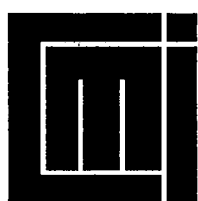


Population and Development Planning

A Demographic Study of the Hambantota Integrated
Rural Development Programme in Sri Lanka

Armindo Miranda and Soma de Silva

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Summary:

The present study, undertaken as part of the background research for an evaluation of the Hambantota Integrated Rural Development Programme (HIRDEP), analyses the demographic characteristics and trends of Hambantota district (leading up to a set of population projections by age and sex 1981-2011), assesses how demographic variables were taken into account in the HIRDEP planning process and discusses the impact of HIRDEP on the demography of the district. The study highlights inter alia the implications of the ongoing demographic trends in terms of employment for young adults and welfare for the elderly, whose numbers are set to grow very rapidly in the coming 20 years.

Sammendrag:

Denne studien, som er en del av bakgrunnsdokumentasjonen for en evaluering av HIRDEP, beskriver de demografiske forholdene i Hambantota distriktet (inkludert befolkningsprognoser frem til 2011), vurderer hvordan HIRDEPs planleggingsprosess tok hensyn til demografiske variabler og drøfter HIRDEPs innvirkning på befolkningsdynamikken i distriktet. Studien belyser bl.a. implikasjonene av de demografiske tendensene, for sysselsetting av unge mennesker og for sosial trygging av eldre mennesker, hvis antall vil øke meget raskt i løpet av de kommende år.

Indexing terms:

Demography
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Utviklingsplanlegging

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ADE	Assistant Director of Education
AGA	Assistant Government Agent
CO	Colonization Officer
DMO	District Medical Officer
GA	Government Agent
GN	Grama Niladhari
HIRDEP	Hambantota Integrated Rural Development Programme (sometimes spelled HIRDP)
MOH	Medical Officer, Health
MOMCH	Medical Officer, Maternal and Child Health
n.a.	not available (data)
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation
PHI	Public Health Inspector
PHM	Public Health Midwife
PIO	Plan Implementation Officer

Administrative nomenclature

Public administration at the district level in Sri Lanka is headed by a *Government Agent* (GA). The Government Agent office for Hambantota district is located in Hambantota town, where many (but not all) district level representatives of a number of departments have their offices. One of the notable exceptions is education, which has its district head-office in Tangalle.

Subordinate to the Government Agent are 11 *Assistant Government Agents*, with offices located in the following towns: Ambalantota, Angunakolapelessa, Beliatta, Hambantota, Katuwana, Lunugamvehera, Okewela, Suriyawewa, Tangalle, Tissamaharama and Weeraketiya.

Each AGA Division is divided into a number of very small *Grama Sevaka Divisions*, headed by a *Grama Niladhari*, who is the government official at the lowest geographical level.

The district's preventive health services are organized in 6 *Medical Officer (Health) divisions*: Beliatta, Hambantota, Katwana, Tangalle Tissamaharama and Walasmulla.

The district's education services are organized in 3 *Assistant Director of Education (ADE) areas* offices: Hambantota, Tangalle and Walasmulla. Each ADE office covers a number of *clusters*; for instance, Hambantota AGE comprises 7 clusters: Ambalantota, Debarawewa, Hambantota, Lunugamvehera, Magana, Suriyawewa and Tissamaharama.

From the electoral point of view, Hambantota district is divided into 4 constituencies called *Electorates*: Beliatta (corresponding to Beliatta and Okewella AGAs), Mulkrigale (Katuwana and Weeraketiya AGAs), Tangalle (Ambalantota, Angunakolapelessa and Tangalle AGAs) and Tissamaharama (Hambantota, Lunugamvehera, Suriyawewa and Tissamaharama AGAs). Each electorate is subdivided in a number of *polling stations*; at present there are 237 polling stations in the whole district.

1. Introduction

In 1991 the authors of the present study were commissioned to review the demographic aspects of the Hambantota Integrated Rural Development Programme (HIRDEP), as part of an overall evaluation of HIRDEP co-ordinated by the Chr. Michelsen Institute on behalf of the Evaluation Unit of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The present study is a revised version of the report produced in that context, stripped of the bureaucratic accoutrements required by the original purpose of the exercise. The authors' assumption is that some of the issues raised in the report about the integration of demographic concerns in regional development planning, or the report's attempt to use census data to explore regional socio-economic development themes could be of interest to a wider audience than those concerned by the evaluation report.

For those not familiar with regional development planning issues in Sri Lanka, a word about HIRDEP may be in order. HIRDEP is the Hambantota district version of the various regional integrated development planning (IRDP) exercises that were instituted in the late 1970's at the district level in Sri Lanka, with support from the World Bank, Norway, the Netherlands and Sweden. The main objective of such programmes is to enhance living standards in rural areas by allocating resources to low cost, short gestation, labour intensive productive investments, planned and implemented at the local level. By focusing development efforts on local needs and local initiatives, IRDPs were "to release the full potential of district resources through the removal of critical bottlenecks and constraints, particularly in plan implementation". In the case of HIRDEP specifically, the agreement signed in 1979 between Norway and Sri Lanka stipulated that "The Programme aims at achieving an increase in income, employment and production as well as improvement of social conditions and living standards of the men, women and children of the Hambantota District, with special emphasis on the poorest groups".

These exercises are far from being uniform in planning methodology or even in institutional build-up, a feature that some see as reflecting the preferences of the donor agency sponsoring each particular IRDP. Although there has been some debate as to where the differences lie and how important they are, Smith (1986:2) has argued convincingly for a distinction

between the 5-year plan, "blue print" approach favoured by the World Bank sponsored IRDPs and the rolling plans favoured by the bilateral donor agencies. Among these, Norway, in the case of HIRDEP favoured a "method of recurrent planning whereby information from ongoing activities is continuously fed into a revolving planning procedure" which in practice came to mean a rolling plan consisting of "an immediate action programme for the following year, an indication of commitments and proposals for the next two years and objectives, guidelines and policies for the longer term" (Smith, 1986:10). The broad objectives of IRDPs necessitated a multi-sectoral approach, and so HIRDEP encompasses activities mainly (but not exclusively) in water supply and irrigation, education, fisheries, agriculture, industry, settlement/community development, roads, and health. From inception in 1979 to 1990, Norwegian expenditure on HIRDEP totalled some NOK 150 million (USD 25 million).

Reviewing the demographic aspects of HIRDEP to us meant looking into three different kinds of issues:

First, to establish the demographic facts, what we call the demographic environment of HIRDEP: the population trends that have prevailed in Hambantota district from the inception of HIRDEP to the present and the medium term prospects, trying to quantify with the help of detailed population projections what will be the increased demand for social services and economic opportunities resulting from demographic change.

Secondly, to assess the impact of HIRDEP on the demographic situation of the district. We call this the evaluation of the development process in relation to demographic variables.

Thirdly, to examine how demographic factors were taken into consideration in HIRDEP's planning activities. We call this the evaluation of the planning process from the point of view of its sensitivity to demographic considerations.

The organization of the present study reflects this three-pronged approach: Chapter 2 maps out the demographic context of HIRDEP during the past 10 years and describes the most likely trends during the next two decades towards year 2011. Chapter 3 addresses the issues of integration of population variables in the HIRDEP planning process while Chapter 4 addresses the issues of the impact of HIRDEP on demographic trends in Hambantota. Building upon this material, Chapter 5 finally presents some recommendations for further strengthening HIRDEP's capacity to deal with socio-demographic parameters and issues.

The review process from which this study results drew on the patience, the generosity and the dedication of a large number of people who graciously put up with the inconvenience of impromptu visits, lengthy interviews, demands for vast amounts of unusual data, clarifications and all sorts of logistical assistance in the field, etc. As we issue this revised version of our report, we realize once again how fortunate we were indeed to have benefitted from the generous and kind co-operation of so many individuals both in Colombo and throughout Hambantota district. We would like to express once again our sincere gratitude to them all.

2. The demographic context of HIRDEP: past, present and prospects

2.1 The baseline situation

2.1.1 Data issues

Most of what we know about the demography of Hambantota district comes from the population censuses — the latest of which was taken in 1981. This was shortly after the official inception of HIRDEP in 1979, and can thus be considered to offer a picture of the baseline situation. As far as trends during the 1980's are concerned, the only statistical evidence available at the district level is the data on births and deaths compiled by the Registrar General's Office. For some particular purposes it might be possible to use more indirect evidence such as the statistics produced by the Commissioner of Elections on the number of registered voters, but that type of data is fraught with methodological difficulties. Given these constraints we have used the 1971 and 1981 censuses to establish not only the baseline situation but also the trends that had prevailed during the 1970's — so as to have some guidance about the possible developments throughout the 1980's. This situation is far from satisfactory and it serves as an illustration of the difficulties that the lack of more up-to-date statistical evidence is causing to the planning process. Until recently there had been hope that the new census, which was due to be taken in 1991, would solve the problem at least for a while. However, due to the disturbances prevailing in some parts of the country the census has been deferred; hence, it will be a while before a solution will be found.

2.1.2 Population size, growth and distribution

Hambantota district had in 1981 some 424,000 inhabitants and thus represented, in terms of population, a medium sized district in the context of Sri Lanka, the 15th among the island's 24 districts ranked by number of inhabitants. It comprised less than 3 per cent of the national population. In 1971, Hambantota had only about 340,000 inhabitants; population growth

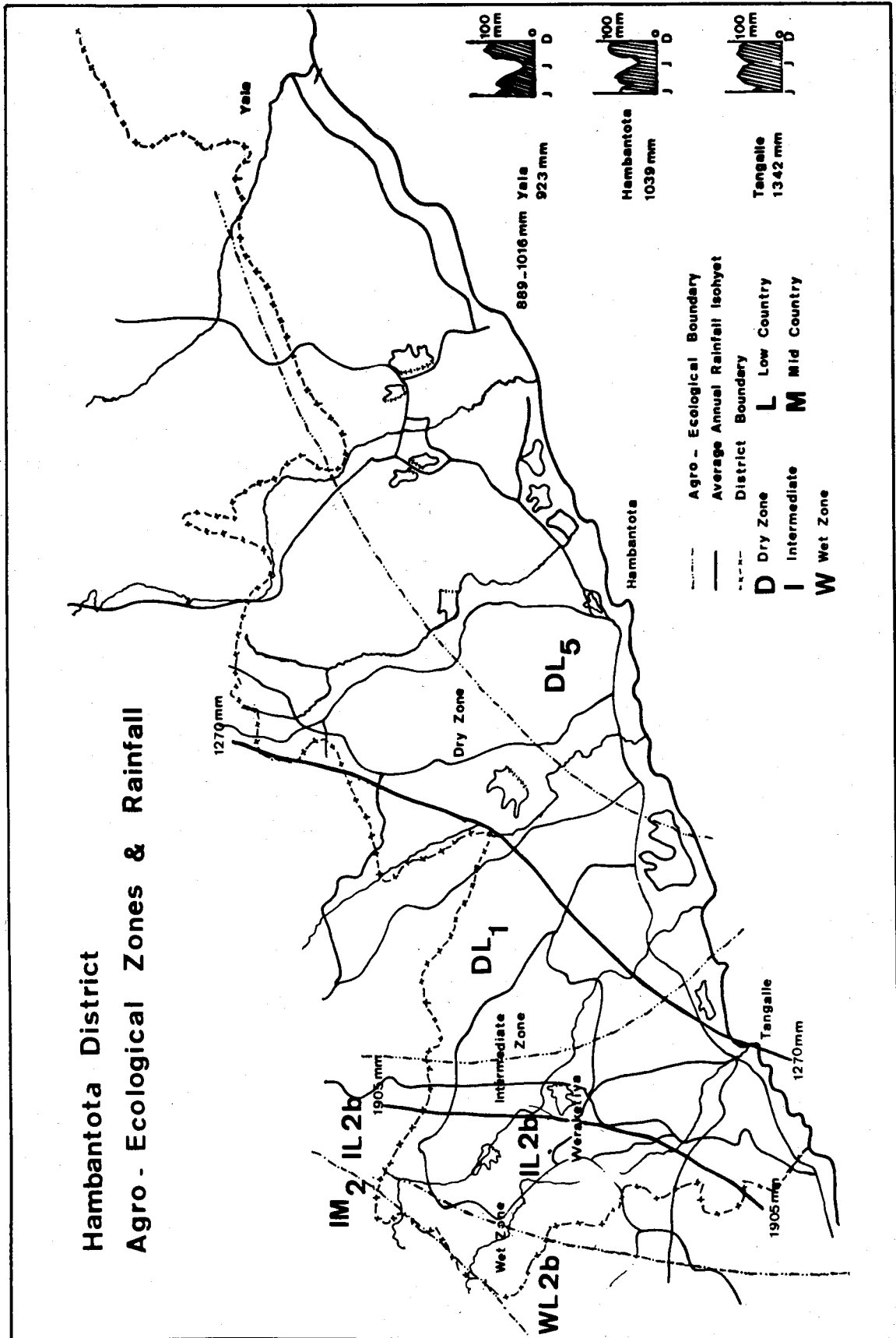
during the intercensal period 1971-81 thus amounted to 24.7 per cent, or 2.2 per cent a year in terms of the annual compounded growth rate. This was considerably higher than the national average, which then stood at 1.7 per cent a year.

From the ethnic point of view, Hambantota is the district of Sri Lanka having the most homogeneous population. The predominant group, the Sinhalese, constituted 97.1 per cent of the population in 1981. Sri Lanka Moors and Malays accounted for about three-quarters of the tiny non-Sinhala minority and most of them resided in the urban areas of Hambantota. In the rural areas, the population was even more predominantly Sinhalese (98.5 per cent at the 1981 Census). Ethnic strife, which has played such a devastating role in the recent history of Sri Lanka, is therefore unlikely to stand in the way of Hambantota's development.

The district shows a very pronounced variation in agro-climatological and ecological conditions, the most significant aspect of it being the contrast between a wet zone in the west and a dry zone in the east. The Wet Zone, which comprises only about 5 per cent of the area of the district, receives an annual rainfall ranging between 1.9 and 2.5 m. The Dry Zone, at the other extreme, registers precipitations below 1.3m a year (in the driest sub-zone ranging between 889 and 1016mm a year); the Dry Zone covers about two-thirds of the area of the District. Between the Wet and the Dry zones, it is customary to distinguish an Intermediate Zone. These conditions determine economic activity as well as many social and cultural characteristics of the people of the district (McCall, 1990:14).

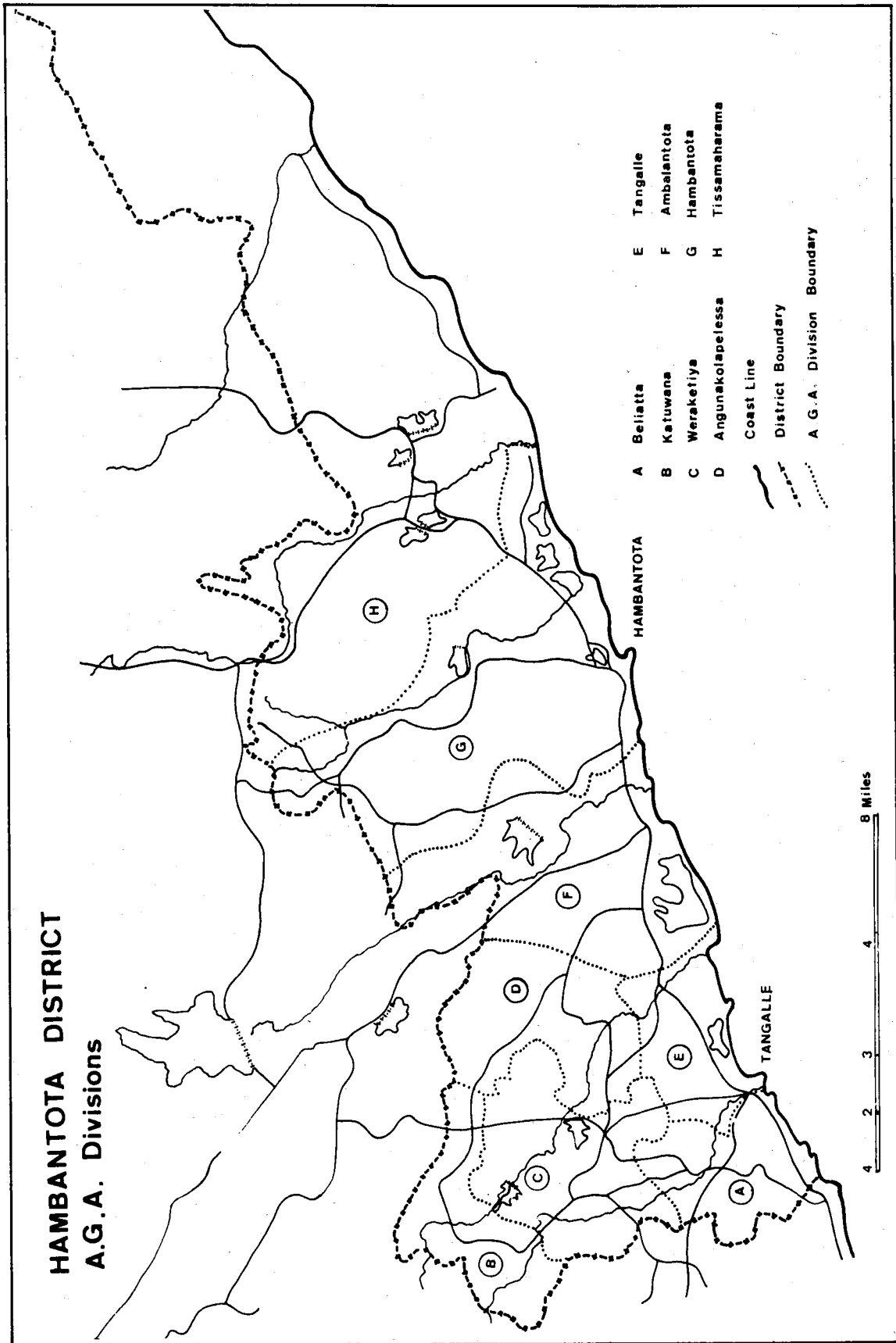
From the point of view of the settlement pattern (population growth and population density), there is certainly a strong contrast between Wet and Dry Zones, as shown in table 2.1. In terms of administrative (AGA) divisions, the Wet Zone comprises most of Katuwana, part of Weeraketiya and a small part of Beliatta; the Intermediate Zone covers parts of the same AGAs as well as Angunakolapelessa, Ambalantota and Tangalle; the Dry Zone covers Hambantota and Tissamaharama (see maps 1 and 2).

Map 1



Source: Smith 1986:6

Map 2



Source: Smith 1986:21.

Table 2.1
Population distribution by AGA Division, 1981 census

Zone/AGA Division	Area (km ²)	Population	Population growth 1971-81	Population density inhab/km ²
<u>Wet and intermediate</u>				
Angunakolapelessa	180	34,330	3%	191
Beliatta	100	48,371	3%	483
Katuwana	165	52,858	12%	320
Tangalle	150	55,804	26%	372
Weeraketiya	195	67,712	9%	347
<i>Sum</i>	<i>790</i>	<i>259,075</i>	<i>11%</i>	<i>328</i>
<u>Dry</u>				
Ambalantota	260	54,629	49%	210
Hambantota	500	52,257	69%	105
Tissamaharama	1040	58,383	52%	56
<i>Sum</i>	<i>1800</i>	<i>165,269</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>92</i>
Hambantota	2590	424,344	25%	164

Note that the above nomenclature of AGAs does not reflect the current situation, following the creation of Lunugamvehera and Okewela AGAs in 1989. There are no population figures available according to the present AGA set-up. Sources: Adapted/calculated from Smith, 1986:64 and Sri Lanka, 1984:1.

The highest population density (480 inhabitants per square kilometre in 1981) is found in Beliatta, a typical Wet Zone district; Tissamaharama, at the other end of the district, had less than 60 inhabitants per square kilometre in 1981. One of the important perspectives of HIRDEP was indeed to contribute to evening out these disparities, by creating the conditions for settlement in the Dry Zone of the overflow of population from the crowded Wet Zone. As shown in table 2.1 the process was already well under way in the 1970's, i.e. prior to HIRDEP. The AGAs on the

wetter side (to the west) of the 1270 mm annual rainfall isohyet, with the exception of Tangalle, experienced very modest population growth in that decade — in the case of Angunakolapelessa and Beliatta, practically no growth at all. On the other hand, the AGAs of the Dry Zone registered vigorous population growth — so vigorous in fact that the question of the sustainability of such a trend immediately comes to mind. In the rural areas of Hambantota, population grew at a rate of 6.2 per cent a year; at this pace, population would double in less than twelve years or become fourfold in the time span of one generation. In the rural areas of Tissamaharama, the rate of growth was considerably less (4.3 per cent a year), but still enough to ensure a doubling of the population every 16 years.

2.1.3 Little inter-district migration, but strong intra-district mobility

The more rapid growth of the population of Hambantota compared to the national average, added to the very rapid increases observed in the Dry Zone, have created the impression the Hambantota is a district of considerable immigration. This, however, appears out not to be the case (at least until 1981). The census figures, used in combination with vital registration statistics, show that almost all of the population growth rate observed during the period 1971-81 could be explained by the excess of births over deaths and that therefore net immigration from the other districts must have been practically negligible. To be precise, the migration balance was estimated at less than 1,000 net immigrants for the whole period.

Also other indicators suggest that Hambantota is not at the receiving end of any strong migration streams: looking at the 1971 census data on place of residence by place of birth it appears that the proportion of the population of Hambantota born outside the district was a mere 15 per cent, only slightly higher than the proportion of people born in Hambantota living outside the district (12 per cent). In 1981, the corresponding data even show a very slight negative balance in terms of life time migration, as the census counted 56,631 natives of Hambantota residing elsewhere in Sri Lanka (life-time emigrants) but only 53,649 residents of Hambantota born outside the district. (Sri Lanka, 1985:table 2). Besides, data on marital status from the 1981 census show a 4 per cent excess of currently married women over married man among the population of the district — a feature that one would not find in a typical immigration area.

Intra-district mobility is not directly documented by the census in the same way as inter-district migration, which can be evidenced by cross-

tabulating, for each individual, place of residence and place of birth and thus identifying the so-called "life-time migrants". However, the differentials in the rate of growth of the various AGAs are a possible indicator of emigration/immigration to extent that these differentials cannot plausibly be ascribed to variations of the levels of fertility or mortality. Another clue to migration lies in the imbalances of the sex ratio: since males tend to be more mobile than females, a deficit of males in a given area would normally point at emigration from that area, while an excess of males would conversely suggest immigration to the area.

The patterns of migration suggested by the analysis of the sex ratios found in the urban and rural populations of the different AGAs in 1981 conform to the general perception of the existence of important migration flows from the western parts of Hambantota towards the dry eastern zone. The largest deficit of males was found in the rural areas of Beliatta — as we have seen in table 2.1, the AGA with highest population density and one of those which were unable to absorb practically any population growth in the 1970's. The most marked excess of males was found in the urban area of Tissamaharama, which experienced a population boom during the same period (table 2.3).

Table 2.2

Sex ratios of urban and rural populations by AGA (males per 100 females)

AGA	Rural	Urban	All
Ambalantota	113	116	113
Angunakolapelessa	111	none	111
Beliatta	90	108	92
Hambantota	121	119	120
Katuwana	95	none	95
Tangalle	94	107	96
Tissamaharama	121	141	123
Weeraketiya	94	108	94
<i>Hambantota</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>116</i>	<i>105</i>

Source: Calculated from Sri Lanka, 1984:1.

There is of course well established observational evidence of seasonal movements, some affecting agriculturalists practising *chena* (shifting) cultivation and fisherman, both moving for 6 months or more a year from

their places of residence in the west to their temporary locations in the east. These movements have not been quantified in a comprehensive and systematic manner, although *chena* cultivation remains one of the district's prominent socio-economic features and very much a central issue in the background of HIRDEP.

2.1.4 A weak urban structure

Another important aspect of the demographic background of Hambantota district is the weakness of the urban structure: only about 10 per cent of the population lived in urban areas in 1971 and that proportion did not change from 1971 to 1981. However, the low level of urbanization of Hambantota is far from exceptional in the context of Sri Lanka: in fact, in 1981, there were 9 districts with even smaller proportions of urban population.

The urban population of Hambantota district lived in 6 urban centres, the largest of which, Ambalantota had approximately 11,000 inhabitants; Tangalle came second and Hambantota, the district capital, third. Only Tangalle and Hambantota had the status of Urban Councils, but their growth — particularly in the case of Tangalle — was considerably less dynamic than that of Ambalantota. The fastest growing urban population was that of Tissamaharama, but this locality, although growing nearly twice as fast as Hambantota, was still considerably smaller (see table 2.3).

As we have seen above (table 2.2) there is a greater excess of males in the urban areas (116 males for 100 females) compared to the rural areas (103 males for 100 females); the analysis of the age specific sex-ratios shows that it is the age groups comprised roughly between 15 and 45 that contribute the most to this imbalance, suggesting that the urban areas are the home of a sizeable number of “unsettled” male migrants who either are unmarried or otherwise did not bring their spouse.

Little is known about the socio-economic structure of the individual urban areas, the dynamics of their human resources and their potential as poles of development in the context of the district. The prevalent view is that “the towns in the district are predominantly market towns and administrative centres and those industries that do exist are mainly garages, workshops and mills, rather than manufactures” (McCall, 1990:47). This is borne out by the data from the 1981 census on the structure of urban employment by division of industry (Sri Lanka, 1984: tables 20-21), which show that community services (essentially public administration and health) together with trade (essentially retail trade) accounted for 53 per cent of all urban employment; agriculture (essentially paddy production) accounted for

another 17 per cent; manufacturing accounted for a mere 5 per cent, as much as the transport or the construction industries.

Table 2.3

Urban and rural growth (1971-81) and level of urbanization (1981) by AGA

AGA	Rural population		Urban population		Proportion urban 1981
	1981 census	Growth 1971-81	1981 census	Growth 1971-81	
Ambalantota	43,546	52%	11,083	35%	20%
Angunakolap.	34,330	3%	none	none	0%
Beliatta	44,912	2%	3,459	8%	7%
Hambantota	43,680	82%	8,577	24%	16%
Katuwana	52,858	12%	none	none	0%
Tangalle	46,210	31%	9,594	10%	17%
Tissamaharama	51,979	52%	6,404	47%	11%
Weeraketiya	65,399	8%	2,313	22%	3%
<i>Hambantota</i>	<i>382,914</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>41,430</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>10%</i>

Sources: Calculated/adapted from Smith, 1986:64 and Sri Lanka, 1984:1.

2.1.5 *The household in Hambantota*

Most people in Hambantota — to be precise, 98 per cent of them according to the 1981 census — live in households and by definition every household has a “head”. Very often, i.e. in 7 cases out of 10 the head of the household will be a married male. But it could also be a female — in 2 cases out of 10, either a married or previously married women (i.e. a widow, divorcee or separated women) and extremely seldom (1 per cent of the cases) a never-married female. The proportion of female headed households (one fifth) was practically identical in rural and urban areas; in fact, as shown in table 2.4, there was a remarkable absence of urban/rural differentials in respect to who headed households. The slightly higher proportion of urban households headed by married females is probably not significant given the small numbers involved.

