

## Colonial Period Language Planning In Sri Lanka

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In linguistically heterogeneous societies, language planning constitutes core institutional practice for maintaining social cohesion as well as unique cultural identities. This study intends to examine the Colonial Period Language Planning in Sri Lanka. The data were collected through official documents, books, journals and thesis such as Colbrooke Cameron Papers, Language Planning by Robert. B. Kaplan etc. The first Europeans to visit Sri Lanka in modern times were the Portuguese who arrived in 1505 and the Dutch who captured Ceylon in 1656. Then the British presence in Sri Lanka began in 1796. The arrival of Europeans was a novel influence on our languages. During those periods Portuguese, Dutch and English were introduced as their official languages and Greek, Latin and Hebrew were included as the languages under the education planning. The colonisation brought European style of education to Sri Lanka, especially to prepare students for positions in the colonial administrations. All official domains were conducted in their official languages. Accordingly, those language policies were introduced to our educational system and to Sinhalese and Tamil languages. As a result, only few people could obtain a proper education and most of the people remained uneducated. Therefore, those language policies caused several social issues. Moreover, Mr. J. R. Jayawardhana introduced a new language planning proposal to change the colonial language planning in 1944. However, that proposal could not be implemented properly. This was a reason for the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka that took place after the independence.

**Key words:** colonial periods, education planning, language planning, language policy, official languages.

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