

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT ORIENTED LAND BOUNDARIES FOR SRI LANKA

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encouraged and there was a 'gold rush' to the Northern Peninsula from South India were large members of 'Malabars' immigrated to grow hand irrigated tobacco, with well sweeps and dug wells which were constructed by the thousands for the purpose. They also used lift irrigation methods with leather buckets to grow tobacco. It was the period where lift irrigation was in vogue. This legacy of the thousands of dug wells which today have replaced the well sweeps with pumps are yet part of the landscape of the Jaffna peninsula where today they not only grow tobacco, but other cash crops like potatoes and vegetables, as well, and for horticulture purposes where grapes are grown.

The Dutch followed the traditions set by the portuguese before them in administration, like the keeping of local records of Lekammitties and Tombos, which formed a valuable record of their times. It is also interesting to note that the Dutch styled their Governors in charge of Districts as Dissawas in keeping with the traditional Kandyan system. The British who followed the Dutch were also enamoured by the trappings of the feudal times, possibly because

1. Introduction:

From the most ancient times Sri Lanka was known to have three traditional Regions namely the Ruhunu, Maya and Pihiti (Rajarata). These were in fact natural divides of the country, delineated for rule under the immediate direction of the King and his heir apparent. According to Claudius Ptolemy the King ruled over 13 tribes of people who came from different parts of the World and made Sri Lanka their homeland. Rajarata and Ruhunurata were the most important as they were the agricultural regions which had the Hydraulic works under them. In the 13th century due to a cataclysm and internecine wars that destroyed the Ancient Hydraulic Works. The Major part of the population moved towards Mayarata from where the King ruled.

The regions were further sub-divided into provinces or Disavanes under Disawas, the Disavanes, in turn were further sub-divided into Pattus. These were under Rata Mahathmayas, Mudliyas and Vanliyars. These hierarchical officers performed functions pertaining to civil administration on behalf of the King. In addition to these were the Adigars (ministers) who advised the King. The military command was directly under the King.

The country like any other country had its share of invasions. But by and large it was ruled as a single country under a single King for the greater part of the 2500 years of its known historical record.

1.2 Migration within Sri Lanka during the Colonial Era:

The Colonial Era began with the coming of the Portuguese in the 16th century, they progressively advanced their frontiers along the coastline from the south of Negombo upto Matara and in the Northern region from Kalpitiya to Mannar and subsequently the Jaffna Peninsula after the martyrdom of 600 catholics in Mannar. The bitter enmity between the Arabs and the Portuguese over trade made the Muslims to seek refuge and settle in the Kandyan territory where most of them took to farming, especial those who were settled by the Kandyan Kings in the Eastern Region, while others continued as petty traders. This was followed by Religious persecutions by the Dutch caused the migration of catholics from Negombo and Colombo to the Kadyan Territory. In this era too the muslims were persecuted and more migrated to the Kandyan areas as well for the second time.

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The Dutch in the mean time encouraged the commercial cultivation of cinnamon on a plantation scale for the first time in the Western Region from Negombo to Galle, where the state had the monopoly of cinnamon trade. In the meantime, the Tobacco economy was

it reminded them of their own Medieval lords in their own country, which suited them well; to emphasise their own importance and reflect pomp and glory. However after independence, one would have normally expected in a democratic set up to pay little

heed to such ceremony. On the contrary, the peoples representatives in the Districts and the Government Agents or "Dissawas" as they were called seem to enjoy such ceremony to show their own importance and they seem to revel in the organisation of such ceremonies at the drop of a hat. Be that as it may.

With the British take over of the entire country, the maritime pro-

management of the Walawe Project even over a decade after the completion (which falls under three districts) can be compared to the impossibility to decentralise its management to a three headed donkey. Because of this inability it has now been handed over to be managed by the Mahaweli Economic Agency. Today we see that only after a few years after its completion, it now faces a major

This management by the Mahaweli Economic Agency cannot be considered a permanent arrangement, as this is a pure unadulterated bureaucracy with no peoples representatives. This arrangement could neither meet the peoples needs or be sensitive to operation and maintenance requirements, as there is no feed back from the people who matter and who are affected by any mismanagement. A democratic system of management demands that a new district has to be carved for the Walawe Project for the integrated management of its water, land and people.

The same decentralisation of powers would also have to be achieved with the massive Mahaweli Project, where billions

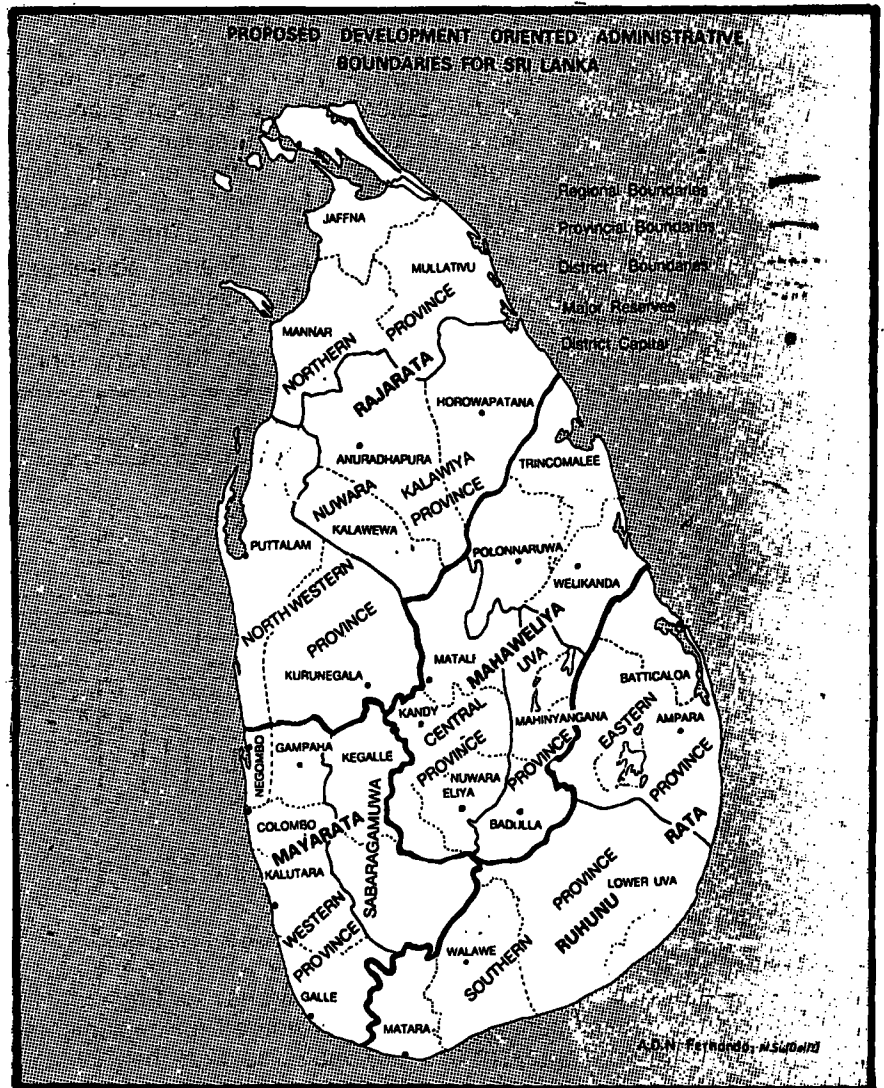
The present Southern Province and the land locked Uva and Sabaragamuwa province are by no means meaning full territorial units from the point of view of Economic Development. The entire country must eventually be re-organised in the viable Economic units.

vinces and the Kandyan Kingdom was first divided into Five Provinces, North, South, East, West and Central, which were in fact compass directions, for the convenience of the Colonial Administration. With the waste Lands Ordinance, the traditional lands of the Kandyan peasants were taken over and converted to tea and rubber plantations, which were established by indentured South Indian Labour. The British constructed roads and railways for their military strategy and for infrastructural development for transport which was crucial for the plantation industry. It was this concerted effort that brought about the plantation economy to pay rich dividends not only to the agricultural sector but also to other entrepreneurs in the Kandyan districts. Subsequently these five provinces were expanded to the nine provinces, as we known them today. These were further sub-divided to Districts which were mainly for the collection of revenue and law and order purposes to run a Colonial Economy".

1.3 After Independence

With independence we yet carry on with the outdated Colonial provinces and districts completely unsuited for development needs. The example of the creation of the Ampara District clearly indicates the necessity of Development Oriented District Boundaries. The inability to decentralise the

rehabilitation programme and we are yet unable to transfer the decision making process to the Districts level.



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of rupees have been invested, other wise here too, after a few years we would have to once again reinvest billions of rupees for a massive rehabilitation programme possibly even before its completion, if the management is weak and technically incompetent. One has also to prevent it from being a super bureaucracy insensitive to peoples needs. Its **management strategy demands that it merges with the democratic processes** in short merge with the provinces and districts of which it forms part, if it is to be meaningful to the people. However, one must not forget the scale of the project, which by itself is a region and has to be treated as such. Provinces and Districts have to be carved out of this region. One has also to merge the three levels of management in the Mahaweli region to be interlinked meaningfully.

One cannot afford to breed tragedies and cataclysms and internecine wars like what took place in the 13th century that led to the destruction and abandonment of our ancient hydraulic civilisation. We cannot afford to tolerate the existence by mismanagement or sheer ignorance of the scientific and technological principles of

ing mass suicide. The Mahaweli project is so large both in context of its size and investment that it would have to be treated as a separate agro-Hydraulic region for the Scientific and technological management of its water and land resources, as well as its people, who should be partners of such human development.

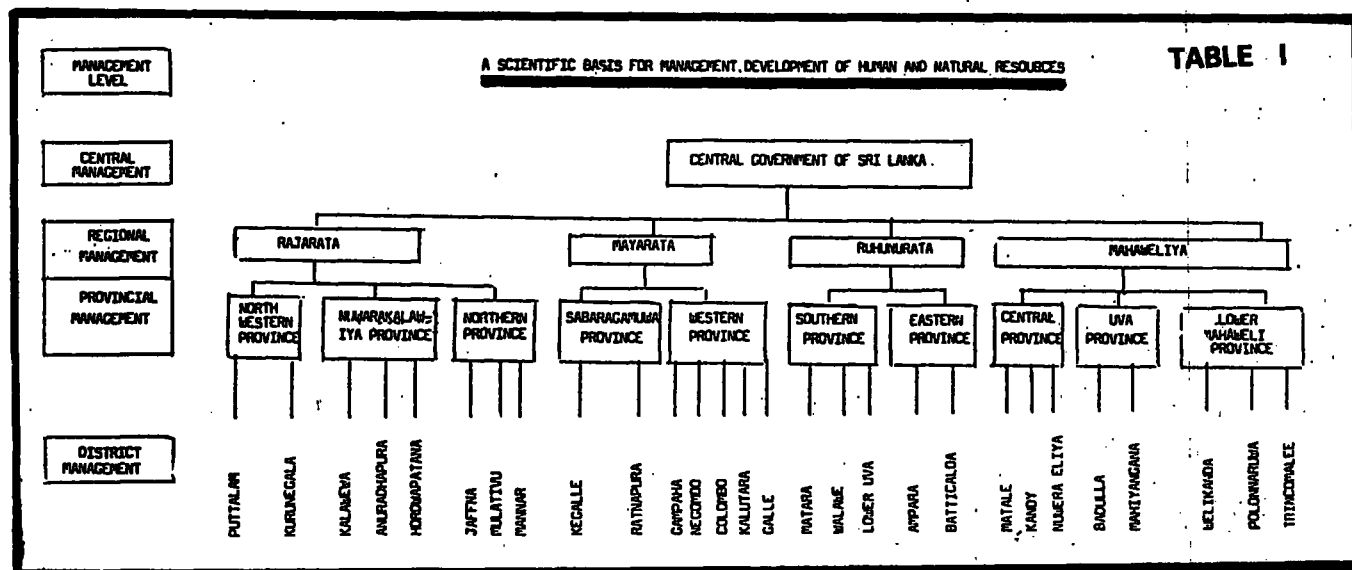
It is in this overall tradition of the historical background that the new Development oriented Administrative Land regions, provinces and districts have been proposed so that they could be managed in a scientific way, as all political decisions hinge on technical economic and social parameters, for the benefit of all Sri Lankans.

It must be stated that this is not the first time that suggestions for having development oriented district boundaries have been made. They have been made before by development planners, water and land resources experts. The author together with Mr. James H. Lanerole, C.C.S. the then Managing Director of the Industrial Development Board, addressed the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science, over a decade ago, on this very topic,

Lest some one put the question as to why I have introduced the word "Land Boundaries", this was done with a definite purpose, as there is also the need to do a similar planning exercise for the new Territorial Boundaries within our Economic Zone that falls within the jurisdiction of our country, which covers more than twenty times the land area and does not fall within the ambit and scope of this paper.

2. Land Regions, Provinces and Districts

Today we do not have regions but provinces imposed on us by the colonial powers for revenue collection purposes. These boundaries today have no bearing whatsoever for development purposes. Sri Lanka was known to have three traditional regional boundaries from the most ancient times namely Ruhunu, Maya and Rajarata (or Pihiti). It is known that these boundaries changed with time due to political and strategic considerations. But they essentially followed natural boundaries. It is recorded in the 2nd century B.C. that the Mahaweli Ganga was the



management known in the world of today, in the management of this Project. To ignore present knowledge would be like commit-

when the Mahaweli Project was being considered for implementation, what was true then is truer and more urgent now.

traditional divide between the Rajarata and Ruhunu, while the Mayarata was bounded in the north

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by the Maha Oya and in the south by the Gin Ganga and included the mountainous area eastwards up to the Mahaweli Ganga.

It was recorded by Claudius Ptolemy (Circa 150 A.D.) that Ruhunu was synonymus with Nagadipa which extended at that time to include the Jaffna Peninsula. The Rajarata in the south was bounded by the Deduru Oya, in the North limited itself to the mainland, and eastwards to include the Knuckles Massif. The Mayarata included the rest namely the area between the Deduru Oya in the north, the Gin Ganga in the south and the central massif in the east.

There were many changes in the Regional Boundaries between the time of Gajabahu I (Circa 150 A.D.) and the 14th century But principally the Ancient Administrative system had been to divide the country into Agro Hydraulic Regions ruled by a King and assisted by his heir apparent and also assisted by Military advisors and Adigars (Ministers) under whom Disavanyas and Korales; the equivalent of Districts and Divisional Revenue officers areas of present times were administered.

If we have to go back to the Management of our economy which is fundamentally based on Agriculture and fisheries, then we would have to go back to the traditional Agro-Hydraulic Regions, but in addition we would also have to demarcate a new region for the management of the largest development project of all time, namely the Mahaweli Project. In short we have to start with a base of 4 large Agricultural Regions namely the Rajarata, the Mayarata, and Ruhunurata and the Mahaweli Region (in short the Mahaweliya). These natural agricultural regions have to be further sub-divided again on the basis of natural divisions into provinces and districts for Development and Management purposes.

In addition to the capital of Sri Jayawardenapura it would also be necessary that the four regions have their own metropolises to be established at Colombo, Kandy, Anuradhapura and Tissamaharama to meet the new requirements. Where ever the infrastructure and amenities are inadequate this should be strengthened. They have been chosen as being central and also given weight to their historical significance.

2.1 Provinces and Districts within the different Natural Regions

The four regions have been first subdivided into Provinces and then further sub-divided to districts, retaining as far as possible their present boundaries, but subject to the changes required for development needs for the management of agricultural tracts and fisheries management, dependent on natural boundaries of water and

necessary on a historical basis as far as possible. The province of Uva and the Southern province were divided to include the Lower Uva (Moneragala) to the Southern province, while the Galle district was included to the eastern province. This decision was taken as the Galle district belongs to the wet zone and has problems common to the natural regions of Mayarata. See Table I showing the levels of management of Central Regional Provinces and District levels proposed for a scientific basis of Development.

On the proposed Regional divisions, the Island population is approximately distributed on the following basis. Rajarata 21%; Mayarata 37%; Ruhunurata 14% and Mahaweliya 28%. The population densities is highest in Mayarata, and Mahaweliya, while it is lowest in the Rajarata and in Ruhunurata. The population imbalance in Ruhunurata could be rectified if the Galle District is included to Ruhunurata, but as stated earlier it has this disadvan-

Regions	Provinces	28 Districts
RAJARATRA	(1) North Western Province	Puttalam, Kurunegala
	(2) Nuwerakalawiya Province	Kalawewa, Anuradhapura, Horowpothaha
	(3) Northern Province	Jaffna, Mullativu, Mannar
MAYARATA	(4) Western Province	Gampaha, Negombo, Colombo
	(5) Sabaragamuwa Province	Kalutara, Galle
RUHUNURATA	(6) Southern Province	Kegalle, Ratnapura
	(7) Eastern Province	Matala, Walawe, Lower Uva
MAHAWELIYA	(8) Central Province	Ampara, Batticaloa
	(9) Uva Province	Matale, Kandy, Nuwara-Eliya
	(10) Lower Mahaweli Province	Badulla, Mahiyangana
		Welikanda, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee

land resources, (see maps on river systems) and Development oriented Management Boundaries.

In some instances the existing provinces had to be spilt up to fall into the agricultural regions.

The districts have been grouped into ten provinces keeping in mind natural divides of river catchments, as they determine natural boundaries for agricultural development. The existing historical names have been retained as far as possible and new names created where

tage. However, if population distribution is to be an important criteria, then the Galle district should rightly belong to Ruhuna.

The new Regions, Provinces and Districts are indicated in the accompanying map and is also listed here for easy reference.

The proposed ten provinces have been divided into 28 districts for better agricultural management, fisheries and industrial development. Three new Districts have been proposed for

Kalawewa, the Walawe Project area and the third for the Negombo district. The high population in the present Gampaha district as well as the specialised fisheries activities and the free trade zone, require special management and attention by the people of this proposed district as they are directly affected by these major activities.

3. Concluding

It is apparent to every one that only by the creation of the rational divisions of the Land Areas of the country into Agricultural Regions, Provinces and Districts that the economy of the country and the welfare of its people and its management could be ensured. Ultimately political freedom has no meaning in the abstract, unless it is integrated to the economic and social wellbeing of its people. For this we have to create economically viable units and areas for the maximisation of the use of the resources of land and water, for the emancipation of its people and for the good of the largest number in a socialist democracy. Political power or freedom have otherwise no meaning to the people. It has meaning to the people only when they can be partners in development, where they can help to take meaningful decisions which are technically sound, economically beneficial and socially desirable. For this purpose we would have to mobilise the intellegentsia:- the Scientists and Technologists, the Economists, competent Management specialists and others to harness the Natural and Human resources that nature has bestowed upon us, for the development of Agriculture, Fisheries and Industry, for the good of the largest number.

I sincerely hope that these proposed divisions would form a basis for the crying need for decentralisation at Regional, Provincial and District level, at this critical time of our history.

