front of the house. But due to lack of money, our home has become a small cottage with only two rooms in total...Our lifestyle has deteriorated now”.

With the aim of supporting his family, Tariqur has moved to Jaffna to acquire higher education. In his town, too, there is no opportunity to study after the A-level. Also, his hometown lacks many other economic opportunities which are required for a person to establish him or herself. So, he moved to
6.2 Attachment to Ur: (actual) return to get connected with broken memories

Jaffna to obtain his university degree that he hopes will help him to find a decent job so he will be able to help his family to overcome the difficult situation they are going through. If he has to move elsewhere to flourish, he will do it because his career comes first and he wants to establish himself. He does not want to lag behind in order to remain in his hometown with his family. Surely, he will visit his family and spend time with them, but settling in with them is not a good option for Tariqur. In his case, his idea of a good life lies in earning a huge amount of money, so that he and his family do not have to face any further difficulties in living. They can get back their past lives. In addition, he has a sister to look after. If he flourishes well, they can get a suitable groom for his sister and he will be able to pay for as much dowry as is demanded by the groom’s family. Furthermore, he has a true affection for his hometown when he talked about his wishes to do some developmental work for his hometown so that his hometown prospers, but for that he needs to establish himself.

The following is his statement where he explains about his aspirations about the good life:

“From June 2012, I am staying in Jaffna to pursue higher studies. In my hometown, we do not have the opportunity to study after Advanced (A) level, we have to either discontinue our studies or have to move elsewhere. So, I have moved to Jaffna. Furthermore, in Jaffna we have the tuition facilities which are not available elsewhere in the Northern districts. After completing my studies, I will look for job and if I get one with good opportunities then will not hesitate to move. But as my family are in Kilinochchi so will try to visit them quite often. But it depends on time. I do not want to lag behind, I want to establish myself well enough in my future for that if I have to leave my home, and I am ready to do so. Moreover, I am also determined to do some developmental work for my hometown, so for that I need to establish myself first”.

The next narrative, which I am going to examine, is from an elderly person who is ambivalent about whether to return or not. This difficulty is because, on one hand, she is still attached to her Ur in Jaffna and, on the other hand, she also wants to live with her children who are reluctant to return. I attempt to reflect on this ambivalent position of hers, showing her attachment to Ur and at the same time her love for her children.
6.3 Attachment to Ur: nostalgia and ambivalence

“I am originally from Jaffna but left Jaffna and settled in Colombo since late 50s due to the 1958 riots. I stayed with my parents and finished my studies in Colombo. I got married in early 1970 and in 1974 went and settled in Jaffna...Me and my husband built our own house in Jaffna in 1978 and started staying there. We have so many memories... I now live in those memories, they keep me alive...Being displaced three times, presently I am staying in Colombo with my younger daughter for the last nine years”.

A retired Hindu-Tamil widow, Mrs. Shantha Parthasarathy9 is originally from Jaffna but has been staying in Colombo for the last nine years with her younger daughter. She enjoys her life in Colombo with all her relatives, yet yearns to return to her Ur in Jaffna as she has so many memories related to her personal life tied to her home. She continues to identify herself with her Ur. She is waiting to experience the village life all over again with a few old neighbors and friends.

“I always have the yearning to return to the silent village life away from all the chaos in Colombo. I want to feel the village life all over again- specially when I kept the doors open, the sound of the leaves of the Palmyra tree blowing in the wind takes me to the good old days. Even, my elder daughter (in Norway) took me to the deck of her house and asked (in joy), Amma is it not like the Jaffna noise? … My daughters rode bi-cycles in Jaffna. Everything was safe. There was no feeling of insecurity. People were so honest and trustworthy then. The house in Colombo has also become “home” to me. I am staying there for a decade now. I have also started feeling for it. Moreover, my daughter is not ready to move and settle in Jaffna...I am now in a dilemma what to do if I get my home back in Jaffna. ...after the war, the entire society has changed”.

Mrs. Shantha feels that returning to her home and reliving all those moments spent with her husband represents something new that has a positive meaning. Despite the positivity that this choice would bring, she is in an ambivalent situation, whether or not to settle back in Jaffna. She complained about the lack of opportunities in the remote areas which is also a way forge her concern about welfare towards her Ur. She has started developing feelings towards her new home in Colombo. Here, again,

9 Mrs. Shantha Parthasarathy, aged 69, was interviewed on January 16, 2013 at her home in Colombo. Presently, working on women issues in the Northern part of Sri Lanka.
Giuliani’s argument that a long-duration stay at one place evokes strong attachment holds true in every sense (1991: 141). In addition, none of her daughters are ready to leave their well-settled lives in Colombo and start anew in Jaffna. They are so disappointed with the LTTE, who took everything away from them. They do not have any kind of attachment to their home in Jaffna now. Yet, Mrs. Shantha will go, renovate the house, and enjoy some time farming and gardening and return back to Colombo. She looks at home as a place to spend a nice vacation. Far from being part of her everyday life, she took it for granted, more or less. She said that it would mean more, because it is something she could only do at home on vacations. Work activities based on using nature are transformed into nostalgic leisure activities and important symbols to link her to her home. No matter what she feels about her current physical well-being, her existence has always been closely attached to her native locality. The social and cultural aspects of her pasts in a rural locality are something she is proud of.

“In Jaffna, our house was constructed in such a way that the air could flow within the house as the town is really hot throughout the year. A traditional Jaffna house with white colored “L-shaped” (she and her husband sketched the plan and got somebody to construct according to their choice.). We planted 10-12 coconut trees in front of our house so that we do not have to buy coconuts and used to farm on the backyard which fetched us with sufficient vegetables. We used to have a library in the house which was always open to students. Our house was always vibrant. We really enjoyed our life amidst the students and the plantations. Our dining table always remained full of books, only at the time of eating we pile all the books together and kept them aside. When we rebuilt our house in Colombo (as it was burnt in 1983 riots), I did the same white color and “L-shaped”. I only realized this when my friends and family visited and said that this house is just like your Jaffna house”.

Shantha’s home represents a space where she could relax and get the feeling of her home in Jaffna and her lost identity. She believes that her insight and experience from this kind of milieu will be an asset for the rest of her life. The value of coming from a rural locality is related to the practical skills, the closeness to nature and the anchoring in a different kind of social milieu than in Colombo. The way she talked about her home, it represented a positive element in the formation and the management of her desired identity. Her attachment, even in Colombo, is in many ways, related to aspects of the past like constructing the same kind of houses and leading almost the same lifestyles then and now.
6.3 Attachment to Ur: nostalgia and ambivalence

Now, I move on to investigate some stories where once there was an attachment to Ur, but gradually, because of several reasons, the attachment has become detachment. The attachment has been transformed to detachment, not only for the young generations but also for the middle-aged and the older people. The immediate narrative is from an elderly Sri Lankan Tamil from Jaffna who has integrated into his present locale in Chennai. Even though he has been in Chennai for more than three decades, he still recapitulates his past in Jaffna. However, his attachment to his Ur has now become detachment because of several reasons which I will elaborate on below.

6.4 From attachment to detachment

“Living in Jaffna and Tamil Nadu means the same to me as I do not find much difference except for the food habits and the language. Indians are really helpful and they helped me a lot during the initial days in Chennai when I was all alone with my four sons. My wife expired, leaving us alone as soon as we started staying in Chennai. At that time, I got full support from my Indian neighbors and friends to stay back in India as the situation was getting worse day by day in Sri Lanka. We stayed in a rented place after coming to Chennai and had to register with the nearby police stations and still now we have to renew our visa every 6 months from the immigration. Otherwise, things are fine here…But my four sons did face problem with education as in Jaffna they studied in Tamil medium while in Tamil Nadu they had to study in English medium which created difficulties for them in the initial years…afterwards, things became easier and they succeeded to prosper in their lives…Being refugees, we are not eligible to get passports in India. But, as my sons are IT professionals, their company helped them with obtaining passports because of their merits. Three among them are settled abroad while the youngest one is in Chennai. He is also doing quite well and there is anticipation that he will also move to USA soon”.

Mr. Suryanarayan, a 73-year-old Sri Lankan Tamil refugee staying in India for the last 37 years, falls under the second category\(^\text{10}\) of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu. They are categorized as refugees outside the camps who, as soon as they arrived in India, informed the Rehabilitation Department that they do not want government assistance and they have the means to look after themselves. Being a

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\(^{10}\) Categories of Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu has been detailed in Chapter 2.
refugee from Sri Lanka, he has to register with the nearest police station in order to get a refugee certificate from the nearest collector’s office. Thus, this procedure constitutes a social boundary which separates him as a Sri Lankan Tamil from the Indian Tamils. Social boundaries, as has been propounded by Tilly, 'interrupt, divide, circumscribe, or segregate distributions of population or activity within social fields. Such fields certainly include spatial distributions of population or activity, but they also include temporal distributions and webs of interpersonal connections. Therefore, we might define a social boundary minimally as any contiguous zone of contrasting density, rapid transition, or separation between internally connected clusters of population and/or activity' (Tilly 2004: 214).

For Mr. Suryanarayan, being a Sri Lankan is different from an Indian Tamil in culture and tradition, which he experiences in Chennai. Though he speaks almost the same language as the Indian Tamils, he finds it a bit different from his own language in terms of dialects, certain words, and meanings. In addition, he also finds the food habits to be different in the two cultures. Apart from these elements, he feels the same being in either Jaffna or Tamil Nadu, because over time he has grown a sense of attachment to his home in Chennai where he has been staying for more than three decades. His four sons were very little when they migrated to India and they have been raised in Chennai. This factor helped him to belong to India rather than to Sri Lanka. They did face some problems during their initial days in Chennai in school because of the language, but soon overcame everything and succeeded established themselves. Being exceptional in their respective professional fields, they earned their passports from their companies irrespective of their refugee status. At present, three of them are settled abroad.

Mr. Suryanarayan's quote hints at the advantages he enjoyed in Tamil Nadu especially in terms of getting support from his Indian friends and neighbors in times of crisis and also for his sons' educations and careers. These advantages have also played an important role in influencing his decision to return to his homeland. After obtaining information about the present status quo in Sri Lanka, from his relatives, he feels that there is no difference in living between Jaffna or Tamil Nadu as things have changed in his homeland. He has no special feelings left for Jaffna, as the war has made significant changes to the environment which has helped develop a kind of detachment for Mr. Suryanarayan. However, his heart is filled with his past memories of his motherland which is evident from his next statement: “Jaffna used to be a place with natural water and soil and no artificial things. I loved the
environment around me which I miss the most. The culture was really adorable which brought together every member of a family to spend a happy and blissful life unlike, here, where everybody is concerned about their own interests. But from my Sri Lankan relatives staying there, I came to know that things have changed due to the war but I hope that some places might retain some aspects of that natural feeling still. If things were the same as it was before, it would have been far better in Jaffna than here. My relations from my hometown do visit me once or twice a year. Unfortunately, I cannot go to Sri Lanka because if I leave India then I cannot return as a refugee again. I have to stay in India as everything is here...”.

Therefore, for Mr. Suryanarayan, home is made up of nature, culture, and family which is lost in present day Jaffna. As put by Marcus (1992: 87), in his article on 'Environmental Memories', “…individuals' most powerful memories revolve around places”, similarly, in the case of my interviewee, his memories also revolve around his home in Jaffna, the place where he grew up, the neighborhood where he settled with his family, spent his younger days, got married and had his children. Such old memories form rich sources of inspiration to persons who are now miles apart from their beloved homes, as happened to Mr. Suryanarayan. Nonetheless, when he compares the memories of his much-loved place in Jaffna to the present day, his heart gets filled with dissatisfaction and sadness, speculating about the changes that have taken place in his home. Furthermore, he loved to speak about the culture of his hometown which was pure and natural compared to that of Tamil Nadu's. Like many of my interviewees, he also portrayed Jaffna-culture as a happy and blissful one. It was mostly identified by the togetherness of family members. Unfortunately, this culture of togetherness has changed presently. Because of the war, at least one member of each family is either killed or is missing. All the people in Jaffna are spending life with sorrow and grief. The rest of the people who used to live in Jaffna, have migrated abroad and are reluctant to return. The economic crisis which occurred as a result of the war has produced innumerable unemployment making the Jaffna culture impure. This unemployment has caused people, especially the youth, to turn to wrong and illegal ways of earning money, like theft or robbery. Women and girls are not safe to walk freely in the area which was unlikely in previous years. All these instances made Mr. Suryanarayan believe that living in Jaffna or Tamil Nadu are the same now. Yet, he is confident that if the war had not caused the changes, then, no doubt, Jaffna would have been a better place to live.
Mr. Suryanarayan shows reluctance to return and settle in Jaffna, however, he desires to go to his homeland because that will help him to get his pension and passport. Being a Sri Lankan refugee in India, he cannot acquire a passport, so he has to be in his country of origin to get it. He eagerly wants to have his passport, in order to visit his sons who are settled abroad. Also, he bought some property in Jaffna before shifting to India, and it is presently rented. With the aim of earning some money, he is planning to do something productive on it which will help him to survive in Jaffna. He has no idea of how long he has to be there because the issues for pensions and passports take time: “Before migrating to India, I bought a plot of land in Jaffna town. At present, it is under rent but am planning to do something productive on it. By next year (2014) I am planning to return to my home. Returning there will fetch me my pensions, and also I have to get my passport so that I can travel abroad to visit my sons. I am not sure for how long I would be staying in Jaffna, at least I need a year to settle my pension matters and to get my passport. But my sons are neither going to return to Jaffna nor to Colombo as they have settled themselves at their present locales”.

His decision to integrate into Chennai is influenced by the aspiration for a good life for his sons. His sons have succeeded, after hard struggles and they are well settled now. Going back to Jaffna means starting from the very beginning again, and their aspirations for a good life could never be fulfilled in Jaffna because of the lack of opportunities. Mr. Suryanarayan is well aware of this fact and does not want his sons to leave everything for his sake and return to Jaffna. Also, he does not want to stay apart from his sons. So after settling down the matters regarding pensions and having his passport, he will travel back to India and will visit his sons. Furthermore, by now, he has lost all the material and immaterial possessions he was once strongly attached to his Ur. He does not feel any different being in Jaffna or in Chennai. Therefore, his attachment has become detachment with time and a shift in priorities in life.

In the next part, I examine the narrative of another older person who is presently living in Colombo. Because of their loss of material and immaterial possessions during the civil war, his attachment to his Ur has become detachment. His statements, which I portray, speak of the changing meaning of home with a shift in his priorities in life.
6.4 From attachment to detachment

“I am originally from Velanai. For the first time, we were displaced from Velanai to Jaffna town on October 17, 1991. Then we went to Kilinochchi in 1995. In 1996, we returned to our native place, but nothing was there. Our home was totally damaged, nobody was there in the neighborhood. All the relations were displaced to other districts like Vavuniya, Kilinochhi, and even some went abroad. Unable to find anyone around, we again shifted to Jaffna town and I continued to work in the Postal Service. I was mentally very much upset to find my beloved home, my village in that terrible condition. I was also one of the wealthier families in the village, unfortunately, the war took away everything from us. I could not take it and decided to live in the town area. Though we were staying in the town, but still I was traumatized. I even thought of migrating to Colombo, but as I was working in the Jaffna division so could not leave my job. But kept on trying to get a transfer which I succeeded to achieve in late 2007. Since then I am living in Colombo with my family…”

Mr. Srikanthan, a Hindu-Tamil in his late-50s, mirrored his bitter experiences with displacement which he first witnessed in 1991. Because of the mass exodus, Mr. Srikanthan along with his family went 'through the narrow Chemmani-Kandy road to the areas of Chavakachcheri and down through the narrow bottleneck of the peninsula' and reached Kilinochhi (Thiranagama 2011: 65). He stayed in Kilinochhi for a year and returned to Velanai in 1996. He returned with the hope of regaining his social status that he enjoyed in his hometown but missed in Kilinochhi. Also, his strong sense of rootedness and attachment to his home, and a connection with a sense of nostalgia from his past made him want to return. Unfortunately, he was very much disturbed to find his native home was totally damaged. To add to his sorrows, he found that almost all of his relatives, friends, and neighbors had migrated to either different parts of the country or have moved abroad. He started to feel like a refugee in his own place.

11 Mr. Srikanthan was interviewed on January 20, 2013 at his Flat in Wellawatta, Colombo. He is married and has two children, a boy and a girl. His son is in France for his higher studies while his daughter is a doctor and is associated with a hospital in Colombo. Since 1979, Mr. Srikanthan works in the Postal Department in the Government of Sri Lanka. Being a Government employee, he did not face any financial problem as he was getting salary from the Government in times of war as well. Only with his salary he survived in the days of crisis.

12 As, according to Thiranagama (2011: 5), the LTTE asked the Jaffna population to leave the peninsula through two routes. One is through the narrow Chemmani-Kandy road to the areas of Chavakachcheri and down through the narrow bottleneck of the peninsula. While the other was to take boats straight across Kilali lagoon to the Vanni district.
6.4 From attachment to detachment

To him, attachment to his neighborhood documents the emotional ties to his locale that have strengthened over time, in part, because his long-term residence imbues the landscapes with the meaning and memories of life experiences. And in part because living there for a long time nourishes local ties to friends and family. This articulation is similar to what Cuba and Hummon have argued regarding constructing a sense of home where geographical mobility plays an important role in place identity (1993: 550). Furthermore, as Mallett has observed that the relationship between home and family is very strong as home symbolizes 'the birth family dwelling' and 'the birth family or family of origin' (2004: 73). Home is the immediate house or dwelling that one goes after birth. It also symbolizes the family relationships and life courses enacted within those spaces. It has been rightly stated in Mallett’s critical review that without the family, a home is only a house (Mallett 2004: 74), which is also true for Mr. Srikanthan. Most of his relatives and friends left the place and without them home is hardly considered to be a home, so he also decided to move to the town area of Jaffna.

Therefore, the sense of alienation from his near and dear ones along with the sight of his damaged home played a part in his decision to go to the town area and settle there for the time being. Yet, he was scared to continue his stay there because of the ongoing vulnerable situation. Many a times he planned to move to Colombo, but because of professional reasons, he failed to do so. However, he kept on trying to make his transfer to the capital city in order to get rid of the frightening situation in Jaffna. Finally, in late 2007, he succeeded in obtaining the transfer to Colombo and from then onwards, he is a resident of the city. His aspirations to have better prospects for the education and employment of his children, and to escape the hardships of the ongoing war led him to move to Colombo.

“I have started considering Colombo to be my second home now. Life in Colombo is totally different compared to my ‘home’. We enjoy all sorts of facilities that are unavailable in Velanai. Yet, home is home after all. I like my native place, and cannot compare it to any-place, still I do not want to return. I have left my place for a pretty long time by now. Moreover, none of my relatives are there. My home is also partially damaged. I am working in Colombo and almost settled here. Emotionally also, I have got detached from my home town. If I return now, I shall not be able to enjoy all the facilities that I am enjoying here. There is no scope for higher education or good medical facilities in my village. If we fall severely ill, we have to travel a long way to Jaffna for treatment. Most importantly, we are innocent people and have nothing to do with LTTE or with the army but still if we return, military interference
will start in our day to day lives as there is no freedom in Velanai. It is still under Military control. Militaries interfere in each and everything. Whereas there is no military interference in Colombo, if one does not want to interact with them, the militaries will not interfere in your lives”.

Mr. Srikanthan has been living in Colombo for quite a few years now and has developed a feeling of attachment to the capital city. Though, he considers Colombo to be his second home, he continues to identify Velanai as his first home because “… home is home after all. I like my native place, and cannot compare it to anywhere.” He cannot compare his feeling towards Velanai to any other place. He has spent most of his life there, which has created a very strong attachment to his place of origin. Now, place attachment, as defined by Hidalgo and Hernandez, is “an affective bond or link between people and specific places” (2001: 274). Relph (1976) identifies the importance of roots, which give people a point of outlook and spiritual and psychological attachment to a particular place, as is found in this case. He states, “To be attached to places and have profound ties with them is an important human need” (Relph, 1976: 38). The term “roots” can refer to place attachment, and he claims that roots in a particular place give one a point of world outlook, a grasp of one’s own position, and a sense of spiritual and psychological attachment. He further defines this sense of place as “being inside and belonging to your place both as an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting upon it” (Relph 1976: 65).

However, he does not want to return because his native place fails to provide the basic necessities of life. Because of the war, the economic situation in the North has deteriorated resulting in unemployment among the population, especially the youth. Furthermore, the lack of essential services such as health, electricity, transportation, inadequate communication with family members abroad and other amenities have made life extremely difficult for the residents of his village. In addition, educational facilities and most importantly the current political situation is making him hesitant to return to Velanai. Because of political obstacles, he chose to stay in Colombo, where he leads a comfortable and safe life. He believes that the Northern part of the island cannot have a stable peace in near future. The Northern province is still overwhelmed by an occupying military force, which systematically seeks to subjugate the population, change the demography, destabilize the economy, impose an alien culture and stultify legitimate democratic aspirations, whilst continuing with grave human rights abuses. His native place is no exception. It is still under the control of the military, who
interferes in their day-to-day lives, often harassing, the females who are alone in their homes. especially. Abductions and killings are still going on in his village even after 4 years have passed since the war has ended. Moreover, the Chief Secretary, who has been appointed in contravention of the law and functions in collaboration with the Governor, was the former Army Commander of the Northern Province. “Apart from the legality of the structure, from a practical perspective how can one expect to carry out governance democratically, effectively, or efficiently, when you have a parallel structure in place, backed by an ominous and omnipresent military?”, uttered Mr. Srikanthan angrily. To make matters still worse, “we have the bogey of the Tiger being resurrected to justify further militarization. However, this was not unexpected. We knew the inadequacy of the 13th Amendment and did expect some interference, though the scale of interference from the military despite being in the spotlight of the world is worrisome for what it portends, not only for the North-East but for the rest of the country”.

Mr. Srikanthan’s decision to move to Colombo is basically influenced by the fact that in Sri Lanka, the capital city is the best place to settle down because it has been a “home to multiple minorities”, for ages as has been documented by Thiranagama while conducting her research on the Tamils in Colombo (2011: 20) Also, the city has areas like Wellawatte and Pettah where Tamils are the majority. To add, unlike in the Northern Provinces, there is no military interference in the day to day lives of people, and they can enjoy complete freedom in the capital city. Apart from this fact, Colombo is the only city on the island where all kinds of facilities and opportunities are available in order to lead a better life. It provides a highly developed educational infrastructure and employment opportunities in both the private and government sectors.

“Colombo, being a majority Sinhala area, Tamils are also adapting themselves with the environment, by speaking Sinhala, changing their lifestyles and habits. We have also become like Sinhalese. I can speak Sinhala, without which it will be really difficult to survive as majority of my friends and colleagues are Sinhalese. The mode of communication is also in Sinhala. In the postal department in Colombo where I work, only 2-3 are Tamils, while rest are Sinhalese, so I have to speak the language...”.
6.4 From attachment to detachment

Having belonged to a predominately Tamil area in Velanai, it was quite a hard task for Mr. Srikanthan and his family to adapt to the majority-Sinhalese society in Colombo, where most of people spoke Sinhala and followed the Sinhala culture and traditions. Colombo is also a multi-ethnic society where not only the Sinhalese, but also other minorities like Tamil-speaking Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Malays, Burghers, Chetties, Bharatha etc. live. Colombo is also a city where Tamil remittances flow, Muslim and Hindu prayers are broadcast on Tamil national channels, along with the existence of numerous Indian Tamil restaurants and shops. However, for Mr. Srikanthan, Sinhala became most important as his professional life and he was totally dependent on the Sinhala language because most of his colleagues are Sinhalese, with only 2-3 who are Tamils. As argued by Sidharthan in his study on the Jaffna Tamil Migrants to Colombo, the process of adapting themselves into the new environment while maintaining and preserving their 'Tamilness' was indeed a difficult task (2003: 305). This is also reflected in the case of Mr. Srikanthan when he migrated to Colombo for the first time in 2007. During the initial days, they faced the difficulty of adapting to the new environment of Colombo, because everything was totally different. Culture and traditions, as argued by Pfaffenberger (1981), was also considered to be of the unique character of the Jaffna Tamils, which sets them apart in their customs and their heritage. Here, I show that ethnic boundary making determines survival in the capital city as there are cultural differences, social separations, and language barriers which he experienced from his very first day in Colombo. Keep in mind that each ethnic group develops its own cultural and social forms, which separate it from others and Mr. Srikanthan is no exception to this cultural development. For example, Language, food habits, and dressing styles are all different for Jaffna Tamils and Sinhalese people. Furthermore, the Tamil tradition of wearing the 'potti' on the forehead, unlikely for other ethnic groups in Colombo, acts as an important boundary marker between the Tamils and the others. This process of adapting to Colombo’s culture while trying to maintain their original sense of cultural identity is a difficult and stressful process. Nonetheless, his family succeeded to pursue this new cultural pattern and lifestyle which is offered to them in Colombo.

The following narrative is from a middle-aged Lecturer, Eshwari Parthasarathy13, who unlike her mother Mrs. Shantha, felt completely detached from her Ur. Although she has spent her entire teenage

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13 Eshwari Parthasarathy, a Hindu Tamil woman (in her mid-40s) is a lecturer in Colombo University. I interviewed her on January 18, 2013 at the university of Colombo.
6.4 From attachment to detachment

life in Jaffna and has been staying in Colombo since only her 20s, she has lost any kind of attachment to her birthplace. She said, “Home to me is Colombo as we have been living here for 22 years now”. Here again is the fact that the longer the residence, the stronger the attachment becomes prominent.

She even commented that, “I do not wear the pottu, which is a marker of our Tamilness. This is because, I am afraid that by labeling myself as a Tamil I might unnecessarily antagonize the other group of people”.

In many cultures, a woman's appearance, and the way she is dressed serve as a symbol of the community or nation that she belongs to. Hindu girls and women are expected to wear the 'pottu' as has been observed by Schrijvers (1999: 312). However, in Sri Lanka, Sinhalese and Muslim women do not have the tradition of wearing the pottu. Therefore, the pottu acts as a primary means of identifying a Tamil woman which also has become the ‘ethnic marker’ in Tamil culture (Schrijvers 1999: 312). At present, Sri Lankan Tamil women, especially in Colombo for security reasons, are always in a dilemma whether to reveal their Tamilness by applying the pottu. For some Tamil women, like Eshwari, this is a fundamental and emotional issue; for others, it is one of those questions that can be solved in a pragmatic manner.

In contrast to the city life, she presented her childhood memories of Jaffna as she spoke, “I really loved to be in Jaffna during those days. I fell in love with the quietness that prevailed there. Together with my elder sister, I used to ride bicycles and roam around without any fear. Our home was the best thing we had. We felt like staying so close to nature there. But things started changing as the military and LTTE started interfering in our daily lives. I started to hate Jaffna slowly as it became quite hard to stay there”. Having freedom and living close to the nature are important aspects to have in one's childhood but she does not emphasize it much. Along with the silence of nature, she has also witnessed the violent part of the town; the loss of their freedom and Jaffna turning into a violent place suddenly with the onset of the fight between Sri Lankan military and LTTE. As time went on, after coming to Colombo, she succeeded to overcome that feeling of attachment to Jaffna.

Like her mother, she has the desire to renovate her home in Jaffna, because it is the last symbol of her father. “I will not mind going to Jaffna and staying there for a day or two”, said Eshwari in a relaxed tone. She is likely to visit her 'home' in Jaffna during holidays to relax and feel at ease, but at no point
6.4 From attachment to detachment

in time will she return to settle in Jaffna. “If the government at any point in time asks us to leave and return to Jaffna, then I would fight, as being a citizen of the country I have the right to live anywhere within the island. I would definitely not give up and fight till my last breathe. I am not going to return to Jaffna as things have changed there. If we return, it would be difficult for us to adjust now. As for the last couple of decades we are used to live a different life in Colombo than Jaffna. Also in Jaffna, all the facilities, that I enjoy now, are absent. I am well settled in Colombo and it would be difficult to leave all this and return”. Her decision to stay in Colombo is mostly influenced by the uncertainties that Jaffna presents now. She is socio-economically well-settled in Colombo with her family and if she returns she has to start afresh again, which she is not at all ready to do. She is a lecturer at Colombo University, and if she returns to Jaffna she will have to leave her job and look for another one there. She is really afraid to do so because she doubts if there would be any jobs for her at all due to increased unemployment in Jaffna. She has struggled hard to reach this position so she does not want to go through the same situation all over again with a return. Her aspirations for a good life cannot be fulfilled in Jaffna. Moreover, all her friends and relatives have migrated abroad or are in Colombo. By home, she identifies the place as well as the people with whom she feels ‘at-home’. Therefore, without relatives and friends, home to Eshwari is merely a place. This observation is consistent with what Mesch and Manor have stated that ‘the higher number of close friends living in the area and the higher the number of neighbors close enough to be invited to family events, the more likely is for the individual to feel attached to the community’ (1998: 515-516). In addition, her lifestyle has also changed. In the last twenty-two years, she has been living a city life which is totally different from life in Jaffna. It would be really difficult to go back to the rural life again after so long. In this regard, Eshwari’s situation is similar to the assumption made by Wiborg, that in today's world, with the development of globalization and mobility, homes in remote areas are gradually losing their importance “as a framework for people’s lives and as a basis for the formation of identity” (2004: 416). In Colombo, she could get all the facilities a city can offer unlike in Jaffna. Any attachment she felt to her Ur is historic; the place where her parents live, not as a positive element in the formation of her identity.

“In the 90s, I really wanted to return to Jaffna, but as days passed my feelings also changed. In 2011, I went to see my old home after 21 years and got really upset to see our home, once constructed by my
parents, has now turned into a broken dream. It is now occupied by the Police who hardly look after it”.

The value and importance of Eshwari’s attachment to her Ur has gradually decreased with time. The urban life-style has greatly influenced her self-image and identity and has distanced her from her rural lifestyle. Therefore, Eshwari presents a very negative image of her hometown and she does not feel like associating herself with either Jaffna or with the people who live there. What she was attached to in the 1990s has become detachment after more than two decades. It is considered to be a challenging situation, especially for youngsters and middle aged people, as shown in this and the subsequent narratives, because these younger generations are getting more and more detached from their traditional homes for professional and personal reasons. It is because globalization and mobility have led to an increased focus on the local and the value of local attachment, as claimed by Boissevain (1992). Therefore, the meaning of attachment to places has changed, making it more fragile and more explicit (Bourdieu 1977), and to an object of negotiation and reflexivity.

The next narrator is a middle-aged person who is experiencing detachment now but was completely attached to his hometown in the past. A Priest by profession, unlike others, he was fortunate enough to get to stay in Jaffna throughout his life and he got to experience the entire war through his own eyes. Nevertheless, with the end of the war, he started having feelings of alienation from the culture currently in Jaffna. He cannot relate to the present environment and he has conflicting mutual expectations like many of his counterparts, especially the young generations. Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, in their writings on Himalayan societies, believe that group life is a pre-requisite in the Himalayan societies as it carries forward the concept of belonging (2011: xx). The ideal of a group life is that everybody is known to each other and engages in face-to-face interactions. Also, group members expect commitment from each other which entails mutual compulsion. Thus, in the Jaffna context, the locals form a group among themselves in order to work for the well-being of their society where each and every member will have some kind of contribution. Unfortunately, with the changed culture in Jaffna, this idea of group formation seems quite vague, as the narrators portray. Different people have different kinds of expectations from each other.
“We are victims of Westernization. Previously, there was nothing like alcohols or drugs or prostitution...We did not even hear of theft...but now, every other day you will hear...”, said one of the Priests in Jaffna, whom I interviewed during my field-visit in 2013. He added, local everyday-life in Jaffna has been disrupted because of the so-called Westernization which began with the opening of the A9 road\textsuperscript{14}. Unfortunately, gaining access to this globalized knowledge has brought about serious issues as pointed out by the Priest. He stated that, due to this opening to the world, youngsters are getting addicted to drugs, alcohol, and pornography. People are no longer attracted to reading books and leading a simple life. Instead, they are more interested in watching movies and daily soaps. These developments are also affecting their daily livelihoods. Their demands are increasing, but most of them cannot afford to fulfill all those demands, resulting in theft or robbery to fulfill one's desires. This new global image of Jaffna is looked upon as beneficial, on the one hand, because it gave enough room for development. Lack of employment opportunities and poverty have also forced many of the younger generation Tamils to take up the easiest path for earning money, resulting in increasing number of thefts all over town. The Priest also believed that the young generation has become too lazy to work hard, unlike previous generations and are easily getting involved in this illegal way of earning money. However, the atmosphere I experienced in Jaffna in 2013 was characterized by both enthusiasm and ambivalence about the new image and impression.

“Jaffna which used to be a peaceful countryside, now, has become a chaotic place to live in”, I heard this statement from almost each and every resident of Jaffna when I visited there in February-March 2013. “Pure Jaffna culture is hard to find nowadays as almost 90% of the Jaffna Tamils have left their homeland and settled abroad. Many among them visit Jaffna once a year and share their new cultures from abroad thus making Jaffna culture a mixed one. Most of the well-known persons have left due to lack of opportunities, so Jaffna is left with very few knowledgeable men who really wish to contribute to the well-being of the society. Moreover, many Sinhalese families are coming and have started living here… Our old culture, traditions all are gone. We have completely lost from all respects”, added the Priest.

\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter 5 for the impacts of the opening of A9 road.
6.4 From attachment to detachment

Previously, Jaffna was inhabited by mostly Sri Lankan Tamils making it the 'capital of Sri Lankan Tamil culture and heritage' as described by Gerharz (2008: 177). It was also ‘the center of advanced education’ which has helped them to prosper in their lives over the ages (Gerharz 2008: 177). Also, the town differs from the other parts because of its ‘insular character’ (Gerharz 2014: 40). Pfaffenberger rightly argues that Jaffna Tamils take pride in themselves for preserving the ancient patterns of Tamil civilization (1981: 1148). They depict themselves as the carriers of Jaffna Tamil culture. But with the end of the war, Jaffna has become 'a place of tremendous human suffering, a closed economy, and a war zone' as observed by Gerharz during her study on the reconstruction and development of Jaffna (2014: 38). Jaffna has also opened itself to the world society, as already discussed. Because of the war, most of the well-off educated Jaffna Tamils have migrated and settled abroad or in other parts of the country, especially in the capital city of Colombo. This situation created a vacuum in Jaffna society which is increasing day by day. Because of this change, the well-being of the Jaffna society is lagging as most people are not interested in doing anything for their society. A few who are really interested do not have the support, either socially or economically to do so.

The Diaspora Tamils visit their places of origin once a year and share their new lifestyles and cultures from abroad, which is quite opposite to traditional Jaffna culture and heritage. The Diasporas mainly dress in Western clothes and behave like foreigners. Most of them speak foreign languages instead of Tamil and some even go on complaining about the minor problems that are visible in a small town like Jaffna. Highly influenced by this diaspora culture, the Priest said, “many of the young generations are trying to adopt those cultures, thus making Jaffna a place with mixed cultures”. With the end of the war, many Sinhalese have settled in various parts of the peninsula, which has led to decreasing Tamil dominance in Jaffna.

6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

In contrast to the narrators who have already been introduced, there are some people, who have either moved to the capital city of Colombo or have migrated to India during 1990s. Mostly educated Tamils from Jaffna migrated to Colombo to find better prospects for further education and employment, to go abroad or to escape the hardships of the ongoing war. Initially, they had to adapt to the multi-ethnic society in Colombo, which is comprised of Sinhalese, Tamils, Tamil-speaking Muslims, Burghers and
foreigners (Gerharz 2014), which was indeed a hard task. Eventually, they managed to survive nicely in their new locales and to establish themselves. Their children, who were very young when they were displaced, have grown up amidst the city life and are reluctant to return to town life, all over again. They too have established themselves and they are doing quite well in Colombo and have managed to set up their own identity among the different ethnic groups. In this part, I am going to narrate the stories of such grown up children who were displaced from Jaffna at a very young age and have been settled in Colombo. Furthermore, unlike Jaffna, Colombo provides a highly developed educational infrastructure and employment in the government, as well as in the private sectors. It is often considered to be a challenging situation, especially to the youngsters, as they are becoming g more and more detached from their traditional homes due to professional and personal reasons.

Most of the Tamil refugees in India, whom I interviewed, expressed a strong hatred towards Sri Lanka, specifically, towards the government. They do not want to return to a place where they would not have freedom of speech or freedom to move. They want the life of freedom they experience in India. They want a place where they can have a better future for themselves and their children. Therefore, all these people experience commonality by sharing the common experience of integrating into their present location and not returning to their former homes in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka. Their aspirations about a good life, are also a common factor in their decisions to return among all these aforementioned people.

“I am originally from Vavuniya. Since 1990s, staying in a refugee camp in Tamil Nadu. During the riots of 1983, many moved abroad while my parents chose India to feel secured. As India is near, some of our relatives were in India and lastly have the same culture and traditions, my parents decided to migrate to India and return after six months when things would change in Sri Lanka. I came to India in 1990 with my parents and elder brother and elder sister leaving behind one elder sister in Sri Lanka with our grandfather though she came here in 2008”.

Ramamurthy15, is working at a Chennai-based NGO in India. In his case, the distanced relationship with Vavuniya reinforced the lack of social and emotional connection to his hometown. He was born in

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15 Ramamurthy, a Hindu Tamil boy aged 27 years migrated to India in 1990. He is originally from Vavuniya. At present, he is staying in Chennai. He was interviewed on May 4, 2013 in Chennai.
6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

Vavuniya, but migrated to India at age four and have been staying there since then. He does not identify himself with the people from his locality or with the place itself, largely because he was very small when he migrated and none of his relatives are there except for his elder brother who has returned closing off all ties to their family. He has neither the basis for creating symbolic roots to his place of origin nor the social network of relatives. In this case, time has played an important role in forming his self, both with changing his identities throughout his lifetime and in the sense that time is an intrinsic component of identity. The dimension of time orientation, in fact, describes the location of one's identity in the future or else in the past.

When Ramamurthy migrated, his home gradually became, as stated by Wiborg in her article, “marginal as a social arena” (2004: 425). Most of his relatives and friends migrated with them, either to India, or abroad. So, he does not consider anybody returning to his home in Vavuniya as his close relative or friend. Most of his relations are in South India and he seldom meets them on holidays. Thus, Vavuniya has lost its importance to him as locally based social relationships. These elements are significant factors in the development of attachment to a place. As argued by Mesch and Manor, attachment to a place might develop through direct experiences with the local environment (1998: 505) which is totally lacking in Ramamurthy. Place attachment results out of a positive evaluation of locale. This means that people who express a high level of satisfaction with the physical and social attributes of the local environment, certainly express a higher degree of attachment, regardless of the extent of their involvement in locally based social relationships as has been stated by the aforementioned authors (1998: 506). In a similar way, Ramamurthy, being away from Vavuniya for more than two decades, has not had the opportunity to evaluate his birthplace and he cannot feel the satisfaction with the physical and social attributes that his locale has to offer. This situation has created a strange kind of hatred towards his hometown because he cannot remember anything from the past, neither can he position himself with that place. “I do not want to return to Sri Lanka. I do not think that I have any kind of special feelings for Vavuniya or for the very few relatives still staying there. India is my motherland. I was not born here but have spend most of my time in India”.

He does not want to return because he considers India to be his motherland. In India, he could move and talk freely, aspire to have a good life, good health, and happiness, and lead a decent life. So, he does not want to leave all these great factors and start a new life full of uncertainties and struggles back
home. From his Sri Lankan counterparts, he has come to know that they need to rebuild their houses to make them habitable places because trees have grown within them and they have become ‘haunted places.’ He does not want to spend his income to rebuild his home in Sri Lanka; he wants to save his income for a good future instead.

In the Sri Lankan context, an attachment to Ur is very normal. The majority of the displaced persons I interviewed, expressed their attachment to their Ur and also related themselves to their traditional cultures. However, there are exceptions like Ramamurthy who does not feel that he belongs to the place of his origin. He contrasts the life in India to his life in Sri Lanka he heard from his parents: “Unlike Sri Lanka, there is freedom to speech, freedom to move and freedom for almost everything in India. I do not want to return to a place of utter military control and where we could not have the freedom to live”.

By emphasizing his values and priorities, Ramamurthy demonstrates that he distinguished himself socially, culturally and politically from the Sri Lankan locality and its people. He sees himself to be Sri Lankan by birth, but does not attach a positive attitude to his birthplace. He does not feel any kind of attachment to Vavuniya, his place of origin. Like Eshwari, Ramamurthy also presented a very negative image of his Ur without knowing anything about his home. He does not feel like knowing his birthplace, instead, he opted for applying for Indian citizenship sooner or later.

Another story of a refugee in Tamil Nadu also explains her detachment to her Ur in Sri Lanka.

“What is the point in returning?” asked a Tulsi16, a 33-year old lady at one of the camps in Tamil Nadu. “We are living a so-called decent life here, my husband is working in a Chennai-based NGO and drawing a satisfying salary and our children are going to school and are doing good. We also get help from the government in terms of cash and other benefits. But, in our hometown in Vavuniya there is

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16 Tulsi, a Christian-Tamil lady was interviewed on May 16, 2013 in Tamil Nadu. She came to India with her parents in 1988 and since then have been staying here. She migrated at a very younger age of 8 years old, so she could hardly remember the good old days from her past home. Only she could remember the firings, bombings and the scary environment all around her. As it became really difficult to survive amidst this situation, Tulsi’s parents, with their other three children, decided to leave the country for good. They decided to migrate to Southern India as it is the nearest place and also it is the cheapest one. The culture is also the same. So it is the best for them to move to India. They even thought of returning within a few months after things get calm down, unfortunately that few months did not arrive yet. 25 years have passed by, Tulsi got married and have three children.
nothing. No employment, no chance of higher studies for my children. We have nothing left there, our relatives, who have returned, are asking us to stay here, as life would be really difficult after return…”.

Tulsi has been living quite a decent life in Tamil Nadu with her husband working at a NGO. Her three children were studying hard to establish themselves in their life. Because they are in Tamil Nadu, her children have had the chance to learn English, which is very unlikely in Sri Lanka. In addition to her husband's income, they also receive monetary help from the Tamil Nadu Government along with rice, kerosene, and sugar at subsidized rates, free housing, free electricity, free medical aid, and free education until a certain age. While visiting other refugees in the camp, I observed that many of the families even enjoy the luxury of refrigerators and television sets with cable. Thus, the socio-economic conditions of the refugees in Tamil Nadu, is considered to be better off than those living in the welfare centers in Jaffna.

Like several others in the camp, Tulsi is also reluctant to return to her hometown in Vavuniya because of the lack of facilities. She wants her children to prosper. But if they return, this prosperity is most likely not possible. Besides, nothing which belongs to Tulsi and her family is left in Vavuniya. They would have to begin from nothing, her husband would have to look for a new job, they have to admit their children to a new school and so on. Getting a job is not an easy task, because there is huge unemployment in the region. Additionally, a few of her relatives who have returned, have asked them to stay in Tamil Nadu, because the political and socio-economic situation is not at all conducive to return.

Whereas, in Tamil Nadu, things are much better. Refugees, like Tulsi, do not face any discrimination from the locals. Her children have developed good impressions among their Indian friends and teachers, which is reflected in Tulsi’s statement:

“*We do not face any kind of discrimination from the locals. Everybody behaves quite well with us. My children get a lot of help from their Indian friends and teachers. My elder son is very good at studies, so his class teacher gives him free tuition as she knows that we are not qualified to educate him at home*.”
6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

In all these years, Tulsi and her family has grown relationships with their Indian counterparts based on mutual love, trust, and help. Unfortunately, this friendly relationship between the locals and the refugees was not the same throughout the years:

“The relation became bitter in the 1990s with Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination, but things have improved now. Only things that have changed are the food habits and the language. Though, I cook our traditional foods like kottu roti, hoppers and string hoppers, my children like to eat Indian dishes. For them, I cook Indian dishes quite often. Though, South Indian Tamil is a bit different from our Tamil, yet we have adopted to this language as it has been already 30 years that we are staying here. Otherwise, everything has remained the same”.

Relations between the Sri Lankan refugees and the local Tamil population have been dynamic. The ethnic factor has acted as a cementing force between the locals and the refugees in the initial years, but the picture has changed substantially since then. In fact, the response of the government and civil society has changed in every phase of exodus. In the first phase in 1983, the locals had demonstrated with placards demanding security for the persecuted Tamils across the Palk Straits. Upon arrival, they were warmly welcomed. The Central Government as well as the State Government, geared up the administrative machinery to accommodate the incoming refugees. By the end of the 80’s, the situation had begun to change, the warmth had been waning and host fatigue had begun to set in. Locals were also wary of the internecine warfare among different Tamil groups in Tamil Nadu. The Central Government gave a general order that incoming refugees should be allowed to enter the country to stay. There were no visa restrictions and deportations were not applied. Schools and colleges admitted students without any hesitation. The State Government also reserved seats in professional courses and polytechniques for the Sri Lankan refugees. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE suicide bomber in May 1991 acted as a key a key deteriorating factor in the relationship between the locals and the refugees. Every Sri Lankan Tamil was seen as an LTTE cadre or sympathizer. There was friction and hostility from the locals and regular police checks in every Sri Lankan house. Special measures were adopted by the Tamil Nadu police to keep a regular watch on the activities of all the refugees in the camps. They also had informers within the camps to keep track of any suspicious movements. Apart from the regular Naval Coast Guard, the State Government deployed its own special force for surveillance on the coastline. The focus of Indian diplomacy also shifted towards persuading
6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

Colombo to repatriate refugees. Schools and colleges took tough measures when admitting Sri Lankan students insisting that every student produce a “no objection certificate” from the police station along with their application forms. This experience proved to be harrowing for genuine students. Seats reserved for the Sri Lankan students were also withdrawn. After concerted efforts, such seats have been restored. The Relationship between the two groups has also started improving and it is gaining strength again.

Attachment and its contrasting images

The narratives explored in this section demonstrate how the displaced persons express their attachment to their Ur in various ways. These expressions range in their depiction of attachment from closeness to separation and in the descriptions of home from the idyllic to the narrow minded. A positive image is maintained by Mr. Rahman, Farzina, Sangeetha, Tariqur, and Samara who have already returned due to a strong sense of attachment to their Ur. They believe that growing up in Jaffna has given them the opportunity to get in close contact with nature, which has played a pivotal role in the formation of their self-identity. For them, nature, environment, culture, and people are the most important components for home-making and these factors are only available to them in Jaffna, which makes it home. Despite this strong attachment, they are strongly disappointed with the experience of return because of the changes to the environment in their homes which they are now witnessing. Not only the environment has changed, but their people and culture has also changed. Most of the people they have known have either displaced to some other parts in the country or have migrated abroad. New, unknown persons have replaced the old ones. Their communities have also changed, becoming a mixed culture with the Hindus, Christians and Muslims all residing in the same area.

Displacement not only has changed the social and cultural dimensions of community, but it has also changed the economic perspectives of these people. Before displacement, most of them were residents in nicely built big houses with lots of plantations in front. During the war, most of their houses were destroyed or partially damaged and would need to be reconstructed. But that requires a huge amount of money, which is not possible for them to have now. Those residing at the welfare centers have no proper earnings, but have to feed their whole family. So, it is really difficult for them to save money for rebuilding their home after return. In most cases, people are not in a situation to rebuild their homes in
6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

the same old pattern. They have started from nothing after return and they do not have anyone who might help financially. For the time-being, they are only trying to make their homes a place to live in.

A slightly different case is observed in the story of Mrs. Shantha, who is in a dilemma, a nostalgic yet an ambivalent position- whether to return or to stay back. She has linked elements at her present location in Colombo to her traditional home in Jaffna and has mostly settled down in the capital city. This nostalgic image conforms to the increased emphasis on locality and heterogeneity as a reaction against broader globalizing and homogenizing tendencies (Boissevain 1992). One way of looking at the ambivalence felt by Mrs. Shantha is in terms of a journey from a distinct traditional rural lifestyle to a totally urban lifestyle combining spatial displacement and geographical mobility. This kind of a journey has created a feeling which makes her attached to both the rural lifestyle in Jaffna and the city life in Colombo at the same time. The time span influences her attachment to both the places. She has left Jaffna and settled in Colombo for more than twenty years. This gap of two decades has influenced Mrs. Shantha's way of thinking towards life. She enjoys the luxuries and the facilities that Colombo offers, but at the same time, misses the quietness of Jaffna and the home that the couple built with their love and affection. This makes it difficult for her to decide which way to go. If she had been living in Jaffna, then this type of dilemma would not have occurred.

Negative images have been presented by quite a few interviewees who have practically no attachment to their homes and do not plan to return. The reason for their relocation occurred, more than two decades ago. They have already asserted their own individual attachments to their new locations, diminishing their attachments to their Ur. They are fortunate enough to have been relocated from a rustic countryside to sophisticated urban areas, which are the influencing factors for their return. For Eshwari and Ramamurthy, not only is the urban lifestyle the sole factor in their decision-making process, but time also played a vital role. Both of them were born in the Northern provinces of Sri Lanka, but migrated to different places soon after. With the passage of time, they kept on forgetting more and more details about their places of origin and became more attached and well-accustomed with the culture and traditions to the life in their displaced places. For them, their present places of residence are their Ur.
6.5 Detachment/ non-attachment

All these different images exhibit a diverse range of attachments to home through people and memories. Thus, attachment to homes becomes a way of talking about social and cultural attachment, as illustrated by these narratives recounted here. The attachment that these people ascribe to their homes come from spatially encoded social and cultural attachments as described by Wiborg (2004). However, she asserts that living in a place is not a necessary condition for attachment to it (Wiborg 2004: 429) as is depicted in Mrs. Shantha's narrative. Though they are away from home, they still have a strong sense of attachment.

6.6 Concluding remarks

From the narratives portrayed here, I argue that most of them still feel intense attachment to their Ur through past memories, emotions, and material, and immaterial properties. Initially, Mrs. Shantha experienced different forms of exclusion in Colombo, yet succeeded to recreate her attachment at the new place while keeping attachment to her past life in Jaffna. Compared to the kind of attachment that the original place used to have upon her, it becomes more challenging to have new attachments and ties at the new location. In contrast, there are few others, like Eshwari, who have negative vibes about their Ur, where they once lived, and they are emphatic that they will never return there because the long spans of time they have been away and their basic socio-economic needs. There are even some people, like Ramamurthy, who have not felt anything for their Ur, because they were very young at the time they were of displaced. They have nothing to recall. For them, their present location is their home, as they consider their Ur as a strange place and cannot relate that place with themselves. People like Tulsi, being housed at refugee camps are most likely to get rid of their 'refugee status' but not very much in favor of returning. Therefore, I conclude that each of my interviewees experience different kinds of attachments depending on so many diverse factors.
Chapter 7: Conclusion: an outlook

This thesis is an end product of the four-year research project on the displaced Sri Lankan Tamil persons, residing not only in the war-affected areas of Jaffna, but also in the capital city of Colombo and in Tamil Nadu, the southern state of India. It is aimed at analyzing the articulation of the displaced persons about their concepts of 'home' and 'belonging' and it answers the main research questions. The findings reveal the undocumented relationship of the displaced persons to their Ur and their capability to adapt to the new environment as well as their degree of attachment to their homes. This project has integrated the two concepts of 'home' and 'attachment' into one research by keeping everyday interactions of the subjects in focus.

7.1 My findings in a nutshell

The empirical part of this thesis (chapters 5 and 6) interprets the findings of the two main research questions:

1. How do the IDPs and the refugees construct the notion of 'home' and 'belonging'? What makes home for them?
2. What kind of attachment do DPs have to their homes? How do DPs negotiate with resettlement and un-homing?

The first question has been answered in Chapter 5. This chapter has demonstrated the conceptualization of home among diverse categories of displaced persons staying in both the countries and has also examined the elements of home-making. These elements are mostly defined in terms of social relations, nature, culture, identity, social status, economic benefits, retrospective memories, imprisonment, estrangement, and threats. Examining the narrations about home, it is observed that the DPs construct and reconstruct the meaning of home depending on different priorities and experiences. The narratives also portray the choices of elements that make home for them. For instance, most of the Tamil and Muslim youths who have returned to their homes in Jaffna after displacement, believe memories (both good and broken), people (family and neighbors), and ambiance (safety and security) are the main elements of home-making. Unfortunately, the young returnees failed to identify these elements after their return in present day Jaffna. According

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1 I have already discussed my research questions in chapter 1.

2 Diverse categories of people:
- Tamils/Muslims
- elderly/youth
- Jaffna/Colombo/India
- returnees/migrants
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

to them, whatever they used to enjoy at their homes before displacement, have become memories of the past. They could not relate to the present as everything has changed. The places where they once spent their leisure times are either destroyed or are under military control. The good memories of these places have shifted to broken ones. Also, they reminisced about the good old days spent with their family, relatives and friends because almost all of them have either migrated or died due to the war thus creating a vacuum in the neighborhoods. Currently, there is no one around with whom the youngsters feel at ease. Moreover, the environment at their homes has also deteriorated after the war. Safety and security issues are at stake. Because they have witnessed the war so closely, they are always in a state of fear and trauma and the presence of military has still kept that fear alive in them. Therefore, it becomes quite difficult for them to enjoy and live their lives in their places of origin. Additionally, there are no job opportunities in Jaffna and very little scope of higher education. Hence the youngsters are not hesitating to move out of their homes for higher studies or in search of a better future. Thus the attachment towards their homes has been converted to detachment.

The displaced young persons in Colombo are reluctant to return to their homes in Jaffna because of the lack of opportunities and facilities. They have been away from their homes for more than two decades and are now well-accustomed to the city life in Colombo. If they go back, it will be very difficult for them to adjust to the rural environment of Jaffna. In addition, most of their relatives and friends have migrated elsewhere and the environment of Jaffna isn’t conducive to live in post-war days. Apart from this, their properties are either destroyed or are in need of renovation. Furthermore, they cannot obtain the kind of jobs and the amount of salary that they are getting in Colombo. Therefore, these categories of persons depict people, good life and nature to be the elements that make it home.

Young Tamil refugees, who migrated to India at a very early age of four or five years, hardly have any memories from their past homes in Sri Lanka. They view their Ur to be a strange and unknown place. Most of their relations are in India and nobody is left in Sri Lanka. Return will be a 'new uprooting', for them as Sri Lanka is a completely new country to them. In addition, the experiences they gained at their present homes influence the meaning of their homes which play a vital role in their decision to return. They have gradually integrated legally, socially and economically with their present locales. Therefore, homes to them are their places of residence and they portray people and environment as the elements of home-making.
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

The middle-aged Tamils and Muslims in Colombo view post-war return as building up a life in an environment which was once familiar but has now turned to be a strange place. Most of them are unaware if their home still exists or not. The civil war has changed the social meaning of their homes where they once lived. Nevertheless, their past homes have become a place to relax and spend a couple of days, keeping all kinds of tension and work pressure aside. They are now happy to be able to settle down in the urban areas far away from their rural places of origin. Displacement has come as a blessing for them because of which, they could prosper in their lives and enjoy their present stature. So, they are not at all ready to leave their secure life and return to a rural life full of uncertainties. Safety issues are also there. Moreover, like the youngsters, none of the relations or friends of the middle-aged groups are staying in their neighborhoods. Hence these groups also consider nature, family, friends, safety, and better opportunities as the key ingredients of home-making. A rather different view has been put forward by the middle-aged female returnees in Jaffna who regard safety, security and freedom of self to be the key elements of home-making.

The displaced elderly Tamils and Muslims³, both in Colombo and India, feel emotionally and spiritually attached to their past homes in different ways. It is through which they identify themselves. It is the soil, air and water at their Ur through which they can identify themselves. In spite of it, all of them do not want to return because of personal and professional reasons. Most of them have integrated either in Colombo or in India, yet they are living in a state of alienation due to differences in culture and traditions. They wanted to return to their former homes to embrace death on their own soil. However, that has become impossible as they do not wish to stay away from their children who are presently well-settled in India, Colombo and abroad. Also, they have succeeded in establishing themselves at their present locations, so returning to Jaffna again means a life full of uncertainties where they have to start afresh. Thus, the elder generations are spending their days yearning to visit their homes once before they die. In contrast, those who have returned after decades to their homes in Jaffna feels disappointed and alienated as things have changed entirely. Still, they are ready to die on their soil. Hence the elderly view soil, air, water, culture and tradition as the main elements which make a home.

³ There are very few Muslims who have migrated to India due to the war. However, I did not get the scope to interview any of the Muslims in India.
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

The Tamil IDPs at the welfare centers in Jaffna, irrespective of their age groups, view their home as a source of income and as a means of regaining social status which is why they are eagerly counting the days to return. They emphasized on the fertile soil, its sweet water and the whole landscape of their home. It has already been over three decades that they are away from their own lands and not yet allowed to return due to several political reasons. A happy and healthy life can only be maintained with due respect and identity and that is only possible if they go back. Thus, besides soil, water and landscape, social status and identity are also the main elements used for home-making.

In contrast, the Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu are of completely different views. The young and middle-aged Tamils say home is made up of peace, safety and security, which are unavailable at their Ur in Northern Sri Lanka. Having fled a place of violence and bloodshed, the refugee camps of India were considered as haven. Also, they have grown an attachment towards the country because of their long duration of stay. Their lives in India are without fear of being arrested, interrogated or killed. In addition, most of the properties are destroyed due to the war. Because of these reasons, they are reluctant to return. Also, in India, they are getting help from the government in terms of money, food and clothing. If they return to Sri Lanka, they have to start from scratch as everything is gone. Nobody will provide any kind of help to them. They have to do everything on their own. Moreover, their children are studying at schools in India. If at this moment, they abandon this life to go back to their past homes, their children will face difficulties in coping up with the schools in Sri Lanka as the education system in the two countries is totally different. Quite a number of the middle-aged and young generation refugees risked their lives and migrated to Australia by boat in search of a better future. During these voyages, many have fallen prey to dangerous human smuggling networks or have gone missing in the sea, while others have been caught by the Indian authorities and are languishing in prisons.

On the contrary, most of the older ones are willing to return to rejoin their family and friends and die on their own soil. For them, soil makes up what is called home or Ur. Also, they want to reclaim their owned properties in Sri Lanka which were handed over to their relatives while leaving. They believe if they do not reclaim their properties they will be encroached either by the Sri Lankan Government or by other IDPs. Moreover, they feel it is really difficult to survive as refugees as they are denied any legal rights and they are looked upon as 'refugees' in India.
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

From the above analysis, I argue that the various categories of displaced Sri Lankan persons consider a variety of elements like people, nature, culture, tradition, soil, good life, identity, social status, and safety for home-making.

In the next part, I have documented the kind of attachment (chapter 6) that the different categories of displaced persons have towards their Ur. I have attempted to elaborate on the notion of attachment (to Ur) from its relatively strong to its relatively weak form among the said group of persons. I argue that people from different age groups, genders, class, and caste have different kinds of attachments to their homes.

I will begin with the Tamil and Muslim returnees of Jaffna who returned to their homes after almost twenty years of displacement. They returned because of the strong sense of attachment they have towards their Ur even though many among them were unaware of the conditions of their homes. They believed that growing up in Jaffna gave them the opportunity to get in close contact with nature which has played a pivotal role in the formation of their self-identity. One of the most important reasons for their return is to regain their lost social status which they missed at their displaced locales. In addition, the purpose of return was not only to acquire what had been lost but also to end the uncertainty, insecurity, fear, and terror. Especially for those who have not been able to acquire a better social status while being displaced, the aim of returning was to start a new life after having suffered endless hardships. Undoubtedly, there were high expectations from the return but each interviewee was confronted with a deep sense of disappointment due to the changed environment at their homes which they are witnessing at present. And this urged them to reconsider and renegotiate their relationship to their places of origin. Life has also become difficult after return as they have to make a fresh start. They felt the difference in post-war Jaffna than in pre-war days. Familiar places have become unfamiliar. Upon their arrival, they observed visible changes that have taken place in their areas. Some of the places have even become unrecognizable. Most of the houses are broken and abandoned. Trees have grown all around them. Fields are overgrown. The old mosques are now demolished. Not only has the environment changed, but the people and culture have as well. Most of the people familiar to them have either been displaced to some other parts of the country or they have migrated abroad. New, unknown persons have replaced the old ones. Their communities have also changed which have now
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

become a mixed culture with Hindus, Christians and Muslims all residing at the same place. They are alienated at their own homes. Due to displacement, the economic perspectives of these people have also changed. Previously, most of them were residents of nicely built large houses with lots of plantations in front. During the war, most of their houses were destroyed or partially damaged and are now in need of reconstruction. The returnees require a huge amount of money which is currently impossible. Despite their dire living at present in Jaffna, they compared their current situation favorably to the 'awful' years of displacement. No other place than Jaffna could tempt them. Jaffna, for them, is a 'home' which offers a story about former sociality and emotional and spiritual sustenance.

Among the young Tamil returnees, many have left their homes in order to pursue higher studies. Due to the war, they have lost almost everything, so they intend to support their family with the income that they will be earning after finishing their studies. They want to earn a decent amount of money which will help their families relive the times they used to live in in the pre-war days. They are more likely to give importance to having a high status job which will enable them to earn enough money to support their families. Higher education is considered as desirable and is becoming increasingly necessary for fulfilling their ambition of earning cash. Unfortunately, this is not at all possible if they remain in their hometowns as there is no scope for higher studies.

The IDPs at the welfare centers in Jaffna also have an intense sense of attachment to their Ur, to the soil, to the landscape and the sweet water. They are waiting to return in order to regain their lost lives and social status. Ur is conceptualized as their source of income and they are confident that within a year of their return, they would be successful in regaining their lost lives that they enjoyed 30 years back. This is because of the fertility of their lands which will help them start their earnings within a very short span of time. Furthermore, they suffer from an inferiority complex because of the discrimination they face from the locals, who are staying outside the welfare centers. Thus their return will help them prosper economically as well as to regain their lost social status. Their keenness to return has also given them the strength to fight for their lands against the government.

The elderly persons who have integrated either in Colombo or Chennai have different feelings about their attachment and return to their homes. They are in a dilemma because their attachment towards their homes represented a nostalgic, yet ambivalent position, whether to return or to stay back. They
have linked elements at their present homes to the traditional homes in Jaffna. This nostalgic image conforms to the increased emphasis on locality and heterogeneity as a reaction against broader globalizing and homogenizing tendencies (Boissevain 1992). And they are ambivalent in terms of their journey from a distinct traditional rural lifestyle to a totally urban kind of lifestyle which is a combination of spatial displacement and geographical mobility. Because of this, they have become attached to both the rural lifestyle of Jaffna and the city life of either Colombo or Chennai simultaneously. Already it has been more than twenty years that they are staying away from Jaffna. This gap of two decades has influenced their way of thinking towards life. They are in a delicate position as they cannot live without the luxuries and the facilities that the cities offer, and at the same time miss being in Jaffna. Their attachment to their homes also gets revealed in many different ways, such as replicating the same kind of houses and leading almost the same lifestyles at their 'new' locations. Therefore, they succeeded in recreating their attachment at the new places while keeping a connection to their past lives in Jaffna. To them, the temples, neighborhoods, public meeting places, shops as well as private homes brought back the feelings of attachment to the past experiences and gave way to future expectations. Their homes are related to their experiences of life course, as well as in the formation of their self-identity. Remembering their former homes is a way of keeping alive their past memories and relating it to their present lives to maintain their sense of continuity, identity and protecting themselves. However, there are even some among the elderly group, who are waiting for the right time and opportunity to return to their places of origin. Their attachment to Ur cannot hold them back for any reason.

In contrast, the middle-aged group of DPs settled both in Colombo and Chennai, showed how their attachment to their homes has become detachment and did not plan to return at any point of time. They have asserted their own individual attachments to their new locations diminishing their attachments towards their Ur. They consider themselves to be fortunate enough to have been displaced from the rustic rural countryside to sophisticated urban areas which are the influencing factors for their return. Apart from this, time also plays a vital role in their decision-making process. Their attachment to their former homes in Jaffna has changed with time. The long gap of more than twenty years has diminished their love and fondness for Jaffna. However, their narratives confirmed their intense attachment to their homes when they really wanted to return in the early 1990s after getting displaced. This is because at
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

that moment they had everything fresh in their minds from Jaffna, their home, the locality and so on. But as time went by, they kept on forgetting about Jaffna and became more attached to the city life because of the socio-economic, personal and professional reasons. They are socially and economically well-settled with their families at present and cannot think of settling back in Jaffna where they have to start from scratch once again. Also, none of their relationships or friends are in Jaffna. Still, they presume that if they get a chance to visit Jaffna, they would love to do it and spend a weekend or a vacation at their Ur. They really want to see, at least for once, the places which used to be their favorite hangouts. In doing so, they would recall their past memories of their places of origin where they were born and nurtured. Hence, to them, Ur means their place of origin and it does not matter where they are settled at present.

The young refugees in India, whereas, displayed complete detachment to their places of origin in Sri Lanka. The reason being they have begun to consider India to be their homeland due to the fondness that they started developing for the culture and traditions of the country. Moreover, they want to prosper in their lives, so they are hesitant to return to a place which cannot offer them any kind of opportunities. Nonetheless, their parents are nostalgic about their Ur, and they keep on telling stories to their children so that they know who they are and where they belong with the hope that they will build some kind of attachment towards their homeland. But they are in an ambivalent position whether to return or not. They are well aware that if they return, their lives will be full of uncertainties as they have to start from the very scratch with things having changed there. Also, the future prospects of their children there are very minimal in compared to their present locales. Yet, many dream of returning to their Ur as they are emotionally and spiritually attached to their places of origin.

Hence, it can be concluded that among the varied aspects of home, Ur constitutes a particular aspect which explicitly refers to the place of origin. Analyzing the different narratives, my argument highlights that most of the displaced persons feel intense attachment to their Ur through past memories, emotions, material, and immaterial properties. However, there also exists the feeling of alienation and detachment towards the Ur. Thus, this dissertation elaborates on what makes home and what kind of attachment DPs have to their homes, being in or away. Furthermore, the empirical analysis of the different conceptualizations of home and attachment show that meanings given to these concepts, at recent times, have changed with time and priorities. As a result, contrasting meanings of the two
7.1 My findings in a nutshell

concepts have developed. In addition, the definition of home and attachment varies amongst IDPs and refugees because the former are within their country of origin, but the latter have crossed the national borders and have taken shelter in other countries. Against this background, this thesis unveiled the kinds of attachment that different categories of DPs have to their past and present homes. Also, I investigated the strategies adopted by the returnees after returning to their places of origin. Finally, documentation has been done on the reasoning for integration of some DPs at their places of displacement as well as their strategies of home-making at their present locales.

7.2 Post-war development: a better future?

During the time of finalization of this thesis, six years had passed since the war ended. However, Jaffna and the rest of the Northern province are still very much affected by the aftermath of the war. According to Groundviews⁴, people are still left with raw wounds and very little hope for a better future. Also, reconciliation process is still in its embryonic stage, cases of abductions and torture are still very much in the news in the peninsula. With the reopening of A9 road in 2009, both the Sri Lankan armed forces and civilians benefited from the renewed opportunity to travel. The country’s economy also benefited from the reopening as trade links between the North and the South were renewed, and agriculture produce from Jaffna reached Colombo, resulting in reduction of prices. The country also experienced an increase of 46% in tourism since 2010 and each year it has been increasing steadily⁵. However, this reopening simultaneously brought along several disadvantages for the locals⁶.

In early 2013, at the time of conducting my fieldwork, the government faced the prospects and challenges of post-war reconstruction in the North-Eastern parts of the country. It executed a grand material reconstruction project shortly after recapturing the North-Eastern areas from the LTTE. This was done with the aim of rebuilding the war-torn areas and foster development. The government


⁶ Already discussed extensively in Chapter 5 and 6.
7.2 Post-war development: a better future?

sponsored large-scale development projects such as highways, railways, bridges, power plants, and industrial development in the war-affected regions. Therefore, the government showed genuine interests in developing the North-East with ‘the purpose of winning the hearts and minds of the Tamil community’ (Herath 2012: 50). This is because the Tamils have been in total opposition with the government for ages. My interviews with the media journalists and development experts from different national and international NGOs reflected on this issue. They stated that the government has not yet been successful in understanding the emotions of the displaced people. Many opined that the reconstruction projects have been done without any proper consultation with the stakeholders in the North-East which provided a lack of sense of ownership in those projects among the Tamil and the Muslims from the North-East.

Over the last few decades, the island nation experienced significant changes due to economic liberalization sectors such as “free trade zones, the urban construction boom, expansion of the service economy, and the urban informal sector, attracted rural labor creating wage pressure in the rural economy” (Hettige 2015: 78). Rising costs of production and food imports led the rural population to migrate to the urban areas with the aim for alternative sources of livelihood as they suffered huge losses. Gaps increased between the poor and the elite due to privatization. Rural population started to shift to Colombo looking for “new income opportunities” (ibid.: 79). Hence most of the people involved themselves in all kinds of legitimate and illegitimate sources of income in order to survive this economic pressure. These developments, as Hettige argued, resulted in the “spread of corruption and abuse of power” in the Sri Lankan society (ibid.: 79). Corruption has turned into a noteworthy issue at present, which is acting as a major hindrance in great administration and improvement of the nation. In addition, people driven by politics have now been appointed in the judiciary, due to which ordinary population has begun to lose confidence in the legal structure. Similar to the judiciary, the media such as newspapers, TV and radio stations have also become highly politicized. This resulted in the disposal of less independent ideas and opinions. They are compelled to distribute only government agenda, favor the government and defending their leaders, regardless of their benefits and faults (Hettige 2015: 88). However, certain media institutions, trying to remain unbiased, shared their own independent opinions and ideas. Unfortunately, by doing this they invite for themselves severe attacks which harms their institutions and journalists. Several such incidents happened during my stay in Sri Lanka.
7.2 Post-war development: a better future?

Educational standards have also declined over the ages. According to Hettige, only around ‘20%’ of the country’s secondary schools have science education in their curriculum (ibid.: 90). Universities and research institutes need sufficient money related assets the lack of which hinders its commitment to research and development.

The Annual Report of Sri Lankan Central Bank\(^7\) observed that there have been considerable developments in terms of the country's social and economic gains. A flight for outside vocation proceeds, till date, facilitating the pressure on unemployment and growing the inflows of remote trade to the country. However, a significant decline in the flight of domestic help was observed, reflecting the effectiveness of measures taken by authorities to minimize the reliance on the help in earning foreign exchange. A promising trend has developed as large numbers of semi to highly skilled professionals are leaving the country to render a higher level of foreign exchange earnings, while opening avenues for knowledge and technology transfer opportunities to the country. However, this very much shows the lack of employment opportunities.

Among several other changes that took place, the most significant was the presidential election which was held on January 8, 2015, two years ahead of schedule. It was seen as the most significant poll for decades in the island nation. Mahinda Rajapaksa, the former President of the country, conceded defeat, ending a decade of authoritarian rule that was spoiled by nepotism and corruption\(^8\) Maithripala Sirisena, a former loyalist and minister in Rajapaksa’s government, became the new President, who surprised everyone by defeating the country's longest-serving leader. Due to growing unpopularity of Rajapaksa among the civilians, the decision to contest the early polls was taken. His government failed to provide the benefits of the economic growth to the poor, especially in rural areas. Reasons for his defeat as published in the Guardian are manifold: “Firstly, corruption and apparent nepotism played a vital role. Secondly, his refusal to move on reconciliation with the Tamil minority and growing sectarian violence denied him votes among other constituencies. Thirdly, votes from the ethnic Tamil-


7.2 Post-war development: a better future?

dominated former war zone in the North and Muslim dominated areas appear to have played a key role in his downfall”.

This change in government, according to Jehan Perera, has led to a new relationship between the government and Tamil polity. President Sirisena’s victory at the election was made possible by the large majorities he secured in all electorates where the votes of the ethnic minorities, the Tamils, and the Muslims predominated. Following this election, the members of the government publicly acknowledged the multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature of the country and the need to govern the polity through democratic means. However, inter-ethnic tensions still are of great concern especially in the North-Eastern provinces. For instance, according to Perera setting up of Buddhist temples and statues in places where there are hardly any Buddhists has become a visible source of inter ethnic agitation. The putting up of these temples and statues has been visualized by the Tamils as a projection of Sinhalese domination in the North after the defeat of the LTTE. However, Christians in the North have also complained of Hindus doing the same and that large numbers of Hindu temples are coming up on encroached state and private lands using Diaspora money. It has been reported that there are many incidents of clashes on inter-religious grounds in the North and East. But the present government is totally against those who are in opposition to inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony. Both President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe have made it clear that they wish these incidents to cease and the law to prevail. In contrast to the politically motivated inter-religious tension, Perera also reported that there also prevails a degree of community level tension between the different ethnic communities living in the North and East that is having an impact on their lives.

7.3 On the road to recovery: Northern part of the island

Railways re-opening in the North

After years of conflict and natural disaster, Sri Lanka’s North is reawakening and revealing its beautiful beaches and islands, striking flavors and welcoming tourists. On October 13, 2014, according to media

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7.3 On the road to recovery: Northern part of the island

reports\textsuperscript{11}, the train to Jaffna has been reopened, resuming a journey after 24 years. A popular Sri Lankan rail service known as the "Queen of Jaffna" has also reopened the railway line which links the South to the North. Ex-President Rajapaksa inaugurated the newly renovated railway line up to Jaffna, which was closed 24 years ago during the civil war. It has extended its run further into the island’s former war zone, from Pallai to Jaffna, and goes all the way up to Kankesanthurai, the Northern most tip of the island, with a naval base and a port. Also, direct train services between Colombo and Talaimannar resumed on April 2, 2015\textsuperscript{12}. Branching off the Northern Line at Medawachchiya Junction, the line heads North-West through North Central and Northern provinces before stopping at the town of Talaimannar. The railway provides a vital link between North and South, transporting goods and people through the country. The train offers Jaffna's young a new experience: many of them have never seen a train before. Also, for decades, Tamils had used the service to travel the length of Sri Lanka, going back and forth between home villages in the North and jobs in the south. During the civil war, government troops used the service to access the North and the trains became a target for attack as they passed through areas controlled by the Tamil Tiger rebels. Thus with the reopening of the railway services, it has become much easier for Sri Lankan Tamils to travel to their homes in the North from the South. Therefore, getting home has become less time-consuming which might influence the decision of many DPs in Colombo to visit their places of origin often. Railways might also be assumed as a founding step in the development of the North. Similar to the southern parts, there is much hope for the Northern development as well which might influence the decision-making and home-making process of the Tamil DPs.

Resettlement process in the released villages of the North

More recently, the government under President Sirisena’s leadership has been releasing land taken over by the former government from the people in the North and East, even though his good intentions have been slowed down by legal processes. Among all other villages of the North, Valalai situated in the Valikamam East (Kopay) in the Jaffna district and in the Northern Province is a Tamil village that was


\textsuperscript{12} \url{http://www.asiantribune.com/node/86703} accessed on April 17, 2017.
7.3 On the road to recovery: Northern part of the island

occupied by the military for nearly 25 years before it was handed back to the villagers in March 2015 by President Sirisena. However, Ruki\(^{13}\) writes that two months have passed, yet, 10 out of 155 families who have returned, do not see hope for resettlement as no permanent or temporary housing has been provided for them. Women expressed their fears to live in open tents and huts. There is only one well with drinking water for the whole village. Transportation is also very poor as there is only one bus which runs just twice a day. Lack of dispensary, school, or even pre-school has made it hard for the returnees to survive. Due to the presence of military, children cannot access the nearby schools in Palali and Myliddy. They were not given any amount as rent for their land and other buildings which had been occupied illegally by the military for all these 25 years. Additionally, no compensation has been provided for livelihoods lost, particularly due to inability to engage in fishing and cultivation. The military has insisted the returnees to register with the military, in addition to the usual registration process by the civil authorities such as Grama Niladhari (Village Official), Divisional Secretariat and District Secretariat. The military has also demanded copies of all family documents as well as photographs of families.

It is indeed positive that the new president has started a process to hand over some land occupied by the military to people. However, it gives room to many questions regarding the resettlement process which remain unanswered. Why were even the basic preparations, such as temporary shelter, water, transport, health, educational services not arranged before the resettlement? Will the people be compensated for the long periods their land and properties were occupied with the income lost and the cost of reconstruction of properties and getting back to normal life? Why is the military engaged in collecting information and photos of people coming back to reside?

Since his election, according to media reports, President Sirisena has ensured that some of the immediate Tamil grievances are addressed or are in the process of being addressed. He replaced the two governors of the Northern and Eastern provinces, who were former military commanders, with those who are purely civilian and with a track record of sensitivity to the aspirations of the ethnic minorities. Palihakkara, appointed on January 27, 2015 as the new Governor in the North, was a member of the LLRC which produced a road map on national reconciliation for the country and has received

7.3 On the road to recovery: Northern part of the island

international support. Meanwhile, Governor Austin Fernando in the East was the defense secretary during the time of the Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE which was the period when the hope of a negotiated end to the war was at its highest. Additionally, there has been an opening of space for civil society activism and for the voicing of Tamil aspirations for a greater sharing of political power. In the context of May 18 and the declaration of Remembrance Day, there has been resurgence in the resolve of civil and political groups in the North to commemorate Tamils’ losses in the war. This was a space that was denied during the period of the previous government. The commemoration of the dead in the North will necessarily involve LTTE cadre. They were kith and kin of the people of the North.

7.4 Challenges for the future: expectation from the new government

The democratic space that has opened up under the present government needs to be used to strengthen the reconciliation process and not for the purpose of gaining narrow political advantage by divisive political statements. Data gathered from newspaper reports suggest that the need for reconciliation between all communities must be foremost in the minds of all Sri Lankans including political leaders. The genuine Tamil grievances that created conditions for the Tamil militancy need to be addressed urgently. The government's redefinition of May 18 to be a Day of Remembrance is one step forward in the process to national reconciliation.

Nevertheless, according to many of the developmental experts, whom I met in Colombo, there is a possibility of the civil war emerging again. During an interview, one of the UN officials in the capital city claimed that Tamil diaspora are building up another military insurrectionary group with their foreign money. If this is true, the government should look into it and make sure that no civil war crops up again. However, when the DPs were asked about their opinions on the emergence of another war, the answer was a strict ‘no, no’ at least for the short term. They believe that after so many years of war, the Sri Lankan Tamils are war-weary and struggling to earn a living. Yet, many also warn that the government runs the risk of alienating the minority if it does not act on political reconciliation.

Two and a half years have passed since Sirisena became the President, some expectations are yet to be fulfilled. A steady and balanced economic growth is anticipated from the present government in order to create new job opportunities, develop agriculture, industry, and improve educational opportunities. Resettlement and housing facilities for the displaced, and empowerment of the socially marginalized
7.4 Challenges for the future: expectation from the new government

and disabled including war victims, should be of prime concern. Welfare of the weak, disabled, the elderly, and the unemployed should be prioritized. A business friendly environment must be initiated to build up confidence amongst local and foreign investors. In order to achieve all these, the first and foremost task of the government is to appoint people with the right competence and credibility to key government positions\textsuperscript{14}. Besides, the new government should also address and take serious measures in order to prevent the continuing disappearances and investigate the truth, justice and reparations for the same that is still going on in the island\textsuperscript{15}. This is already the end of 2017, and granites (explosives) are still being found in several areas of Jaffna which had been buried during the war. The latest has been found on October 8, 2017 while cleaning to renovate a well at Thayiddy, Tellipalai in Jaffna\textsuperscript{16}. Therefore, it is also the duty of the government to look at such matters because these involve life risks and can cause serious injury.

7.5 Fate of the displaced persons...

Thus, I conclude this thesis with the hope that someday the findings of this research will provide some guidance in the understanding of the concepts of home and the attachment towards it. It is a sociological analysis which is also an account of experiencing the understandings of home and attachment, which showed the scope of return and resettlement for the Tamil displaced persons at their own Ur. However, recent developments in the country make the fate of these people doubtful. It is really easy to speak about these issues in paper, but I doubt that I will ever be able to understand what it actually means to be unhomed? The continuous political and military presence until now leaves these displaced persons without any scope of returning to their own homes and live a life of their own choice. I wholeheartedly hope that the displaced population will soon no longer be called 'displaced' and will be able to return to their own Ur. I hope that this day will come very soon and that the concerned authority will do so with the same enthusiasm as they did at the time of uprooting these people.


\textsuperscript{16} I came to about this issue from one of my informants in Jaffna.
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Appendix

Map 1: Internal Displacement in Sri Lanka

Appendix

Map 2: Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka, my study area

Source: https://reliefweb.int/map/sri-lanka/jaffna-district-sri-lanka-administrative-map

accessed on September 14, 2017.
Appendix

Map 3: Sri Lankan refugee camps situated around the state of Tamil Nadu, India

Source: OfERR India (collected during my field visit on May 22, 2013).
Appendix

Fig. 1: Construction and Re-construction of home in post-war Jaffna (Myliddi area)

![Construction & Reconstruction of Homes in post-war Jaffna](image1)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.

Fig. 2: Remnants of home in Jaffna (Myliddi area)

![Remnants of the homes, at present, in Jaffna.](image2)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 3: Newly built homes in Jaffna in 2013

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.

Fig. 4: Homes of Muslim Returnees in Jaffna (Moor Street)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 5: Some resettlements of Muslims in Jaffna (Moor Street)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 6: Jaffna (Moor Street)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 7: Welfare centers in Jaffna (Sababathipillai and Mallakam)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 8: IDPs in Jaffna Welfare center

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.

Fig. 9: Returnees resettled in Mathagal near Jaffna

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 10: Returnees resettled in Mathagal near Jaffna

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 11: Thalsevana Holiday Resort in Kankesanthurai, Jaffna

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Jaffna in February-March 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 12: Refugee camp at Kottapattu in Trichy (Tamil Nadu)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Tamil Nadu in May 2013.

Fig. 13: Refugee camp at Karur in Rayanur near Trichy (Tamil Nadu)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Tamil Nadu in May 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 14: Refugee camp at Valavanthan kottai near Trichy (Tamil Nadu)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Tamil Nadu in May 2013.

Fig. 15: Refugees in Gummidipoondi camp near Chennai (Tamil Nadu)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Tamil Nadu in April 2013.
Appendix

Fig. 16: Refugees at Karur camp in Rayanur near Trichy (Tamil Nadu)

Source: My ethnographic field-visit in Tamil Nadu in May 2013.
Appendix

**My questionnaire**

1. Could you please introduce yourself? (Name, age, family members, marital status, children, education, religion, occupation).

2. For how long have you been staying at this place?

   Based on the answer, I further carried on with my questions:

   **Those who have not yet returned**-

3. Kindly describe your journey from your birthplace to here.

   a. Why did you come here?

   b. How and when did you come here?

   c. Who were with you?

4. Did you face any problem after coming here? If yes what problems were they? Do you still face those problems? Did the NGOs or the National authorities help in settling down here? If yes, what kinds of help did they provide? If no, how did you survive? How do you earn your living here?

5. What are the differences that you feel living here and living at your home?

   a. Do you experience change in your life styles? Do you cook/have the same kind of food that you had at your home? Do you serve your traditional food from home to your guests?

6. Do you miss your home? Tell me about your home? How did you spend your time there? What were your daily routines?

   a. Is there any special thing which you miss the most at your home? Is there any special thing which you love the most here?

7. Do you want to return to your home? If yes, Why? If no, Why?
Appendix

8. Are you aware of the present condition of your home? If destroyed, do you want to rebuild it again? If you return, how do you plan to earn your livings?

9. What does your home means to you? Is it about a person or about material things or about security or about memories or a mixture of all these?

10. Do you face any kind of discrimination from the locals here? Did they welcome/help you during your initial days?

11. Do you feel any lack of physical home qualities like comfort, safety, social life, affordability and independence? Why?

**Questionnaire for the Returnees**

In addition to all these 11 questions, I also asked:

12. How do you feel to return to your home? Do you feel any kind of difference from the past? Or everything is just the same?

13. Do you have the same neighbors?

14. Do you feel the same kind of attachment to your home that you had previously?

**Questionnaire for the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu**

In addition, for the refugees in India, I asked:

15. Why did you chose to come to India? Kindly describe your journey.

16. Did you face any kind of problem from the Indian Tamils mainly during 1991?

17. What are the main differences between India and Sri Lanka?

18. If you return, then how are you going to survive there? What kind of jobs are you going to do there?
Appendix

These are the questions that I mainly posed before my interviewees. However, during the interview sessions, questions kept on changing depending on the answers I was getting.

Below are the few testimonies from the book, The Incomplete Thombu by Shanaathanan T. as referred in Chapter 4

1. I moved to Colombo during the Indian Army occupation of Jaffna. Home is about the moments we shared together as a family. I also remember the vegetation in my garden. I do not know how to express these fleeting memories. It is something you cannot catch hold of ... (document 1)

2. We lived in Keerimalai. The seashore, the roads, madams and the temple that we served come to my mind whenever I think about my home. This area was declared a HSZ and still remains so. For me, home is not just my house. The building alone does not have any meaning. For me, the people, the whole neighborhood and occasional gatherings are what it made home. Every year in our temple there was a Pongal. This has been what I missed most about my village. (document 5)

3. It is hard to nurture a jasmine creeper in the heavy winter of Toronto. I covered the plant with a blanket and kept it inside the house. Last summer it yielded four flowers. Their fragrance brought me back to my Jaffna house. ..(document 15)

4. The house that I live in now came under an air attack in 1990. It was the first night air raid by the government. Everything in the house was destroyed. I lost all my toys that I had kept since I was a child and all the glass bangles that I had kept in wooden boxes. I have since rebuilt my house but there are no toys and bangles to call it home. (document 74)
### Table 1: Details of Returnees from India (2006-2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voluntary Return</th>
<th>UNHCR's Return</th>
<th>Total number of members</th>
<th>Before/After the war</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>396</td>
<td></td>
<td>396</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>256</td>
<td></td>
<td>256</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2009-2015)</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>7083</td>
<td>8400</td>
<td>8400</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2015-2017)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2269</td>
<td>7083</td>
<td>12000</td>
<td>12000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OfERR India and Groundviews August 9, 2017 (Mayuran J.).

### Table 2: Mode of arrivals and returns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modes used</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Returns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>58166</td>
<td>18336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight</td>
<td>6319</td>
<td>9582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OfERR India (collected during my field visit).

### Table 3: Repatriation from India (as of February 2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Camp</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Thoppukollai</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lenavilaku</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>Anaiyur</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Place</td>
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<td>-------</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Tiruvathavur</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Uchapatti</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Trichy</td>
<td>Valavanthan kottai</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kottapattu</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Karur</td>
<td>Rayanur</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Irumboothipatti</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Perambalur</td>
<td>Duraimangalam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dindigul</td>
<td>Sivagiripatti</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Virupatchy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Pudupattu</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Puliyampatti</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sivaganga</td>
<td>Moongilurani</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Okkur</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Thalaiyur</td>
<td></td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Karaiyur</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>Mandapam</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>158</td>
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</table>

Source: OfERR Trichy (collected during my field visit).
Table 4: Population details of Trichy region as of January 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>CAMP</th>
<th>TOTAL NO OF FAMILIES</th>
<th>TOTAL NO OF PERSONS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TRICHY</td>
<td>KOTTAPATTU</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>1195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TRICHY</td>
<td>V.V KOTTAI</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>698</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>KARUR</td>
<td>RAYANOOR</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>KARUR</td>
<td>IRUMPOOTHIPATTI</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PERAMPALUR</td>
<td>THURAIMANGALAM</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PUTHUKOOTAI</td>
<td>AZHYANILAI</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PUTHUKOOTAI</td>
<td>LENAVILAKKU</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PUTHUKOOTAI</td>
<td>THOPUKKOLLAI</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>GOWRIPATTI</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>KARAIUR</td>
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<td>416</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>MOONGILURANI</td>
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<td>368</td>
<td>347</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>OKKUR</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>THALAZUR</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SIVAGANKAI</td>
<td>THAYAMANGALAM</td>
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<td>81</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>ADIYANUTHTHU</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>358</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>SIVIKIRIPATTI</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>PULIYAMPATTI</td>
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<td>446</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>THODANUTHTHU</td>
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<td>293</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>GOPALPATTI</td>
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<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>VIRUPATCHI</td>
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<td>304</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>DINDIGUL</td>
<td>PUTHUPATTI</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>400</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Source: OfERR Trichy (collected during my field visit).
## Table 5: Returnees and resettlements in Jaffna district (2013)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DS Divisions</th>
<th>Refugee returnees</th>
<th>IDPs resettled</th>
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<td></td>
<td>No. of families</td>
<td>No. of families</td>
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<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velanai</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayts</td>
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<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karainagar</td>
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<td>590</td>
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<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>2437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nallur</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandilipay</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chankanai</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uduvil</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thelipallai</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kopay</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chavakachheri</td>
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<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karaveddy</td>
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<td>2199</td>
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<td>Point Pedro</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>Maruthankerny</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>967</strong></td>
<td><strong>22952</strong></td>
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</table>

Source: OfERR Ceylon (collected during my field visit).
## Table 6: Camp population of Sri Lankan refugees staying in Tamil Nadu as of 1st November 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Camps</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>No. of Adults</th>
<th>Total No. of Persons</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Families</td>
<td>Single Families</td>
<td>0 to 5 Years</td>
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<td>989</td>
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<td>214</td>
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<td>Guadaloupe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>115</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Dambarli</td>
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<td>696</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>999</td>
<td>138</td>
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<td>Erode</td>
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<td>173</td>
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<td>432</td>
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<td>612</td>
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<td>326</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>Madurai</td>
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<td>Namakkal</td>
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<td>702</td>
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<td>72</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pudukkottai</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>262</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
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<td>584</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>192</td>
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<td>Salem</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sivaganga</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Vellore</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Virudhunagar</td>
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<td>974</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Special camp</td>
<td></td>
<td>108</td>
<td>19451</td>
<td>2944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [http://www.rehab.tn.nic.in/camps.htm](http://www.rehab.tn.nic.in/camps.htm) accessed on September 15, 2017.
Diotima Chattoraj (PhD)

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https://www.linkedin.com/in/diotima-chattoraj-phd94a9b077/

Phone: (+65) 94460697
Email: diotima.chattoraj@gmail.com

Summary:
• Researcher with more than five years of experience in Development Studies with a focus on migration.
• Extensive experience of field work (Jaffna, Colombo, Tamil Nadu) interviewing both self-settled displaced persons and those refuge at the camps.
• Analyzed data through MAXQDA software and proficient in SPSS, MS office, Linux (Ubuntu).
• Strong analytical and excellent scientific writing and communication skills.
• Excellent team player and capable of working with minimal supervision and under pressure.
• Proficient in 3 Languages (English, Hindi, Bengali) with knowledge of German (A1.2), French (basic).
• Experience of strategic programming and planning, implementation, monitoring and learning.

Experience:
Doctoral Research
IEE, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany
2012-2016
Project was partially funded by DAAD, Stipendien der Wilhelm und Günter Esser Stiftung and IEE. Constructed research proposal, reviewed literature, interviewed Displaced Persons at the camps, compiled and analyzed data qualitatively. Documented the outcome of the project in the form of a Thesis and was awarded with Magna cum Laude.

Internship
OfERR India, Chennai
April 2013- May 2013
Interviewed refugees at the camps of Tamil Nadu, compiled and analyzed data qualitatively.

Volunteer
Singapore Committee for UN Women, Singapore
September 2017
Working as a Table Concierge to raise funds in their SNOW gala event (22nd September 2017) which includes Live and Silent Auction.

Mayor’s Office on African Affairs’ (MOAA), Washington D.C.
May 2017- present
Working as a Community Grant Reviewer reviewing the proposals who applied for MOAA’s African Community Grant.

UNICEF, Washington D.C.
April 2017- present
Working as a member of UNICEF Congressional Action Team (CAT) to protect the rights of the world's most vulnerable children. Getting in contact with the Senator of VA and other Congressmen, organising workshops and events to raise awareness. Learning something new about UNICEF’s work on issues affecting children around the world, receive training on, and support in engaging their legislators on these issues.

JUMA Ventures, San Francisco, CA
June 2017-July 2017
Critically evaluate the Annual Report of the organization and providing inputs in improving its quality.

COSMOS, Kolkata, India
May 2011- Dec.2011
Assisted street children of Kolkata to enhance their reading and writing skills.

Education:
PhD: Development Studies
Institute of Development Research and Development Policy at Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany.
**Publications:**


**Scholastic Honors:**

1. Got selected twice from Rabindra Bharati University for the program “A New Passage to India” in Bielefeld University, Germany organised by DAAD.
3. Participated in a discussion, which was broad-casted through the radio, on political science in Kolkata.

**Workshops/ Conferences:**

- Had the privilege to interact with the honorary Chinese consulate general of Kolkata, Mr. Mao Siwei on “Present Indo-China relationship” in 2009.
- Accepted proposal for invited talk on Sri Lankan IDPs in RLC/ZEF International Fall Academy on “The Economies of the Commons: Reshaping Economic Education” on September 19-23, 2012, in Bonn, Germany funded by DAAD.
- Participated in “Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung” (CIM), a joint operation of GIZ and the German Federal Employment Agency, workshop for Indian returning experts from November 9-11, 2012, in Heidelberg, Germany funded by CIM.
- Accepted proposal for invited talk at CARFMS’14: Coherence and Incoherence in Migration Management and Integration: Policies, Practices and Perspectives in Montreal, Canada from 7-9th May 2014, funded by RUB Research School.
- Accepted proposal for invited talk at the 3rd PhD conference at the International Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) in The Hague (September 2014) funded by IEE, RUB.
- Selected to attend MOAA’s workforce development program held in Washington D.C. in April-May 2017.