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VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN TWO JAFFNA TAMIL VILLAGES IN POST-WAR SRI LANKA

Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran

University of Kentucky, pathmenesan@yahoo.co.uk

Author ORCID Identifier:

🆔 https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2463-322X

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DISSERTATION
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By

Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Mark P. Whitaker, Professor of Anthropology
Lexington, Kentucky

2020

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN TWO JAFFNA TAMIL VILLAGES IN POST-
WAR SRI LANKA

This dissertation investigates how community rebuilding is occurring in a gravely damaged, post-conflict society. Specifically, it looks at how people in two villages in Tamil, Hindu, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, are using their 'sense of place' and 'place-making practices' or what I call here their 'village-temple consciousness' or village consciousness, to maintain and rebuild their communities after war to make them, once again, places in which they feel a comfortable sense of belonging. This is a comparative study because Inuvil and Naguleswaram were affected differently by the Sri Lankan civil war. That is, while Inuvil, was physically damaged and socially disrupted by the conflict, which ended in 2009, it nonetheless remained intact throughout; Naguleswaram, on the other hand, was completely raised to the ground by government forces, and its scattered inhabitants are only now being allowed to return after twenty-six years to rebuild their homes and Hindu temples.

By comparing the efforts of people in these two villages -- one where people are using an ongoing but altering sense of place to adjust to changed circumstances, and another where people, of necessity, are using their memories to reconstruct a place once lost -- this dissertation attempts to show the role Jaffna Tamil people's own models and practices of community making play in postwar healing and reconstruction that is ongoing in this rapidly changing post-war society. This study uses the compound term 'village-temple consciousness' to refer to local models and practices of community-making. This term reflects a Tamil word, *ūr*, meaning, at once, a physical village of origin and the sacred, landscape-fixing temples that organize such places as social and physical spaces. Thus, this study found that understanding the conjoined village-temple sense of place that underlies social life and its reconstruction in Jaffna requires recognizing the conjunction of the physical and the sacred implied by this compound term.

This dissertation discusses the three key components of village/village-temple consciousness that are central to its use in village reconstruction. (1) Temple-centered practices of allegiance, rights, status and conflict, which regulate local notions of caste and gender hierarchy and, more generally, social control and power. (2) *Bhakti* (devotional) religious practices, including domestic rites of passage, which many residents appear to be remaking to reflect postwar concerns in ways that involve modern, capitalist and cosmopolitan influences. And (3) the village's temple-organized landscapes, as imagined and as lived in, including as re-imagined in the wake of the war's destruction and the post-war intrusion of cyberspace and the Tamil diaspora. In terms of the community reconstruction, this study found two larger significant findings that (1) the postwar social and communal rebuilding ongoing in these two villages

depends upon people using their village-temple consciousness as models of/for such endeavors; 2) that an ethnography of the role of 'place-making' in community rebuilding in Jaffna, Sri Lanka will illuminate the more general issue of how communities anywhere after war use similar models and practices of community-making to reconstitute themselves -- and not just as physical locations but as places in which people can once again feel at home.

KEYWORDS: Village-Temple Consciousness, Memory, Place-Making, Village Reconstruction, Tamil diaspora and Ritual Innovation

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Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran
(Name of Student)

May 6, 2020
Date

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VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS IN TWO JAFFNA TAMIL VILLAGES IN POST-WAR SRI LANKA

By

Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran

Dr. Mark P. Whitaker
Director of Dissertation

Dr. Scott R. Hutson
Director of Graduate Studies

May 6, 2020
Date

DEDICATION

To my late father Mr. Sabaratnam Sanmugeswaran and
late grandparents of Mr. & Mrs. S. Sabaratnam and Abiramy Ambal
and Mr. & Mrs. K. Rasiah and Rasamma

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. "VILLAGE CONSCIOUSNESS" AND "VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS" AS CULTURALLY-ORGANIZED AND PLACED-BASED MEMORIES

"We have come to our *conta iṭam* (own place); it was our longtime dream. We have now started to rebuild our temples, houses, wells, community center, etc. In our relocated village, people were friendly, and we have earned new friends, but they recognized us as outsiders when we try to express our opinion in village and temple matters. In particular, we were not allowed to take temple festival rights or to carry the idol of deities during the temple festivals. Whenever we requested for these opportunities, they simply objected, and we were asked that when did we come to this place? What did we know about this place? What did we know about the history of this place? Here is no space for *vantān varātan* (outsiders/strangers). So, when one has a membership right in a temple or a community center in his or her village, then that membership right confirms his or her village as their *conta iṭam*." (Raja, a returnee in Naguleswaram, Jaffna, 2018).

1.1   Introduction

This dissertation is a comparative ethnographic study of two Tamil Hindu villages called Inuvil and Naguleswaram in the Jaffna Peninsula of Sri Lanka and how they each, in different ways, used memories of their prewar life to help them rebuild their communities after the Sri Lanka ethnic civil war (1983-2009). The Sri Lanka ethnic civil war was between the militant separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (*īḻam*) (LTTE) and the mostly Sinhalese armed forces of the Sri Lanka state. This study further illustrates about community rebuilding is occurring in a gravely damaged, post-war society where people use their 'sense of place' and 'place-re/making practices' (Feld and Basso 1996; Kingsolver 2011; Escobar 2008) to maintain and rebuild their *ūr* (villages) after war to make, once again, place in which they feel a comfortable sense of belonging. Both villages were affected differently by the Sri Lankan civil war. That is, while Inuvil, was physically damaged and socially disrupted by the war, which ended in 2009, it nonetheless remained intact throughout; Naguleswaram, on the other hand, was completely raised to the ground by government forces, and its scattered inhabitants are only now being allowed to return after 21 years to rebuild their houses, Hindu temples, community centers, and *ūr*.

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that in post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindu communities people reconstructed their villages, their *ūr* (village)*,* in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war by using their nostalgia for, and memories of, prewar *ūr.* In other words, how the memory of or nostalgia for *ūr* (village) consciousness as it existed in the recent pre-war past, is being used in the reconstruction of communities affected or destroyed by the war", and then arguing that this is part of a larger theoretical claim that in any post-conflict society where communities have been damaged or completely destroyed an important part of what must be reconstructed is the 'sense of belonging and place' that existed before the crisis.

The prolonged civil war greatly devasted the environment, economy, and people's lives in northern and eastern Sri Lanka. Further, the war destroyed people's lived locales, temples, schools, hospitals, community libraries, playgrounds, trees, shops, farms, dwellings, etc. Since the war ended, the war-affected Tamil Hindu villages are being rebuilt, and thus, the northern Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu villages are experiencing tremendous transformations not only due to the war, but also globalization, the Tamil diaspora, and transnational connections. I arrived in my hometown, Inuvil, Jaffna Peninsula of northern Sri Lanka in 2016 and spent three months doing preliminary research studying Hindu temple disputes and *bhakti* (devotional) practices in the post-war Tamil Hindu villages of Inuvil and Naguleswaram. But I was not aware of what I was ethnographically looking for at that initial stage, and later, my Ph.D. advisory committee enhanced my research proposal through intensive revisions. This intensive training enabled me to become more insightful cultural ethnographer of the post-war reconstructions of Tamil *ūr* (village) in Sri Lanka by adopting interpretive anthropology, phenomenological anthropology and Wittgenstein's (1961) philosophy as my theoretical lens. I revised my dissertation research project accordingly and went back to Jaffna, where I spent eighteen months (May 2017- December 2018) to carry out research project.

Post-war community reconstruction is not a new phenomenon around the world and is mostly

implemented through development, government and non-government agencies; but these

agencies' reconstruction projects are completely different from how Tamil people attempt of

reconstructions based purely on their own imaginations of their Tamil *ūr*.

What is a Tamil *ūr*? As previously mentioned, a Tamil *ūr* is, of course, a person's dwelling

locale; it is however a distinct social, economic, political, religious, and cultural entity in Tamils'

lives in South Asia. For instance, I lived in my *ūr,* Inuvil, for more than thirty-five years

throughout the civil war. As a Tamil Hindu, I perceive my *ūr* through embodied experiences of

cultural practices in which many *kōvils* (Hindu temples) socialize the villagers' way of life. Is the

kōvil the most important social unit for a Tamil *ūr*? Yes, of course; there is no a Tamil *ūr* without

a *kōvil* in Sri Lanka and South Asia: "kōvil illā ūril kuṭi irrukka vēṇṭām" [Do not live in a place

where there are no temples] and "tirukōvil illāta tiruvilūrum aṭavi kāṭē" [Where a *ūr* has no

temple the *ūr* is like a forest area].[1]

The above popular phrases indicate the essential relationship of the temple to a Tamil *ūr.* I

followed Shreen's (1997) work to theorize the Jaffna Tamil Hindu community as a 'temple-

centred' community (Sanmugeswaran 2010). The operationalization of the term 'temple-centred'

starts with the identification of the various kinds of temples that the Jaffna Tamil Hindus are

involved with. It also involves a deep-rooted relationship between the people and the various

temples. Increasing the number of temples within the same caste and among the different castes

in the same village forms a kind of immediacy based on kinship, caste, *pakuti* (clanlineage)[2],

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[1] Here the two phrases emphasis the essentiality of a temple in a village or a place where people live. First was driven from *Mūturai* which was written by Auvaiyar was the name of more than one poet (female poet) who was active during different periods of Tamil literature. The second phrase was found in *Tēvāram* of Appar (Thirunaavukarasa *nāyanār*). *Tēvāram* is Tamil Saivite devotional poetry, Appar *Tēvāram* belongs to 7th century AD. See also K.K..Pillai, Tamiḻka Varalāṟu: Makkaḷum Paṇpāṭum (Chennai: 2002)

[2] Sivathampy (1995) and David (1972) have different explanations about *pakuti* and Sivathampy's argument is in accord with my findings, which I will discuss in detail in chapter eight.

kuṟicci, vaṭṭāram, (*kuṟicci* and *vaṭṭāram* refer to a small sub-territory [hamlet] of a village within the same caste) and *kuṭumpam* (family).

Thus, a Tamil *ūr* can be a temple-centred sacred landscape, which may have multiple myths or stories about the origins of many temples in one *ūr*. On the other hand, the emotional attachment with regard to a *kōvil*'s ownership or *urimai,* membership onto temple trustees board (*tarmakartā capai*) or temple administrations (*kōvil nivāka capai*), and rights to sponsor temple festival (*tiruviḻa upayam*) open a space for discussions on one's caste identity, *kouvravam* (honour), *mariyātai* (prestige), and status quo in *his ūr*. With regard to such temple-centred matters, I cannot say *her ūr,* because the temple ownership, festival rights, temple related *kouvravam* (honour), *mariyātai* (prestige), and status quo aspirations are purely patriarchal constructions for their power and authority in a Tamil *ūr* in Jaffna. Their power relations indicate the Veḷḷāḷar (high caste) patriarchal hegemony in a Tamil *ūr* through male domination and negligence of women' and low-castes' participation.

People are closely connected to caste consciousness, which is experienced between the high caste people and the low-caste people. Such caste-based categorizations create a particular identity. This categorization was simply created by the Veḷḷāḷar people based on purity and pollution complexes. Veḷḷāḷar caste people perceive Ampaṭṭar (barbers) Naḷavar (toddy tappers), Paḷḷar (labors) Paṟaiyar (funeral drummers), and Vaṇṇār (washermen) caste people are low castes. The above five castes are also known as *Pañcamar*,[3] and they are deteriorated by untouchable status (Geetha 2011; Paramsothy 2008; Silva at.al 2009). However, these categories are ambiguous because the low-caste people construct their own identity through social mobility in contemporary Jaffna. Although a prolonged civil war, internal displacement, encampment, migration, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) past administration and eventual

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[3] The People of Jaffna, however, do not use the term *Pañcamar* in their daily conversation, but it is referred as a literary term. There is a triggering novel, written by *Pañcamar* K. Daniel (1982) who discusses the struggles of the low-caste people in Jaffna.

defeat have altered social life in the Jaffna Peninsula in many ways, caste consciousness still plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining religious space and religious power under the leadership of 'dominant castes.' Even though the province's past social rigidity has been changed even within its caste system, caste consciousness has not vanished. In addition, both caste consciousness and caste identity still exist and shape the social structure, and caste remains a hidden social phenomenon in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of the Jaffna Tamil Hindu community.

In a larger context, the Tamil *ūr-* sacred landscape does not only denote a form of religious life or *bhakti* religious practices, but also the Tamil *ūr* has an ongoing forms of social life such as violence, war, family disputes, village disputes, temple festivals, domestic rituals (rite of passage), family stories, village folk tales, village aesthetic values, village culture, Tamil culture, Tamil nationalism, Tamil Eelam (*īḻam*) ideology, and Tamil politics. Indeed, Tamils constructed a form of consciousness in their lived locales or *ūrs* through such religious and social lives in the prewar period and during the war in Jaffna. The Jaffna Tamil Hindus' embodied cultural practices were generated through their religious and social lives, which constituted nostalgia for their prewar *ūr*. Such unique knowledge and experience of Tamil Hindus' or Saivites' nostalgia for prewar *ūr* is vastly neglected in studies of post-war reconstruction in Tamil Hindu villages in Sri Lanka. This task was my inspiration for doing in this dissertation research project. Hence, the overarching argument of this dissertation is that in post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindu communities people reconstructed their villages, their *ūr,* in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war by using their nostalgia for, and memories of, prewar *ūr*.

People in Inuvil and Naguleswaram are embedded in their *ūr* through their consciousness about cultural practices. To ethnographically and theoretically explain people's consciousness about cultural practices in such places, I use two conceptual terms, "village-consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness," that I coined for this project. These concepts refer both to a set of culturally-organized and place-based memories including culturally-constructed emotions about

their villages, temples, cultural practices, and their lives. Although people do not have a Tamil word that exactly equates with either "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness," these terms refer to how Jaffna Tamils embed emotions, affections, and cultural practices in their inhabited locales or *ūr.*

Thus, Tamils evoke memories about their lived places that I ethnographically found in these villages. For example, the landscape of Inuvil is an *ūr* divided into four cardinal direction-based divisions (southwest, west, northeast, and east) for administrative purpose, but each division is further fragmented into sub-territorial divisions based on caste, *kuṟicci, pakuti,* and *vaṭṭāram.* In Inuvil, the big temples and small shrines were established based on such place-based knowledge and practices. Furthermore, each cardinal direction-based division of the *ūr* is unique in terms of its cultural practices, beliefs, myths, historical narratives, and caste demography. For example, although Inuvil Sri Pararaja Sekara Pillaiyar Temple (a Hindu temple located in Inuvil southwest) has this official name, people also address it as *Vaṇṇāṅkāṭṭu Pillaiyar* Temple. Another temple that has an official name is Inuvil Sekaraja Sekara Pillaiyar Temple that is different from what people call it Paruttiyaṭaippu Pillaiyar *kōvil.* Here *Vaṇṇāṅkāṭu* and *Paruttiyaṭaippu*[4] are the names of *kuṟicci* (sub-territory) within the same village structure of Inuvil.

Similarly, I will draw another example from Naguleswaram village. Kavunavathai, a *kuṟicci* in Karukampanai is a sub-village of Naugleswaram, which popularly known place among the people of Jaffna through the ritual of *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice). These ethnographic realities reveal how people are consciously connected to places. However, I do not argue that people divide official and unofficial names to address the temples and they use both, but it is important to look at how people connect their locality/place as an identity for their temple.

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[4] See also, Sanmugeswaran, P. *Sri Pararājasekara Pillaiyār Kōvil: A Social Anthropological Perspective* (2009), p.134.

In addition, quoting phrases, from Inuvil, like "our temple," "our festival right," "this *pūjā* (Hindu worship rites)[5] belongs to our grandmother's period *pūjā* right," "we are the people to perform this festival," "*pūjā* offerings belong to us," "the temple land patron is our grandfather" and, from Naguleswaram, like "host community is not our *conta iṭam* (own/natal place)," "our cemetery is still controlled by the military," and "*conta ūr* is the best place to live and survive, though we have nothing to eat" demonstrate how people's consciousness is embedded in places (temple and *ūr*) and cultural practices. Such ethnographic findings enabled me to use "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness to better understand the reconstruction process in post-war Jaffna.

As I previously mentioned, a Tamil *ūr* can be a sacred landscape too as it contains number of large temples, small shrines, and pilgrim sites. Eck (2012) limited the idea of sacred landscape, that claiming such landscapes can only be considered sacred if they have a mythological significance or a sacred value as a site of pilgrimage. However, this dissertation takes a slightly different view of sacred landscapes since my central focus is on village-temple consciousness which goes beyond the spiritual or religious sense of belonging.

Further, I point out that although Naguleswaram and Keerimalai (a sub-village of Naguleswaram) are popular pilgrim sites where people invest their sense of belonging, this sacred landscape also contains people's emotional attachments to their living places. A sacred landscape includes not only devotees and pilgrims, but also ordinary people, businessmen, traders, farmers, and labors who invest themselves in it as their *ūr*. In addition, the scared landscape is invested in not only for religious practices but also for daily life. However, this does not mean that people make their temples into an irreligious place, but that they attempt to expand sacred landscapes to include their ordinary forms of social life as well. In this aspect, "village-temple consciousness," is meant to indicate the kind of consciousness of themselves Jaffna Tamils have through their

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[5] *Pūjā,* a devotional service for the god in which things are offered to the god such as flowers, fire, oil, or fruit.

attachments to temple-centered sacred landscapes, to home places, and to the everyday life of the places they call *ūr*. Hence, I argue with regard to "village-temple consciousness" that it tends to erase the line between sacred and profane (as in Durkheim and Douglas) and allows one to have both secular and non-secular forms of life. In other words, the temple landscape or sacred landscape is part of the village landscape and one cannot separate them. But both can be separately discussed at two different analytical levels, depending upon the context.

"Village consciousness" is a form of consciousness about their *ūr* that people have culturally-constructed memories and place-based memories of temples, schools, shops, playgrounds, markets, farming, rituals, and many others are in their village. In the above list, the temple is an important social unit in the village organization, and a Tamil *ūr* cannot be organized without a temple. Thus, a temple not only occupies a significant position in a Tamil village landscape, but also for organizing people's everyday lives. Even Tamils imagine their village through their "village-temple consciousness," which they have nurtured through embodiments of their everyday religious life. Hence, "village-temple consciousness" describes culturally-constructed emotions and memories, which people have for their *ūr* temples to claim their identity, temple *urimai* (hereditary ownership), and festival *urimai*. Likewise, Tamils imagine their *ūr* through their *ūr* temples because they are governed by the ruler of God or Goddess of the temple in their *ūr* and remember their *ūr* through bodily experiences in participating temple rituals and festivals. However, people sometimes claim other attributes such as schools, ponds, trees, shops, wells, playgrounds, war, domestic rituals, scholars, etc., to imagine their *ūr*. Remembering their villages through these attributes reveals how they have constructed their emotional attachments and belongingness to them.

Furthermore, this dissertation illustrates the importance of the Tamil term *iṭam* or place in relation to village-temple consciousness. Knowledge of one's *iṭam* (or *conta iṭam*) or place is an important part of identity in a Tamilians' life, and this place-based identity indicates that they belong to a particular physical locality or dwelling. This belongingness tied to a particular place

implies the importance of land ownership and village membership. In this regard, temples and places are closely connected because temples become key sources of identity for *ūr,* dwelling places, and neighbourhoods. I found that there were many instances where when I asked people where they were from, they not only specified a dwelling place but also mentioned various nearby big and small temples as landmarks. Also, in Inuvil, temple youths (*kōvil iḷaiñarkaḷ*) or young temple devotees (*iḷam toṇṭarkaḷ*), including both married and unmarried men, when talking to me or to each other, addressed their identity by invoking their different temple affiliations. They did this not just because they belonged to different temples but because, in this way, they could present a finely calibrated account of who they were. In a way, for them, you are your place; and places in this identity-defining sense always include, somewhere, identity and place anchoring temples.

Thus, one's lived memory of a place is connected to a plethora of collective elements and temples are one of them. In this aspect, Tamil peoples' belongingness to a place is also revealed through the temples and temple festivals of their places. However, this is not the only form of place-belongingness wherein people are embedded into their temple-related consciousness, for there are other forms of belongingness as well. That is, belongingness is also revealed when we look at Tamil peoples' lived places, and this is why I have used the second analytical category, "village consciousness", in concert rather than in equation with the term "village-temple consciousness", to explicate people's experiences as these are connected to different identity-anchoring elements other than temples. For example, people also experience their places through the stories they tell, or though their memories of their own experiences of war, violence, trees, food, schools, family, commodities, playgrounds, and so on. Some Marxists in Inuvil remember their village by focusing on their past activities as youth mobilizers and social service activists at village community centres rather than on the village temple. Further, while people rarely say *ūr,* but they often mention the place they lived, because place is a more accurate indicator of one's

own dwelling. Thus, place as a form of consciousness, as *iṭam* consciousness, is invested in any place where Tamils dwell.

Dwelling denotes a certain culturally and emotionally organized set of practices, which I have defined as "village consciousness". Heidegger's (Cighi 2008) notion of dwelling brings us closer than anything else I can think of to my project, where I have intended to investigate how people make their place of mere existence into a home. Further, dwelling comprises of "a sense of continuity, community, and homeness" (Seamon, 1984: 4) which, I would argue, are precisely what the efforts of post-war Jaffna Tamils having been trying to achieve. That is the notion I have used to examine how post-war Tamils in Sri Lanka portray their way of life to themselves in a phenomenological fashion. In phenomenological terms, then, this dissertation has designed its theoretical argument to show how people look and think in their own fashion and style rather than when being intentionally motivated to perceive their world of being. I have shown that experiencing *ūr* in the post-war context of Jaffna cannot be analyzed in terms of a set of physical properties alone. Rather, physical properties like temples, villages, and places should be analyzed through the culturally-organized memories and emotions of the Jaffna people. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Nine.

Moreover, these terms "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" despite being separate, consist of the sets of beliefs, cultural practices, culturally-organized and place-based memories, and emotions regarding their places of origin that Jaffna people have available in their everyday lives. For further clarification, here I describe ten different *ūr* projections found among my informants. The first, Sivathasan, claimed that *kirāmamiyam* (villageness or ruralness— Tamils use both *ūr* and *kirāmam* to address village) is deconstructed in Inuvil due to the war and globalization. The second, Poomani argued that her *ūr* is not like before, which is in a tremendous transformation due to loss of social control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) in village life. The third, Kajanthan, a young boy, told me that he does not feel Naguleswaram is his *ūr* because he was born in a different village while his family was displaced. The fourth, Sankalvi a

Swiss-born Jaffna Tamil girl claims her parents' *ūr* as her *ūr* identity, at a distance, though she was neither born in nor resided in Inuvil. The fifth, Vasanthi moved to Colombo during the war, but she still remembers her *ūr* through her nostalgia for her prewar *ūr* and so visits her *ūr* every year at the annual festival for not only meeting her *kulateiyvam*,[6] lord Pillaiyar, in Inuvil, but also to meet her village people and relatives.

The sixth, Seelan from Naguleswaram argued that he was treated as *pirathiyār* (others) when he was displaced in different villages for 23 years, but he has now returned for reconstructing his life and *ūr* identity. The seventh, Raithan from Naguleswaram, pointed out that though Kōviyar caste people became the majority in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai after the war, the temple management matters at the Naguleswaram Shiva temple and the reconstruction of pilgrim sites are still dominated by the high castes (Veḷḷāḷar and Brahmin). The eighth, some young girls with low-caste background from Keerimalai argued that casteism was also reinstated in the rebuilding of their villages, which they did not like; further, their parents are trying to control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) them to be a "good girls." The ninth, people like Kumar from London, who celebrated his daughter's puberty ritual in Inuvil because he wanted to show his *kouvravam* (honor) to his village people and remember his *ūr* through meeting relatives and friends there. The tenth, Supiah, a Veḷḷāḷar tobacco farmer, told me that *Inuvil pukaiyilai* (Inuvil tobacco) is an identity for his *ūr* but he now worried that this tobacco cultivation and tobacco cigar industry were destroyed due to the war and political instability, and that the social control is also changed in his *ūr* due to the emergence of diaspora remittances and a new Veḷḷāḷar caste-class formation among the Veḷḷāḷar in Inuvil through diaspora remittances and transnational networks.

These ten different *ūr* projections can be discussed in different chapters of this dissertation, which express, generational, gender, caste, class, time, and place variations with reference to people's belongings in their lived *ūr*. I have listed these *ūr* projections to

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[6] *Kulateiyvam* refers to family, clan, caste-deity or even village guardian deity also can be a *kulateiyvam* for some people.

ethnographically clarify readers' understanding of what are "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness." My reasoning as the explanations will make more sense in later chapters when these terms are used with ethnographic details. In particular, the civil war, displacement, and outmigration are the major causes of the structural changes, disruption of caste demography, interruption of village local economy, and deconstruction of village life. In addition, since the war ended in 2009, the interaction of post-war village communities with global flows, Tamil diaspora, and transnationalism are greater than before. In this context, how can one understand the "village consciousness" or "village- temple consciousness" through the greatest transformations of post-war villages? What happened to the traditional 'temple-centered' community? How does Tamil diaspora, transnationalism, and cyberspace influence the temple-centered sacred landscape and villages? How are both "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" constructed and used in the recovery and reconstruction of post-war villages? How do older and younger people react to the post-war changes? How did people in Inuvil replace their life and rebuild their houses after having short time displacements at different periods (1987, 1990, and 1995) during the war? How did internally displaced people (IDPs) replace their life and rebuild their houses and temples after 21 years in Naguleswaram villages? Why is there cultural resistance against the changes in cultural practices? How do people now at Inuvil and Naguleswaram perceive their *ūr* in post-war Jaffna? As an initial step, I open this introductory chapter by narrating the ethnographic stories from my fieldwork.

It was late evening on Friday 22, September 2017, when I visited Mr. Venthan's house to interview him. Venthan, is a 75 years old freelance writer, who has published many Tamil novels. He was reading a novel when I entered his house. He resides on the east part of Inuvil, very close to the Inuvil Sivagami Ammon (mother goddess) temple, which is his *kulateiyvam* temple. On Fridays, people in Inuvil visit their village temples as they consider Friday an auspicious day. I asked Venthan if he visits his *ūr kōvil* (village temple) on Fridays. He told me that he does not frequently go to the temple because of disputes between people the temple owner and devotees in

temple. His many friends asked same this question during the festival. One day, Murukan, a famous religious orator from Inuvil, held Venthan's hand and kindly asked him why he does not come to the temple during the festival wherein Venthan was walking near the temple premise for a prayer. Venthan told him "do not disturb my mind and wait for a while I will go to the inside the temple to see my mother goddess, Sivagami, and come back soon to answer your question." On his return from worship, Venthan explained that he worships Sivagami Ammon and does not go to the temple to avoid unnecessary temple disputes. He visits temple on non-celebrative days.

Purposively, Venthan switched to another topic with Murukan and asked him why he interpreted the wrong information about the temple car (*tēr*)[7] construction in his religious oratory on the temple car festival day. Murukan mentioned Raja, who put great effort into the temple car is construction through singing *bhajan* (singing religious hymns or songs). However, Venthan refused his statement and further argued that the temple car was made out of money collected through *tiṟupani sabai* (Fundraising Association for Temple renovation). Although Raja initiated the construction work, this *tiṟupani sabai* completed the task and there were many people attached to this association. He further questioned, "if you changed the history, then how will the younger generation understand the history and we should not distort the history." Furthermore, his cousin Lingam, a retired village administrative officer, wrote books about the temples' histories in Inuvil, but Venthan argued that Lingam's writing was also very biased because he exaggerated the history and reality. Venthan therefore was unhappy with his cousin who wrote the same thing in his book about Inuvil and disagreed with his cousin's writings that Murukan did. Venthan told Murukan, "you supported the mistakes in his writings, so our Tamil politics also works same as Murukan and Lingam." Due to this disagreement between Murukan and Venthan, Murukan did not attend Ananthan's novel launching ceremony when he was invited.

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[7] Temple car (*tēr*) or chariot is used to carry the Hindu deity of a temple during the annual festival. The temple chariots are wooden and contain many carvings and sculptures of Hindu deities.

Interestingly, Venthan brought another incident to my attention that many people knew about the history and aesthetic significance of the *mañcam* (a temple car)[8] in the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple. Murugan was invited to deliver a religious oratory on the *mañcam* festival day and stated, in his speech, that Queen Elizabeth had visited the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple and got some *pāvai* as a gift (wooden carved dolls, which are decorated with *mañcam*). He had been saying the same statement in his oratory for the last three years; hence Venthan and his colleagues warned Murukan not to convey this wrong information to the public. Venthan explained that the actual story was that in 1965, Queen Elizabeth stayed in Colombo on a short visit while travelling to Singapore for its Declaration of Independence. Further, he argued that Murikan was not even born in 1965 and had incorrectly interpreted the real history. What happened was that Ratnam was a teacher from Inuvil who took some *pāvai,* which had fallen from the *mañcam,* and donated them to the London museum. When Murukan visited London, he went to see those *pāvai* in a London museum; then fabricated the story that they were given to the Queen Elizabeth.

Though he lives in the east part of Inuvil, his village boundary (village administrative division) falls on the neighboring village division Kondavil, but he refuses to accept Kondavil as his village identity because he claimed that he was born in Inuvil and strongly attached to his *ūr* through his close relatives, orally transmitted stories, history, village scholars, friends, temples, and school. He further argued that the village division is operationalized through its village boundary; so, it is just for their administrative purpose. But his *ūr patru* (affection/love over the village) is on Inuvil, not on Kondavil. I will limit Venthan's life history here; the rest will be discussed in later chapters of this dissertation. Individual experiences of *ūr,* as in Venthan's life history, is very relevant to my phenomenological theorization of "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness." Although Inuvil is a multi-caste village, the Veḷḷāḷar are the

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[8] *Mañcam* is also a type of temple car but different from *tēr* in terms of shape, structure, and color.

dominant caste there. Venthan, Murukan, and Lingam who are all Veḷḷāḷar, competing with each other on framing the history for their village at the end of the war. About this, low-castes people never have the chance to talk because they are inevitably part of the Veḷḷāḷar dominated history.

Yet all three compete to establish their own identity and honor (*kouvravam*) in the village. Murukan wanted to uplift the village and temple's status through connecting it to Queen Elizabeth. This caused me to think that Veḷḷāḷar people did the same in many places: wanting to show they have connections to very high-level people, but at the same time, are anti-colonial and against cultural change. However, while Veḷḷāḷar are, curiously, resistant to culture change, they are also seeking the *latest fashion* to uplift their self-projection in the village. For instance, when they organize a wedding or any other domestic ceremony, they try to do something *different* to show they are *unique*. This is not only practiced by Veḷḷāḷar people, but other castes also. Thus, the construction of *kouvravam* (honor) is a projection of one's self, which is highly valued in the village and in national politics.

On the other hand, Venthen did not want to change the cultural history of the village and temples, which he was inclined to because he was socialized through a form of cultural history of his village. He cannot operate by another cultural history. At the end of the war, multiple explorations and pluralistic forms of cultural writings emerged from various channels. Diaspora men also imported a village story from Canada and London to Inuvil. The earlier generation, who migrated to foreign countries during the war, transmitted village folk tales among the children. So, the influx of diaspora, transnationalism, and cyberspace have made great connections to village community reconstruction and transformation. Cyberspace and global communication technology have influenced people to develop different connections with diaspora members for communal rebuilding. In this, social media (like Facebook) plays a greater role as diaspora members and village members post and update about temple festivals and fundraising for temples' renovation on temple Facebook page.

During the war and the LTTE state (1990-1995) in Jaffna, the majority of people's priorities were on their daily lives rather than any other business because everyone was a victim of war, violence, and political insecurity. Needless to say, "village consciousness" was hibernating among the people because everyone feared for their lives every day and all of them had the same condition of life due to the lack of opportunities and facilities in Jaffna. Also, diaspora remittances fulfilled the family level needs rather than the village level developments. Thus, people were more consciousness of their life, safety, security, and suffering than thinking about village history and identity. This claim does not mean that they had lost "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness," which can be reawakened at any time. This is why I used the term "hibernating." Further, they were motivated to own and experience *īlam* ideology (Tamil homeland theory), which were seeded by the LTTE and Tamil nationalists during the war. After the defeat of LTTE, Eelam (*īḻam*) consciousness began to decline as the Tamil homeland territory was lost. More importantly, after the war, the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam, a diaspora organization, had created a new path to reawaken people demand for Tamil rights and Tamil self-determination at a distance. In addition, while temple disputes continued in the village during the war, they increased after the war.

People are returning back to their places not only for redefining village history and identity to show their involvement in *ūr* but also to reinstate Veḷḷāḷar domination, *kouvravam* (honor), and heroism in the village community reconstruction. Of course, the temple disputes in South Asia have been vastly discussed in the literature (Whitaker 1999 and Appadurai 1981); but village conflicts, based on *kuricci, pakuti,* and *vaṭṭāram* among same caste Veḷḷāḷar, are also part of the conundrum of the temple disputes, and are left out of other discussions of temple disputes. As previously mentioned, the village is fragmented by many sub-territorial divisions where people compete with each other in terms of economy, education, and social status (*kouvravam*).

Venthan, of course, constructs his own worldview of village and religious practices that he bases on religious faith and the mother goddess, Sivagami. But at the same time, he does not want

to be involved in temple politics. Also, he has the Tamil nationalist consciousness that is reflected in his writings. People like Venthan are strongly connected to his *ūr* through placed-based knowledge and stories; at the same time, they also express their consciousness towards the nation state. Also, I argue that both Tamil nation state consciousness and village consciousness have separated into their own projects. Tamil nation-state consciousness caused people to care about Tamil rights, Tamil homeland, Tamil self-determination; but "village consciousness" or "village temple-consciousness" is more person specific and based on particular place-based life experiences. Moreover, I have briefly sketched out "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" through some ethnographic stories to clarify our understanding of how a post-war village like Inuvil continued to exist in the war with its tremendous transformations. At another ethnographic location, Naguleswaram, I will show how Naguleswaram is reconstructed to be a Tamil Hindu Saiva (*caiva*) village by people uprooted from there for 21 years. Moving on to this second ethnographic story tells us about a completely different sort of *ūr* projection.

 In October 1990, the armed clashes between the Sri Lanka's military and the LTTE in north part of the Jaffna Peninsula in Sri Lanka resulted in a massive displacement of more than 50,000 people from 16 villages.[9] My informant, Rasathi[10] was born and raised in Naguleswaram, one of the 16 villages involved in this displacement. She was first displaced from her natal village (*ūr*) in October 1990 and experienced several subsequent displacements over the next two decades. She lived in several houses and villages until she returned back to her *conṭa* (own) *ūr* 23 years later. Returning to her *ūr* was her longtime dream. She described how people at Naguleswaram have now started to rebuild their temples, houses, wells, community center, etc. In the villages where she was relocated, the people were friendly, and they earned new friends; but host community people also saw them as outsiders or *iṭam peyar̲nta āṭkaḷ* (displaced people) whenever they tried to express their opinion in village and temple matters. In particular, they

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[9] See also, K. Kugabalan, *Yāl̲ppāṇa iṭapeyarvu* [Jaffna Displacement] (1996)
[10] All informants' names are anonymous in this dissertation.

were not allowed to take temple festival rights (*urimai*) or to carry the idol of deities during the temple festivals. Whenever displaced people requested these opportunities, people of the host community simply objected, and Rasathi' husband, Raja, told me they said "when did you come to this place? What do you know about this place? What do you know about the history of this place? Here is no space for *vantān varatān* (outsiders/strangers)." Raja explained further that when one has a membership right in a temple or a community center in a village, then that membership right confirms that village as *conta iṭam* (own place or natal place).

Further, Raja grew emotional, saying "I do not know how the army officials chose the date November 27, 2010 to hand our lands back to us [the lands that were under the Sri Lanka military control for 21 years]; you know, November 27 is *Māvīrar nāḷ* (Great Heroes' Day)."[11] But he felt it was something auspicious to receive his *conta iṭam* (own place or *ūr*) on November 27. For Raja, it was auspicious because the LTTE fought for Tamil rights, the Tamil homeland, and Tamil self-determination, and people in Naguleswaram officially received their *conta iṭam* back on Great Heroes' Day. Raja's family was also happy just because they were in their *conta iṭam.* Why is one's *conta iṭam* a big deal in Jaffna Tamil culture? When a person utters the place, *conṭa iṭam,* they clearly indicate some kind of ownership of a particular place. More important, Jaffna Tamils do not just perceive *iṭam* as a physical setting but also pay attention to their own primordial sentiments of attachment to the place where they have lived, had experiences, past memories, and family stories (*kuṭumpa kataikal*).Thus, *conṭa iṭam* reveals people's cultural meanings of place and how local (and nonlocal) knowledge is interwoven in their place-remaking process in post-war Naguleswaram.

In November 2011, Raja's family returned to his *conta iṭam* and experienced "home as a journey" which describes the "continuous process of transition between one's original or previous home to one's ideal or future home" (Kabachnik et.al 2010: 323 [Mallett 2004: 69]). His

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11 November 27 was a *Māvīrar nāḷ* (Great Heroes' Day) chosen by the LTTE to remember the deaths of militants who fought for the LTTE.

transition period was similar to what Turner (1969) called "liminality," because displaced people were ambiguous towards and confused about their own place or *ūr* through " a sentimental and nostalgic journey for a lost time and space" (Kabachnik et.al 2010: 323 [Mallett 2004: 69]). The continuity of Raja's life in Karukampanai (a sub-village of Naguleswaram) was broken for 20 years, and the discontinuity of his life and his attachment to his *ūr* is now being rebuilt through a set of culturally-organized collective and individual memories. Why does a set of culturally-organized memories matter to reconstructing villages in post-war Jaffna, Sri Lanka? The anthropological investigation of culturally-organized memories and culturally-constructed emotions about dwellings is the major focus of this dissertation.

Villages like Naguleswaram, which are in the process of reconstruction, have a major task at hand. They must concern themselves with new ways of life in post-war circumstances, demographic and structural disruptions (in caste demography). Nostalgia itself is impossible because Naguleswaram had undergone dramatic changes since lived dwellings (houses) and places were destroyed. My informants tried to remember their places and life, but they could not remember because they have even lost their old photos of their places. People have strategically rebuilt their *ūr* through discovering *ūr* nostalgia and domesticating new flows of opportunities. Thus, Naguleswaram constructs community continuity through the discontinuity of forms of life and the invention of forms of life through new connections. That is, people, who were uprooted from Naguleswaram, were disconnected from their places and prewar life. They had to adopt a new form of life through new connections and opportunities when they displaced to new villages.

However, I was surprised to see present day Naguleswaram. Jaffna villages are divided into many Grama Niladhāri (GN) divisions (village administrative divisions). Naguleswaram belongs to J/226 GN division, which includes four sub-villages such as Keerimalai, Karukampanai, Old Colony, and New Colony. Although Old and New Colonies were separated as two distinct divisions, both are located in Keerimalai. People, from these colonies, claim Keerimalai as their village. In fact, there is an oldest Lord Shiva temple and it is called Naguleswaram Sivan temple.

In addition, people also identify this temple as Keerimalai Sivan temple. The oldest name of this temple was Thiruthampaleswaram according to the historical archives (Keerimalai-Naguleswara Ātinam 1969; Kanagaraja 1952; Sabanathan 1949), but this name is not in use. However, the whole village landscape, including the temple, is still identified as Keerimalai by the people. But since 1992 the name Naguleswaram is not only used for the Sivan temple but also for the *ūr* GN division. This name change was implemented by the Thellipalai Divisional Secretariat Division at the request of chief priest of the Naguleswaram Lord Shiva temple.

However, my surprise was not because of the *ūr*'s name change, but the physical transformation of the Naguleswaram landscape.

I could not visit Naguleswaram after 1988 as they were under the Sri Lanka military control for 21 years. People were not allowed to visit those villages. Why was Nagulewaram so important for Jaffna Tamils to visit? People talk about many reasons; Naguleswaram is considered a pilgrimage center[12]; Keerimalai freshwater spring is referred to as a 'spiritual heritage' associated with the Naguleswaram Sivan temple'[13]; Keerimalai sea beach is a well-known tourist spot; Naguleswaram and Keerimalai have historical connections with local kingship; Keerimalai is the only place Jaffna Tamil Hindus visit to perform post-funerary rituals; and after the war, Naguleswaram and Keerimalai became important tourist sites for the Sinhalese and foreigners as both sites are part of Jaffna cultural heritage tourism.

Surprisingly, the physical features of the Naguleswaram landscape have drastically changed. I could not find the older shops, pilgrim guest houses (*maṭam*), food stalls, and many small shops, which were all there before the war. Residential areas are present a ghastly scene of ruined buildings of all categories, most destroyed by bombs or shells. Some are partly damaged,

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[12] Pilgrims wish to visit Naguleswaram because it is one of the *Pancha Eeswarankal* (the five important ancient Lord Shiva temples in Sri Lanka).

[13] Thus, Naguleswaram and Keerimalai are popular sacred sites and a huge crowd of Jaffna Tamil Hindus visit during the seasonal festivals like *Mahā Shivaratri*, Naguleswaram temple annual festival, and *Āti Amāvācai* day (the new moon day in July month).

but many are razed to the ground; they express forgotten war memories. Thus, the places of

Naguleswaram, Keerimalai, and Karukampanai tell us many stories—a long series of woes about

burnt fields, inaccessible farms, abandoned garden plots, cultivable lands idling without owners,

and because they were rich agricultural areas for grape and beetle cultivation, people have now

lost their former local economic prosperity. The new *kōpuram* (temple-gateway tower) of

Naguleswaram temple and the newly built Sivapoomi Maṭam (pilgrim guest house), the Sri Lanka

Navy Check Point, the Sri Lanka Military Camp, and two new small restaurants.

1.2   Two villages and the war

Like Naguleswaram, Inuvil was also affected by the many disasters and political

insecurities. These political emergencies and violent environments affected peoples' everyday

lives; people lost their family members; they were abducted; they were brutally attacked; they

were internally displaced within Jaffna and Sri Lanka and many migrated to western counties.

About my own 'temple-centered community,' several of my informants spoke of feeling that

"muntiṉa mātiri illai" [Inuvil is not like it was before], and that life now lacked 'social control'

(kaṭṭupāṭu illai). Also, this 'temple-centered community' is in anxious transition in which people

have had to construct an 'imagined village' somewhat similar to the way Anderson's national

level citizens have had to construct 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983). Yet Jaffna Tamils

in diaspora and living in other parts of Sri Lanka still identify their *ūr* as the places where they

were born, and thus maintain and interact with their *ūr* at a distance (Whitaker 2015; Sanathanan

2011; Fuglerud 1999).

Unlike in early days (before 1980s), former members of Inuvil village do not regularly have

face-to-face interactions because they have scattered all over the country and the world. But the

shared experiences of *ūr* nostalgia are re-imagined through *ūr* associations; for example, Inuvil

Tiruvūṟ Onṟiyam (Inuvil village Association) in Canada connects Inuvil village members there.

Inuvil is part of these *ūr* associations in western countries. These diasporic connections and

translocal interactions are also encompassed by the project of re-making the *ūr*. Although both villages, Inuvil and Naguleswaram, were badly affected by the war, each has a different story to tell about war and war recovery experiences. To rebuild their *ūr*, each village is worked on a project of reconstruction that was heavily based on their culturally-organized memory of *ūr* nostalgia. Discovering this worldview about the role of culturally-organized of *ūr* nostalgia in village reconstruction is the major purpose of this dissertation.

Hence, this dissertation demonstrates how post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindu people in Sri Lanka are using "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" to adjust to post-war circumstances. In other words, "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness," or the memory of or nostalgia for *ūr* (village) consciousness as it existed in the recent pre-war past, is being used in the reconstruction of communities affected or destroyed by the war. To observe this on-going process, this dissertation introduces the term, "village-temple consciousness" since the English terms 'village' and 'temple' must be combined to capture what Jaffna people mean when they say *ūr*. This argument is part of a larger theoretical claim that in any post-conflict society, it is likely that destroyed or damaged communities undergoing reconstruction are using suitably modified pre-war place-making practices (Kingsolver, 2011; Feld and Basso, 1996) as *models of* or *for* their efforts (Geertz 1973: 93).

My findings about village-temple consciousness in two Jaffna villages, namely Inuvil and Naguleswaram, address a general anthropological problem: the reinvention of destroyed hometowns and associated senses of place in post-conflict societies. Furthermore, I argue that understanding the conjoined village-temple sense of place that underlies social life and its reconstruction in Jaffna requires recognizing the conjunction of the physical and the sacred implied by this compound term. The outcome of this study is to show that the postwar social and communal rebuilding ongoing in these two villages depends upon people using their "village-temple consciousness" as *models of* or *for* such endeavors. Also, this ethnography of the role of 'place-making' in community rebuilding in Jaffna, Sri Lanka illuminates the more general issue

22

of how communities anywhere after war reconstitute themselves not just as physical locations but as places in which people can once again truly feel at home.

The major purpose of this dissertation is to argue that one cannot understand the post-war reconstruction effort without knowledge of such of culturally-organized and place-based memories. For people there, such memories are mandatory for resettling and healing in the aftermath of civil war. Thus, people have a project of reconstruction which is completely different from the purely econometric development envisioned by government and INGO agency' projects of reconstruction. I further argue that understanding "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" may be important in order to grasp what is going on in any post-conflict situation. At the same time, more specifically, one also cannot understand how people live and remember in Tamil villages in South Asia without knowledge of the Tamil cultural practices of *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control), which shapes people's daily lives.

There is a set of culturally-organized and place-based memories in each community about the village, temple, place, house, school, sacred spring, festival, pilgrim guest house (*maṭam*), community center, etc. In fact, people consult this set of culturally-organized memories when they are thinking about the village as an entity, and use "village-temple consciousness" as a *model of* or *for* maintaining or reconstructing their villages in post-war Jaffna. Both "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" are *essential* to the *ūr* rebuilding project (Asad 1993); some of its elements are *essential* to the historical identity of *ūr*, but this claim does not neglect the changes in the historical construction of *ūr*. For instance, in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, people still talk about orally-transmitted histories and myths of their villages and temples; but at the same time, the village's diaspora connections and elite formation have changed the historical construction of the *ūr*. For example, Inuvil Kanthaswami temple's

kōpuram (temple-gateway tower) was built in Chōla[14] style between 1905-1909; this tower, however, was demolished in 1996 and built in a new style tower in 2001.

Although "village-temple consciousness" and "village consciousness" can be represented as a *model of* or *for,* village-temple consciousness is not a text-metaphor, but a distinct social process rather than an encapsulated form (Rosaldo 1989). However, my own theorization of Geertz's *model of* or *for* is in combination with Schneider's (1968) emphasize on the natives' point of view by considering native categories instead of *model of* or *for* as a system of symbols of meanings (Geertz 1973). This is because native categories of "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" are defined, constructed, and manipulated through human knowledge and power (Foucault 1979) and as discussed not only by Giddens (1968) in terms of individual agency through the notions of cultural habitus and structuration, but also by Robb's (2010) notion of multiple agencies, collective agencies, and material agencies.

This culturally-organized memories can be re/created through Bourdieu's (1990) *habitus* and *practice*; but at the same time, human agency plays a vital role in modifying habitus and practices (Giddens1984 and Robb 2010) by domesticating and indigenizing the global flows to produce a new form of Tamil *ūr* (Appadurai,) Thus, village-temple consciousness or village consciousness must be seen as an "ongoing social process." This properly characterizes the post-war Tamil *ūr* as a "busy intersection," a place where "a number of distinct social process intersect" (Rosaldo 1989). Although post-war Jaffna opens up new opportunities and changes, this re/discovering of nostalgia of their place, as a sense of their places (*ūr*), and as disturbed by the prolonged civil war (1983-2009), reveals a complex rebuilding process that also involves the intersections of caste, gender, and the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control).

Moreover, I would claim here that the village (*ūr*) is re/constructed or invested in through a set of cultural memories. 'A set' refers to a group of things or ideas. Further, although people

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[14] The Chōla dynasty built Hindu temples in a particular style in India, which architecture is known as Chōlar *pāani* (Chōla style).

were born in particular villages, many were forced to move away from their homes or into foreign exile due to the war. So, this chapter will also address how people imagined their villages at a distance by discussing the connections between community and personhood this disrupted. Many South Asian anthropologists have argued, like Valentine Daniel (1984), that Tamil people believe their personhood is formed from the physical substances, the soil, the *maṇ kuṇam* [behavior of the soil], of their communities. Daniel's Peircean theory of village-based personhood, of course, developed in reaction to McKim Marriot's ethnosociological theories about caste. However, this substances-based understanding of South Asian human being is derived from the Hindu texts, particularly the Manu-Smriti or Manu Dharma Sastra. While inspired somewhat by Daniel's analysis, this chapter will point out that it is not always appropriate to the situation in Jaffna, particularly after the war, and for the generation that has grown up since it ended in 2009.

In this dissertation, I develop my theoretical analysis based on a combination of Bordieuan (1990) and Geertzian (1973) theory, with a phenomenological sense of how people are practicing and being in the world. I focus phenomenologically on how individual Tamil experiences are interconnected with an orientation towards a home place (*ūr*), and how, in turn, this orientation, shaped by and shaping encounters with the Tamil diaspora and globalization (Cheran 2004; Tekwani 2003; Appadurai 1996), is affecting reconstruction in post-war Jaffna. Further, I argue that people in Jaffna's villages are adjusting to their changed circumstances by continuing to revise their practices of belonging to, imagining, and placing themselves in the specific named locales they refer to as *ūr*. Hence, I found in my study that, phenomenologically speaking, multidimensional *ūr* projections were in evidence in the two different villages, Inuvil and Naguleswaram, where I conducted my research. In the end, then, I will argue that only such multiple *ūr* projections could explain what has happened to post-war Tamil *ūr,* and the way they have been reformed by intersections of caste, gender, ethnicity (Tamil consciousness), transnationalism, and the diaspora. I will discuss more details of the theorical background in Chapter Three.

In addition to "village-consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness", this dissertation has also looked at some other major themes such as caste, class, and social order or *kaṭṭupāṭu* with reference to the greatest village transformations. For example, although caste demography is disrupted and caste geography is slowly changing, high caste Veḷḷāḷar's domination has not changed in the social, economic, and political contexts of the Jaffna Peninsula. But low caste people do have more control over their lives and over how they are presented than they did in the past. That is, both their access to diaspora money and social technology (Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, and so forth) have altered the balance of power in their favor a little bit. Also, the diaspora connections and influx of remittances have immensely challenged village elites (i.e., Veḷḷāḷar who were economically rich through farming and business), which led to new class formation among the Veḷḷāḷar through diaspora remittances. The new class formation is also found among the low-caste communities through educational attainments and diaspora remittances. This indicates class distinction within each caste. In terms of reorganizing social order in the war affected villages, there was a conflict between a pre-war moral order and post-war changes, which generated different conversations because different generations have had different attitudes toward such changes. Finally, power relations in the villages have changed within each caste and between the different caste with respect to each other, which will be discussed in the respective chapters of this dissertation.Now I move to explain briefly what are "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness?"

1.3   What are "village consciousness" and village-temple consciousness? A brief discussion

What are "village-temple consciousness" and "village consciousness"? One faculty member asked me how you measure or study a person's consciousness when I presented my Ph.D. research proposal in the Monthly Research Communication series at the Open University of Sri Lanka in July 3rd, 2017. His question was entirely valid because he perceived consciousness

as a psychological category. However, I am not a neurologist or psychologist studying how people think, act, perceive, feel, and experience; rather as an anthropologist, I employ participant observation and interpretive methods to study consciousness through cultural practices. In addition, interviewing people, having casual conversations with informants, analyzing cultural mapping, and reading locally-produced historical materials, enabled me to grasp "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" as forms of daily life. By "village-temple consciousness," then, I mean the kind of consciousness of themselves that Jaffna Tamils have through their attachments to places of origin as mediated through their enacted affiliations, memories, embodiments, and 'placing' (Kingsolver 2011:13), as well as their sense of rightful ownership (*urimai* – see Appadurai 1976, 1981; Whitaker 1999) of local temples, new and old gods, (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2015), local landscapes, and each other (Kingsolver 2011:13-16). I also argue that "village-temple consciousness" consists of the sets of beliefs, practices and culturally-constructed emotions (Clark-Decès 2005; Lutz 1986; Lutz and White 1986; Ring 2006) regarding places of origin that Jaffna people have available in their everyday lives.

Above all, this dissertation focuses on the questions of what it means to have village or village-temple conscious for Tamil Hindus themselves in Jaffna, not only when they are worshiping their *kula* deities, participating in village temple festivals, or involved in village temple disputes, but even when they are in small spaces like their houses (*vīṭu*) re/constructing their daily lives, or when they are rebuilding their houses, dealing with consequences of war and internal displacement, and interacting with family members in diaspora. These questions cannot be answered by asking informants either in Inuvil or Naguleswaram "what does it mean to be "village" or village-temple consciousness"? As previously explained, there is no specific Tamil term for "village" or "village-temple consciousness" in Jaffna Peninsula. However, other insights and other expressions collected by interacting with people as they work, worship, and talk enabled me to learn how people re/create spaces for their being at home: temples, villages, states,

and in diaspora. It implies that we learned abstract concepts like race and sex in daily life similar to the way Tamils learn "village" or "village-temple consciousness."

Another way of putting this would be to say that "village temple-consciousness" consists of the sets of beliefs, practices and culturally-constructed emotions and memories regarding their places of origin that Jaffna people have available in their everyday lives. However, the consciousness of *ūr* is not exactly the same as having an identity, for often the anthropological conception of identity is discussed in terms of ethnicity, class, caste, sex or gender (Eller 1999; Giddens 1993), and while village consciousness involves these identities too, it more involves how people ground themselves (and their identities) and their understandings of the world in a complexly- imagined locale.

A Tamil is always keen to "place" (Kingsolver 2011; 1992; Muehlebach 2001; Feld & Basso 1996) another Tamil by asking whenever they meet, "what is your *ūr*?" (Daniel 1984). In Tamil, I would say that this sense of *ūr* has implications beyond national level political identities considered alone since it involves the localization of such identities (among others) by means of the complex experience and practice of belongingness that is central to village or village temple consciousness. Also, while identity is usually discussed in pluralistic societies in terms of its political sense alone (Taras and Ganguly 2010; Horowitz 2000; Eller 1999), I, in this dissertation, want to reach beyond the political to see Jaffna people's localized lived experience and sense of belongingness – their village consciousness -- as being shaped and reshaped in the religious, temple-centric, social, ritual and, of late, cybernetic practices that currently make up daily life.

This dissertation argues that *ūr* consciousness is a set of practices (Bourdieu 1990), and, phenomenologically (Ram and Houston 2015; Desjarlais and Tharoop 2011), is a way of experiencing and dealing with the world. Therefore, this dissertation shows how *ūr* consciousness produces a Tamil person's experience of being in the world, and how this process has changed over time – particularly in the face of the pressures created by the war and post-war globalization. Therefore, this way of studying about changes through the lens of a complexly imagined place

does not only reveal and reflect what is happening to postwar Jaffna, but also provides an alternative way of looking at post conflict communities and the role of the local in globalization.

By comparing the efforts of people in these two villages -- one where people are using an ongoing but mutating sense of place to adjust to changed circumstances, and another other where people, of necessity, are using memory to reconstruct a place once lost -- this research is attempting to understand the role Jaffna Tamil people's 'village temple consciousness' is playing in the process of local social healing and community reconstruction that is ongoing in this rapidly changing post-war society. It does so by comparing how people in these two villages are using their senses of place and practices of place-making – their 'village-temple consciousness' -- to do so. In the case of Tamil Sri Lanka the relevant practices of place and belonging happens to be contained within the notion of "village-temple consciousness" and "village consciousness" since, there, it happens to be the case that when people experience belongingness and place they do so in terms of villages as home places anchored by temples as ritual and social centers. As a Tamil from Jaffna, I have experienced and found that the recent removal of restrictions on people's movements and access to communication technologies, and the reopening of the A9 high way link between Jaffna and the rest of Sri Lanka, has been increasingly shaping and is reshaping the sense of *ūr* that infuses everyday life in Jaffna. My findings determine, thus, exactly how people in both villages are altering their practice and experience of village consciousness in the face of war and a post-war surge of globalization.

In Sri Lanka, a study of the use and re-invention of community consciousness must involve studying both villages and village temples together. But while the notion of "village temple consciousness" is Sri Lankan and South Asian, the more general notion that people living in conflict zones in other parts of the world who are also engaged in rebuilding their home places must consult their lived memories of their own forms of community consciousness – of, in other words, their own ways of being conscious or practicing belonging to their own towns or villages – is surely not. It is a key gap in the literature on post-conflict societies that while a lot of

attention has been paid to the rebuilding of communities physically, or to people trying to rebuild themselves through various forms of post-traumatic healing, there is considerably less attention being paid to how people rebuild their communities as places where they feel 'at home' or 'in place' (Somasundaram 2014, 1998; Peshan 2013; Keerawella 2013; Somasundaram and Sivayokan 2013; Nakagawa 2012; Phillips and Goldberg 2011; Hogg 2011; Mehta 2010; Goodhand and Walton 2009; Cohranea et.al 2009). For this reason the rebuilding now going on in Jaffna Sri Lanka, especially in the village in the high security zone, offers an important opportunity to investigate how people there are using their 'senses of community' and practices of 'place-making' (in this case, their village-temple consciousness) in the task of community reconstruction. I argue that their struggles to do this using "village-temple consciousness" offers obvious theoretical insights into the more general problem of community reconstruction in post-conflict societies.

Furthermore, I have found it useful to deploy the Jaffna practice of 'belonging' – village temple consciousness – to the consideration of post-conflict readjustment (in the case of Inuvil) and reconstruction (in the case of the former high security zone village, Naguleswaram). But reconstructing a community is a problem in all post-conflict societies that had wars as violent as Sri Lanka's was, so this research is now addressing a general theoretical problem rather than a specifically Sri Lankan or South Asian one. By the way, when explaining 'village-temple' consciousness, the word *'kōvil'* literally means 'place of the king or ruler', and so the relationship between *ūr* and *kōvil* is implied in the very Tamil name for temple, because a ruler rules a territory, something made very explicit in a temple *tiruviḻā* (festival). This association is not the case in English with the word 'church' or 'temple'; though perhaps there is something of this relationship in the Catholic and Anglican notion of a 'parish Church', and in the word 'Cathedral', the 'seat' of a Bishop in Catholicism. As previous studies (Sanmugeswaran 2010; Sivathampy 2000; Whitaker 1999; Shanmugalingan 1997; Pfaffenberger 1982) stated, having village and temple linked this way is just the way it works in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

It is also important to say that village-temple consciousness varies by caste, class, age, and gender. In pre-war Jaffna, for example, the Veḷḷāḷar caste often played the role of "dominant caste" in Srinivas' sense (1966), or Pfaffenberger sense of *Sudra* domination (1982): and, for related reasons. Jaffna's economic elites tended also to be Veḷḷāḷar (Arumainayagam 2000; Banks 1960, 1957). Similarly, pre-war, Veḷḷāḷar, patrilineal households tended to valorise the central position of the father (Holmes 1997 [1980]; Thiruchandran 1997). Thus, for pre-war Veḷḷāḷar men village-temple consciousness involved maintaining class, caste and gendered structures of power (Thiruchandran 1997). Obviously, however, members of other castes, classes and women often viewed this differently, as a pre-war temple entry movement by non-high caste people in Jaffna demonstrated quite clearly (Vegujanan and Ravana, 1988).

1.3.1 Three major components of village-temple consciousness

"Village-temple consciousness" can be defined in a broader sense; but I have looked at three key components of "village-temple consciousness." These three key investigations cover the wide range of elements expressed in a sense of *ūr.* I have structured the chapters of the dissertation based on the findings about these three components and will briefly discuss the three components here.

(1) Practices related to temple allegiance, status and conflict, including notions of caste, hierarchy, and *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control/power) (Banks 1957, 1960; Pfaffenberger 1982). As stated above, I have explored how all three of these components of village-temple consciousness have been used to accommodate the dislocation and trauma people experienced during the war, as well as to handle an increasing intensity of globalization since the war's conclusion (Boswatte 2012; Gerharz 2010, 2009; Somasundaram 2010). Thus, cultural practices of *bhakti* religiosity and many other aspects of "village-temple-consciousness" have been visibly altered by the war and current post-war circumstances while practices of conflict over temple *urimai*

(rights/legitimate shares) do not appear to have been altered as much. The notion of 'rights' has

removed for people at a moment of great historical and political upheaval when other aspects of

local identity – including feelings of connectedness to specific communities, caste, local and

ethnic – have been more transformed more definitively.

(2) *Bhakti* (devotional) religious practices, including temple festivals and domestic rituals. By

bhakti, I refer to devotional practices only and do not question whether the level of *bhakti*

(devotion) among people has diminished or still exists, which will be another level of

investigation. However, I have looked at the religious practices of *bhakti* religiosity. That is, I

have looked at new practices of *bhakti* religiosity that seem to be occurring now in Jaffna,

particularly those relating to altered rites of passage (wedding ceremonies, coming of age

ceremonies, and funerals), such as how these rituals are now produced for public Internet

consumption, that appear to be making daily Hinduism more modern, capitalist and cosmopolitan

(Babb 1986; T. Srinivas 2010). Many new forms of innovative religious practices have been

identified in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. They represent just part of a continuum of religious

strategies (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2015) which work, along with more 'traditional'

practices involving *kulateiyvankal* (caste deities) and *iṣṭṭa teiyvankal* (favorite deities), to help

people deal with their changed circumstances.

(3) Village (*ūr*) consciousness as this relates to the landscape as imagined and lived in, including

how this landscape has had to be re-imagined in the wake of the war and the post-war intrusion of

cyberspace. I have looked at "*ūr* consciousness" as this relates to the landscape, by comparing

how people imagine the landscape in daily discourse, including the 'sacred landscapes' associated

with temples (Eck 2012; Whitaker 2015), versus how they have had to traverse those landscapes

in their daily, postwar lives, including the new, expanded 'landscape' of cyberspace and the

diaspora (Cheran 2004; Fuglerud 1999; McDowell 1996). To gain a concrete picture of these

landscapes, I have worked with people to study how they live in these imagined places, and in their memories of them (Basso 1996; Boyarin 1996; Rodman 1992), by using cultural mapping and story-telling method (Crawhal 2007; Jones and Garde-Hansen 2012; Muzaini 2012; Poole 2003; Riano-Alcala 2002). In addition, this chapter and other chapters examines the perceptions of members of the Tamil diaspora who visited for the domestic rituals and temple events in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, about why and how they such retain an intense connection to 'their' natal village even after they have moved far away.

Altogether, then, I attempted to discover why these sudden shifts in consciousness and practices took place, as well as, sometimes, why they did not. The enmeshment of postwar Jaffna village temples and villages in global capitalism (Robbins 2002) and newly accessible diasporic cyberspace networks-- via the proliferations of temple Facebook pages, temple websites and village websites – has forced the production of new forms of 'being', and, hence, of *uur* consciousness. Here issues of global engagement, diaspora connectivity, voluntary and involuntary migration (Boswatte 2012), and the worries of Jaffna's older generation about a loss of social control, *'kaṭṭupāṭu'* (including loss of control through caste and gender), are all a part of the postwar changes that I am trying to explicate with my research on village or village-temple consciousness. The Tamil expression *'kaṭṭupāṭu'* literally means to submit, to be tied. This implies that people who share an *ūr* are tied together by cultural values and a social hierarchy that prevents disorder and social disarticulation.

Yet, until recently, many of the characteristics of village consciousness have not been analyzed ethnographically or theoretically within the context of an investigation of the phenomenology of Tamil *ūr* (Desjarlais and Throop 2011; Desjarlais 1992). Therefore, this dissertation is to examine the three components of village-temple consciousness discussed above to show how the war and globalization have influenced them. The war as such was not the only cause of these changes in Jaffna; rather it set in train multiple interconnected causes, here thrown together under the term 'globalization', that began to change Jaffna during the war and have

continued changing it post-war. Because the war's direct effects and those of globalization are complexly interlinked and inseparable, I have looked at both together. However, identifying the changes caused by either war or globalization (Gerharz 2010, 2009) also involve acknowledging the range of opinion people there have about them. Hence, I found during my fieldwork in 2016 and 2017-2018 that one old man said, sadly: "due to the war and displacement we have lost many known members and relatives in the village; also the practice of control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) became powerless among the children because the LTTE's control and form of administration already changed society a lot during the war period."

On the other hand, an older women claimed, more optimistically: "after the A9 high way was reopened, now everything is available in Jaffna; banned materials are allowed to be in use; more development works are in progress; people use Skype and Facebook to communicate with their family members in diaspora after allowing convenient communication technology service by the Government of Sri Lanka." These are contrasting attitudes toward the changes caused by war and globalization. Though there was a difficulty in identifying the changes caused by either war or globalization, older and younger people have identified some of the changes accordingly.

Although both migration and internal displacement took place during and after the war, access to global media and global flows were limited compared to the present. It was the end of the war which allowed these innovations, digital linkages, diasporic connections, and engagements (Boswatte 2012; Gerharz 2010, 2009) to come flooding in. Hence, I found that technology, global capitalism, and connectivity between Jaffna Tamils and the Tamil diaspora connectivity are having an immense influence of the contemporary Jaffna Tamil community. For example, I encountered global capitalism in the new way some people pay for blessing and spiritual advice (sometimes over the Internet) about their life and health, a revealing 'commodification of spirituality.' In this and other ways, I argue that global capitalism is producing new forms of interaction and perception that are becoming part of people's current sense and practice of *ūr.* Thus, I for instance found with one temple website that diaspora people

require not only photographs and videos of temple, deities and festivals, but also photographs of people.

Similar transformations are perhaps behind the emergence of many new wedding halls (and new temples) in both villages (in many other villages in Jaffna as well) and in the renovation of community centers, emergence of new community-cultural center, and temple youth associations These alterations too seem to be part of what is happening, at present, to village consciousness. After discussing the war and a brief ethnographic detail about the two villages in Jaffna, the readers might wonder where Sri Lanka is. Some would know that Sri Lanka is a tiny teardrop island in the Indian ocean, which has a very long colonial history. Or many know Sri Lanka through the recent past of dirty war history, but this country has long produced the first-class tea to the global market. The readers might have many questions about Sri Lanka and the two villages in terms of population, history, colonial history, post-colonial history, war, etc. Therefore, the following section will be about the background and context of Sri Lanka and the two ethnographic sites.

1.4 Background and context
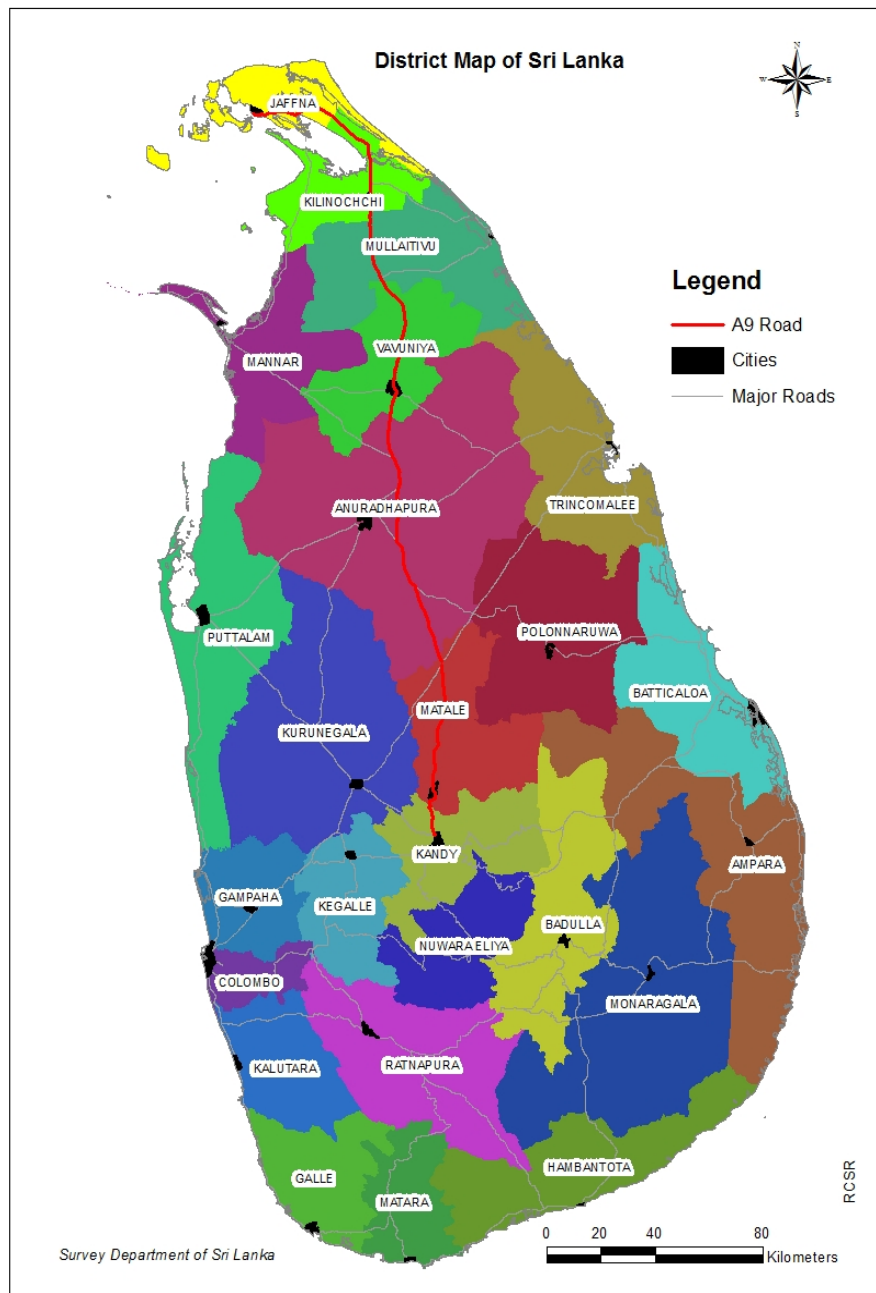
Figure 1. District Map of Sri Laka

Sri Lanka is a tiny island and located in South Asia. It has a total land area of about 65,610 square kilometers and a population of over 20 million (Pathirana 2010). Sri Lanka's population multi-ethnic and, dominated by three main ethnic communities namely: Sinhalese -79.4%, Tamil-15.2%

and Muslim-9.3% (Census Report 2012). Jaffna (Yaazhppaanam) is a peninsula located in the far

north of Sri Lanka, has an area of 1,025 square kilometers. Jaffna is one of the Sri Lanka's 25

Districts, and the capital city of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka (Statistical Information

2012). In terms of ethnicity, largely Tamil Hindu populations reside in Jaffna, although there is

also a significant number of Tamil Christians (Sivathamby 1995). The total population 583,378 of

ethnically are composed of Tamils (577,745), Sinhalese (3,366), and Muslims (2,139) (Census

Report 2012). Most Tamil speaking Muslims were forcibly exiled by the LTTE in 1990

(Thiranagama 2011).
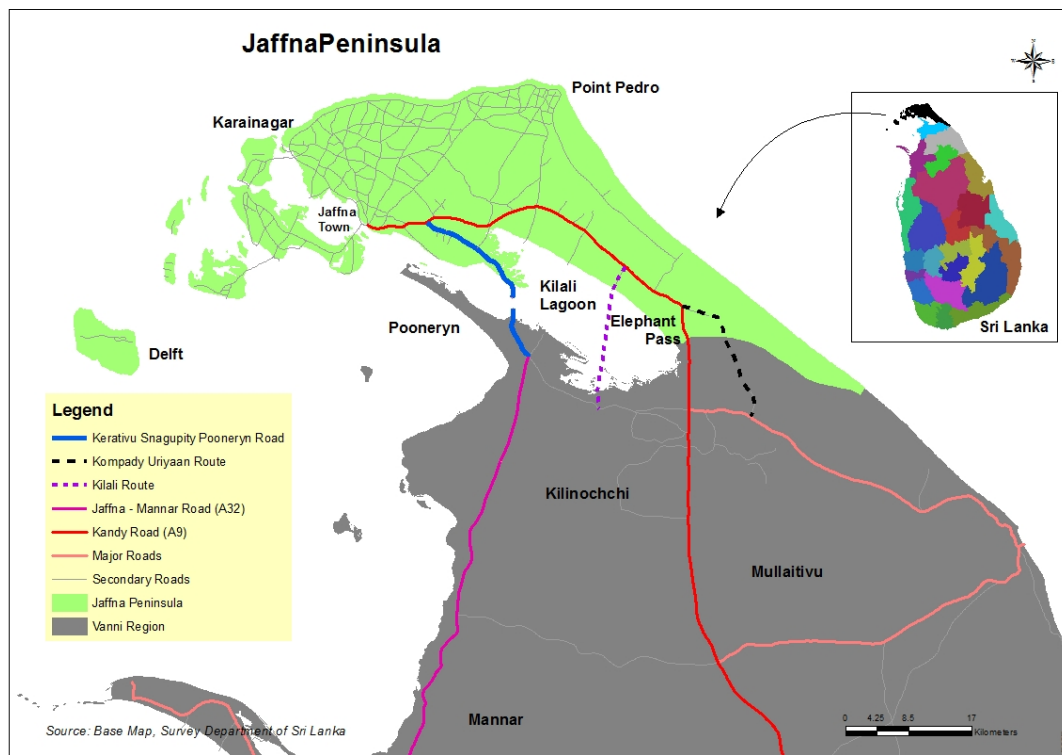
Figure 2. District of Jaffna Peninsula

The history of Jaffna is complex because there are various versions of its history. Some claim the

Jaffna Kingdom (1215-1624 CE) was founded by the Aryacakravarti Dynasty (Indrapala 2005;

Pathmanathan 1978) while other historians argue there were early Tamil settlements in Jaffna

37

before the Aryacakravarti Dynasty (Gunasingam 2016; Pushparatnam 1993; Ragupathy 1987). With respect to religion, the majority of Tamils are Hindus and profess *Saivism*. The majority of Tamil Christians are Roman Catholics, but there is also a small growing number of Protestants (Holmes 1997 [1980]). Agriculture, fishing and industrial activities are the main components of the economy in Jaffna. In addition, Jaffna was under the colonial rules of the Portuguese, Dutch and British (1621-1948) (Abeysinghe 2005; K.M. De Silva 1981).

After independence from Britain in 1948, the majority Sinhalese came to power in independent Sri Lanka (Russell 1982). The Sinhalese dominated government then passed various laws privileging that ethnic group. In 1956, the Sinhala Only Act policy declared Sinhala the official language (Brown 2003), and the standardization policy (1972) reduced Tamil student enrollment in university level education (K.M. De Silva 1997). As a result, the relationship between the Sinhalese Buddhist majority and minority Tamils worsened. Eventually, this ethnic tension led to a prolonged Civil War-1983-2009. This war was sparked off by anti-Tamil riots in July 1983, popularly known Black July where many Tamil civilians were killed, and Tamil homes and shops were burned. This was my first displacement in 1983 and I do not want to omit my personal war and displacement experiences in my ethnographic writing and would like to acknowledge the worth of reflexive knowledge in my dissertation writing up.

1.4.1 Civil-war and internal displacement in Sri Lanka and Jaffna

Generally, the process of displacement takes place at two different forms such as 'voluntary' and 'forced', and both were present in Sri Lanka at various times due to many reasons. This study purposely concentrates on conflict induced displacement which can be referred to as 'forced'. The recent history of displacement begins from 1958 onwards, though a massive Sinhalese and Tamil population influx took place in ancient times according to history.

Unfortunately, in 1958, a Tamil displacement took place from Southern Sri Lanka to Jaffna and other regions due to violence against Tamils and political instability (Kugabalan 1996).

Nevertheless, the Northern and Eastern provinces were constantly affected and distorted with regard to their social, economic and cultural spheres of community life by military power, liberation movements, military force establishment and territorial expansion and geopolitics. Remarkably, physical structures and insecurity were major reasons for massive displacement within the country. The 1983 riot was a turning point in Sri Lankan history as violence against Tamils took place in various forms.[15] By the mid-1980s the war settled into a struggle between the militant separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the mostly Sinhalese armed forces of the Sri Lanka state. The LTTE fought to create a separate Tamil state, called Tamil Eelam, in Sri Lanka's North and East. Even though 1983 riots had been stopped under the pressure of the international community, inter-ethnic relations were affected drastically. Consequently, an 'agitation' between Sinhalese and Tamils was constructed as a common feature in both communities and was constantly induced through writings, propaganda, stories, poems, history and mass media.

The war displaced nearly one million people, and killed tens of thousands of noncombatants through assassination, abduction, massacres by both sides, suicide bombing by the LTTE, and indiscriminant bombardment by the armed forces (Uyangoda 2009; Senanayake 2009; Dissanayaka 2005; Mooney 2005; Goodhand 2001; Trawick 1997; Hoole et.al 1990). The island of Sri Lanka is often quoted by UN and other humanitarian agencies as one that consists of a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). It is estimated that there are over 600,000 IDPs in Sri Lanka, of whom 270,000 have been displaced in recent military campaigns between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in the Northern Province. According to Wassel (2009), approximately 250,000 others were returned and relocated following the government's

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15 For more detail see K. Kugabalan, Jaffna Migration (1996)

military control of the Eastern Province between 2007 and the present. The largest of the IDP camps, the Menik Farm in the Vavuniya District, held just over 220,000 people, making it Sri Lanka's second biggest town and the largest IDP site in the world.[16] The IDPs originate mainly from Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Jaffna districts in the Northern Sri Lanka, as well as from some areas in the East of the country.[17]

During and after the Civil War, many Tamils with means fled to western countries (Whitaker 2005; Cheren 2000). For instance, the Jaffna District Statistical Handbook (2010) indicates a peninsular population of 831,000 in 1981 reduced by a quarter to 622,589 in 2009 by death and migration. Even now many long-term IDPs, uprooted from their homes by the civil war, still remain in welfare centres, relatives' homes, and transition centres in Jaffna (UN Status Report 2016; Sanmugeswaran 2010).

After 1980s, liberation movements and military forces became strong established. Particularly, military bases were territorially expanded due to the attacks of the LTTE and other liberation movements. During this expansion process in Jaffna, the Palali military base was expanded into a very important centre of military control. This territory was expanded through military activities and the military base encroached of neighbouring villages such as Mailyddy, Vasaavilaan and Kadduvan, which were eventually cleared by shelling, bombing and shooting. In 1985, the operation slowly progressed to capturing the lands beside the Palaali Military Base. Further expansion actively took place in 1990 (Kugabalan 1996).

As a result of this, 16 villages went under military control and their people became internally displaced persons losing their land, properties, and invaluable documents such as deeds and certificates due to the destruction caused. The 16 villages are Mailyddy, Thaiddy, Urani, Kangesanthurai, Naguleswaram, Veemankamam, Maaviddapuram, the northern part of

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16 See also 'Sri Lanka: a question of rights', *Forced Migration Review* (2009)

17 See also World Refugee Day: 42 million uprooted people waiting to go home, At available http://www.unhcr.org/4a3b98706.html

Thellipalai, Palaali, Idaikkaadu, Valalai, Pathanmeni, Kupilaan, Oddakappulam, Kadduvan North and Kurumbasiddy. All came under the control of the Palaali Military Base as a result of this expansion process and were consequently declared a high security zones (HSZ) and cleared of all people and non-military buildings (Kugabalan 1996).
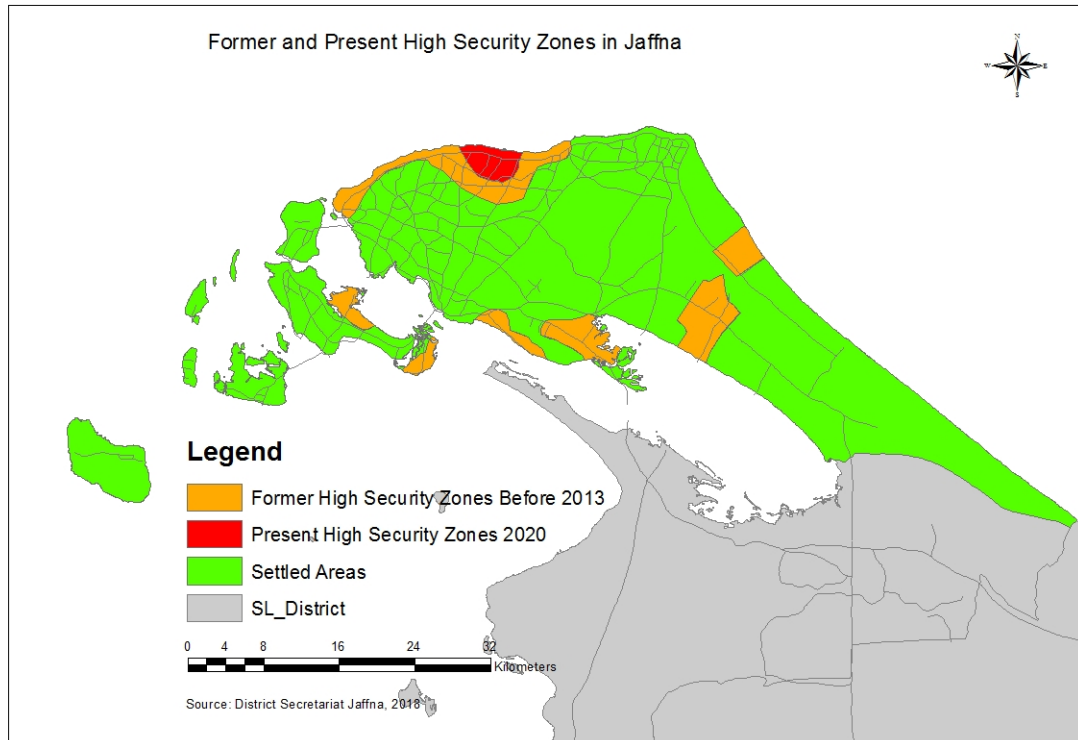
Figure 3. Former and Present High Security Zones in Jaffna Peninsula

More than 50,000 people were uprooted from this zone and displaced within the Jaffna peninsula and to other parts of the country (Kugabalan 1996). There are still currently 5,341 acres under the Jaffna HSZ; in 2015, however, now 1,728 acres, were released (UN Status Report 2016), and some long-term IDPS are returning to rebuild destroyed villages and temples.

One reason this dissertation involves in ethnography of a village within the newly released HSZ land and temple sites, then, and a further reason for its timeliness, were as the need to observe a village and temples at the critical moment when they were being re-invented.

Due to the closure of the A9 highway[18] during the war (World Bank 2007), Jaffna was cut off not only from material supplies but also from telecommunications, global media (Poster 2008; Kraidy 2002) global capitalism (Robbins 2002) and access to cyberspace (TamilNet 2006; Bell 2001). Though some Jaffna civilians maintained their connections with Colombo or abroad through different modes of transportation (air and sea) during the war (Somasundaram 2010; Mehta 2010), this was not easy for the whole population.

After the A9 highway reopened, there were many studies of the post-war community of Jaffna. This work focused on the post-conflict reconciliation, social harmony, peace building, and resilience (Peshan 2013; Keerawella 2013; Somasundaram and Sivayokan 2013; Nakagawa 2012; Phillips & Goldberg 2011; Hogg 2011; Goodhand and Walton 2009; Cohranea et.al 2009). In particular, Peshan (2013) looked at how Jaffna people were regaining democratic peace, healing and unity; Keerawella (2013) discussed the devolution of power, political reform; Sivayokan & Somasundaram (2013) analyzed war related psychological problems, mental health, and individual and collective trauma; Nakagawa (2012) recommended countrywide reconciliation; Hogg (2011) suggested bringing truth, justice and reconciliation to all the communities; Phillips & Goldberg (2011) developed a curriculum for building social harmony among school children; and Goodhand and Walton (2009) emphasized the need for an alternative mechanism for liberal peace building. Hence, all of these studies have narrowly focused on how people were dealing with the consequences of political violence and the war, and on how Jaffna Tamil community should heal and rebuild their community. Although I acknowledge the worth of these studies, this dissertation will go beyond them to show how people are also using village-temple consciousness to deal with the newly globalized circumstances that have arisen since the war.

I argue that the lives of people in post-war Jaffna are being shaped by globalization and diasporic flows, and that village consciousness is helping people accommodate and perhaps alter

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[18] The A9 highway over the Elephant Pass is the only way in and out of Jaffna peninsula by road. A new bridge across the lagoon from Pooneryn (Pūnakari) now offers additional access to Jaffna.

these forces even while it is, itself, being changed by them. It is also clear that because these earlier studies dealt with the Tamil community from a whole-Jaffna-Peninsula perspective rather than from an *ūravan* (village person) perspective, the role of village consciousness in this historical process has been neglected. In addition, since the war in Sri Lanka, much more attention has been paid to ethnicity, ethnic identity, Tamil nationalism, and ethnic conflict and violence than to village identity. This neglect of village studies in the anthropology of Sri Lanka is gap in the literature the outcome of this dissertation hopes to fill.

1.4.2   Inuvil and Naguleswaram as ethnographic research sites in Jaffna
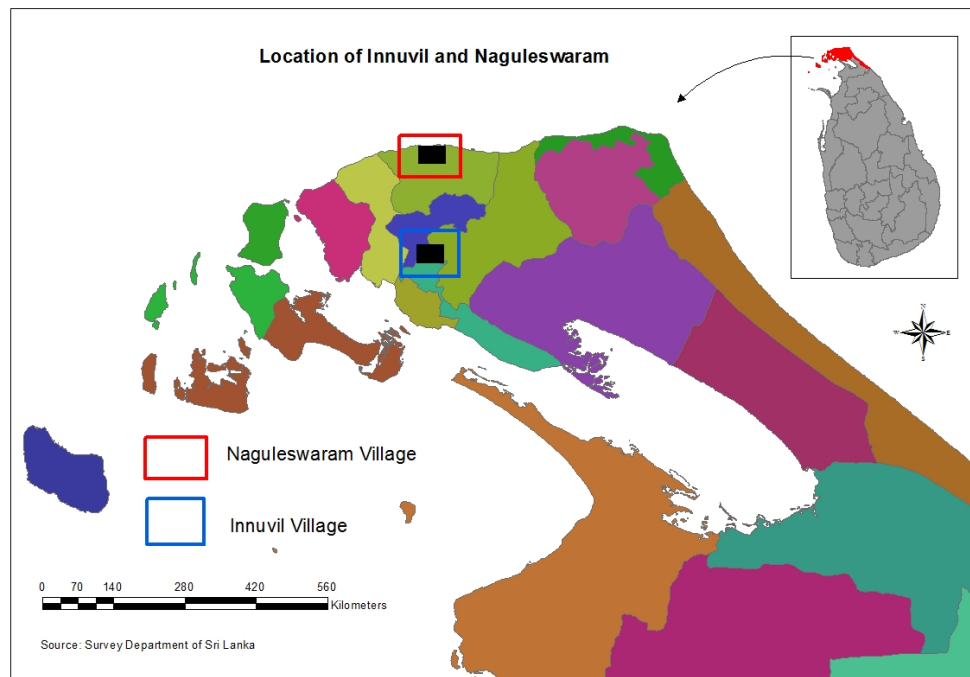
Figure 4 Locations of Inuvil and Naguleswaram

Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages are two villages in Valikāmam, one of four named regions of the Jaffna Peninsula. Geographically, Jaffna is a sandy peninsula surrounded by ocean and a large lagoon linked to the mainland by a thin bridge at Elephants Pass. Valikāmam means 'sandy place'. But to be from Valikāmathan also denotes a regional identity; hence, people from

this part of Jaffna are said to be different from people from the other three regions,

Vadamarachchi, Thenmarachchi, and Theevakam (Islands) of the Peninsula. I have conducted my

ethnographic research in these two villages. The first village, Inuvil, my hometown, though

highly affected by the war for more than 26 years, was never completely depopulated by it. The

second village, Naguleswaram, was completely destroyed and depopulated after it fell within the

military's former High Security Zone (HSZ) and is only now being rebuilt as its uprooted

inhabitants return after 20 years. This research has captured their re-imaginings of their former

village as this was happening, and with it, their reconstructions of village consciousness. This part

of the project was of the utmost importance because it allowed a comparison of village

consciousness in Inuvil where it is an ongoing form of life and village consciousness in

Naguleswaram, where it is a more self-conscious project.

Both Inuvil and Naguleswaram are called 'ancient' villages (*pazhaiya urkal)* because they

appear in Jaffna Tamil origin myths and are sites of religious pilgrimage (Mahalingam 2014;

Thirumurukan 2002; Rasanayagam 1999 [1926]). Inuvil was selected for this study because it is

my home village and I have done previous research in one division of the village. Naguleswaram

was selected because it lay within the former HSZ, was completely destroyed during the war, and

is now being rebuilt.
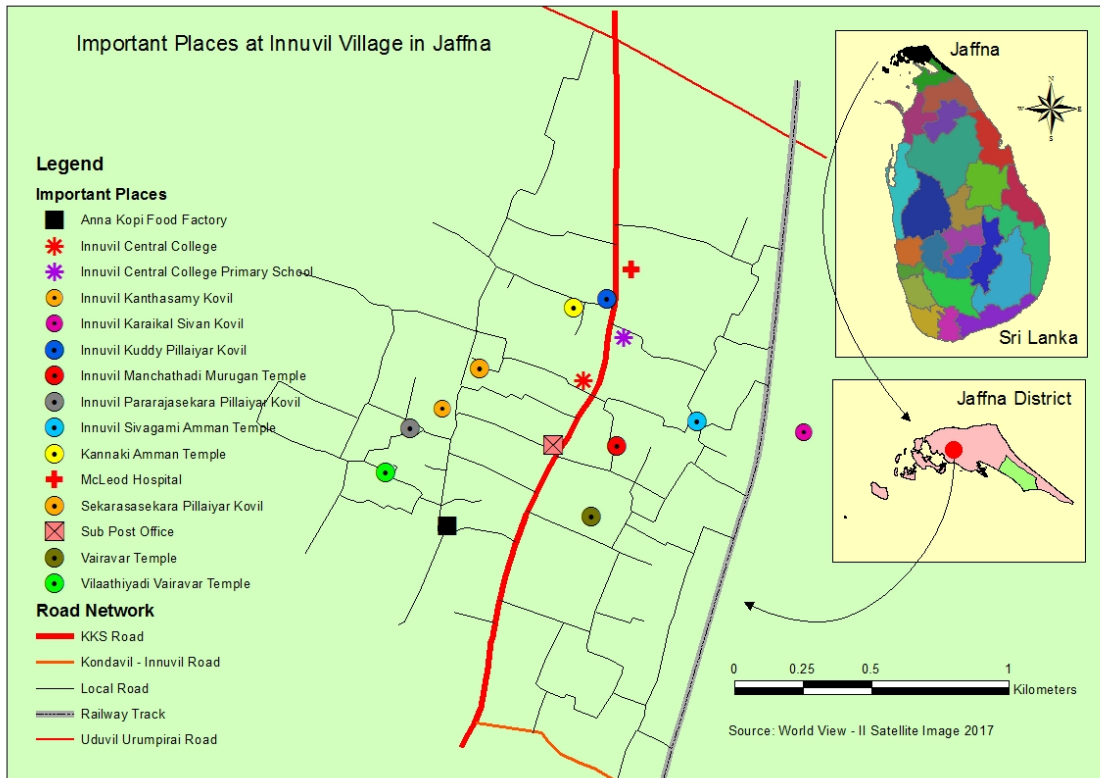
Figure 5 Inuvil Village

Inuvil is a typical Tamil speaking village in the Valikāmam South (Uduvil Divisional Secretariat Division) of the Jaffna District in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, and is inhabited by 5,649 persons[19] of the following castes: Brahmin, Veḷḷāḷar, Panndaram (Veerasaivar), Isai Veḷḷāḷar (Nattuvar), Nalavar (toddy tappers), Pallar (agriculture labours) and Paraiyar (drum beaters) (Sanmugeswaran 2002).

Inuvil is divided into four Grama Niladhari (or GN-Village administration) divisions: J/188 Inuvil South-West, J/189 Inuvil East, J/190 Inuvil North-East, and J/191 Inuvil West. This study covered all four divisions. Also, Inuvil is a village of temples (21 Hindu temples) (Sivalingam 2013). Some are historic, like the Parajasekera Pillaiyar and the Segarajasekera Pillaiyar temples, which date back to the times of the Tamil Kings of the Jaffna (Sivalingam 2013, 2004; Nadarasa 1977). Agriculture is the major economic activity in both villages; people cultivate vegetables,

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[19] Uduvil Division Secretariat Statistics 2018

tobacco and subsidiary food crops. The production of Tamil music drama, dance, music, *Kavadi* dance, temple music, garland making, and flower decoration are important in Inuvil village life (Sivalingam 2013, 2004; Nadarasa 1977). Ultimately, Inuvil was an ideal site for this research because it is occupied by multiple castes, has ongoing temple conflicts (Whitaker 1999; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1976), temples of both high and non-high caste people, is a site of much self-conscious artistic and religious activity, and is experiencing new religious practices, as well as interactions with the Tamil diaspora and increased cyber-connectedness (Boswatte 2012: Whitaker 2006, 2004). For instance, members of the Swiss Tamil diaspora recently built a new lord Shiva temple in Inuvil, and other diaspora people have funded a public library, a computer center, various temple renovations, and other village infrastructure developments after the war (Sivalingam 2013). However, Inuvil's temples were not physically affected by the war, even as many temples in HSZ villages (such as Neguleswaram) were destroyed and had their temple idols stolen.
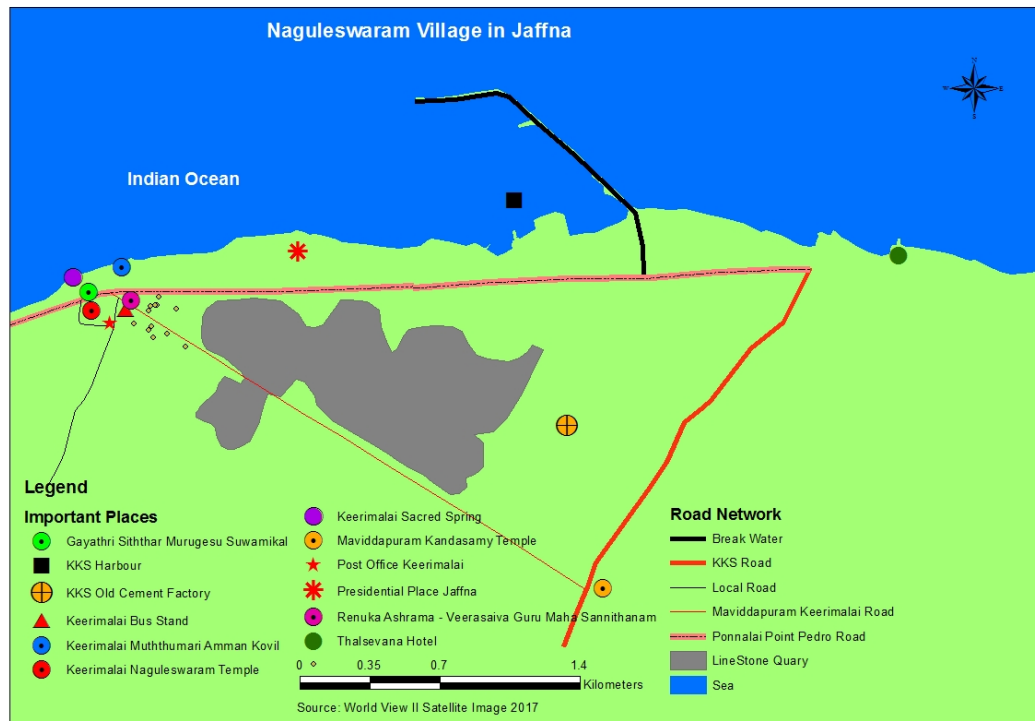
Figure 6. Naguleswaram village

Naguleswaram is also a Tamil speaking village from the Valikamam North of Tellippalai Divisional Secretariat Division, which has one GN division J/226, that includes four sub villages, Karukampanai, Keerimalai, and the New and Old colonies. These are inhabited by 1347 people[20] of the Veḷḷāḷar, Koviyar, Pallar, and Nalavar castes; but likely had a population in size much like that of Inuvil before the war. Both villages are inhabited by people of multiple castes and were dominated by Veḷḷāḷar prior to the war. But in Naguleswaram Kōviyar caste people have become the numerical majority since the war.

Contrariwise, Veḷḷāḷar caste people are still demographically and politically dominant in Inuvil. Naguleswaram is located on the northern seacoast of the Jaffna Peninsula near Keerimalai, where both salt and freshwater flow together. The Keerimalai natural water spring at this spot, is locally known as *Theertham* (holy water) among the Jaffna Hindu Tamils (Shanmugalingan 2012; Visvanathan 2000). Keerimalai is 50 feet above the main sea level and located West of Palaly. Both Keerimalai and Naguleswaram are pilgrimage sites. At the same time, people must perform a ritual called '*Anthiyeddi*' (a re-enactment of the funeral ritual) for the dead people at this holy place (Pathmanathan 2012; Thirumurugan 2002; Visvanathan 2000; Holmes 1997 [1980]). Due to the prolonged civil war and military restrictions, these sites went under the HSZ and people were not only uprooted from this village, but also no one was allowed to enter this area thereafter to perform the ritual or worship at Naguleswaram temple (Sivathamby 2005). Recently, these restrictions were removed, and people are attempting to rebuild their homes and reinvent their past memorized, sacred landscape.

As Gunasinghe (1985) has pointed out, market-oriented cash crop cultivation made many Jaffna villages prosperous before the war. This was true of both Inuvil and Naguleswaram too, though both villages also participated in industry. Prior to the war, people in Inuvil cultivated vegetables, tobacco and other crops, and worked at white color jobs and other businesses; they

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[20] Tellippalai Divisional Secretariat Statistics 2018

continue to do so now. But Inuvil's locally famous cigar and tobacco industry was disrupted during the war, and many Inuvil people have moved to Colombo or migrated abroad. A similar economic prosperity was found in Naguleswaram before the war. In that village the cultivation of onion, beetle, and grapes, fishing, and a larger cement factory were the main providers of economic activity prior to the war. But during the war Naguleswaram and other villages in the HSZ were destroyed, their economies ended, and their people were exiled to other parts of Jaffna and Sri Lanka for 26 years.

During their period of exile, people from Nagulswaram were also barred from entering the area to perform rituals at their Naguleswaram temple (Sivathamby 2005). This temple, destroyed and occupied by the Sri Lanka army for 26 years, was recently rebuilt and now hosts normal public worship. Indeed, several temples at Naguleswaram that were pilgrimage sites have been rebuilt and now boast newly built pilgrim guest houses. Further, as military restrictions were removed, people begun to return to Nguleswaram to rebuild their homes, and, perhaps, reinvent a sacred landscape. I have found that capturing this contested re-imagining of a former village, and self-conscious reconstruction of village-temple consciousness, by Naguleswaram people as it is occurring sets up an interesting comparison to the situation in Inuvil, where most physical markers of the village's structure remained intact, and where "village-temple consciousness" continued unabated as an ongoing form of life. Thus, "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" in post-war villages will be the main focus of this dissertation and three components of village consciousness are further expanded through my research findings, which aided my organization, as demonstrated by the following section, of dissertation and chapters.

1.5   Dissertation plan and chapter organizations

This dissertation compiles ten chapters, which are structured based on a comparative study that was conducted in two Tamil Hindu villages in Jaffna. The introductory chapter has presented the overarching argument of the dissertation that in post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindu villages, people reconstructed their villages, their *ūr* (village)*,* in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war by using their nostalgia for, and memories of, prewar *ūr.* In this chapter, I have introduced the two terms such as "village-consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness," which are the major focus in this dissertation. These two terms have explained the role and significance of culturally-organized and place-based memories in post-war reconstruction through brief ethnographic narratives. Thus, I have ethnographically clarified these two terms, which are divided into three sub- sections I have structured the whole dissertation based on these sub-sections.

In First Chapter, I have mapped out the historical, geographical, and demographical backgrounds of Sri Lanka, the Jaffna Peninsula, and the two ethnographic field sites, including research methodology I used in my research. I will have to explain how I anthropologically theorized these two terms; these questions will be discussed in Chapter Three, Theoretical Background and Literature Review.

Before moving to chapter three, I have devoted the second chapter, My Memory of Life During the War, Violence, and Displacement: A Brief Story, for my personal war memory to discuss in this dissertation because my war memory is very important to delineate the historical and cultural transformation of the Tamil Hindu society in South Asia. Hence, internalization of war experiences is a key tool in understanding the post-war reconstruction and cultural transformation.

The Third Chapter, Theoretical Background and Literature Review will discuss the theoretical perspectives used in this research. That is, how I develop my theoretical based on a combination of Bordieuan (1990), Geertzian (1973) theory, with a phenomenological sense of how people are practicing and being in the world. In my study I found that, phenomenologically

speaking, multiple *ūr* projections were in evidence in the two different villages, Inuvil and Naguleswaram. In the end, then, I will argue that only such multiple *ūr* projections could explain what has happened to post-war Tamil *ūr,* and the way they have been reformed by intersections of caste, gender, ethnicity (Tamil consciousness), transnationalism, and the diaspora. At the end of the chapter, I realized that the readers would expect to see intensive ethnographic details of the dissertation; I therefore devoted the fourth, fifth, six, seven, eight and nine chapters are to be ethnographic accounts of post-war Jaffna. On the base, I have dedicated the chapter four to be, "Village Consciousness," "Village-Temple Consciousness and *Kaṭṭupāṭu* (Control). Let's see what is about this chapter.

The Chapter Four, "Village Consciousness," "Village-Temple consciousness" and *Kaṭṭupāṭu* (Control), examines the role of "village or village-temple consciousness" and conventional forms of control (*kattupādu*) over cultural practices among the Tamil Hindus in preset-day Jaffna. This chapter discusses the phenomenological process of Jaffna Tamil village reconstruction. I have included caste, gender, and generation differences with respect to the practice of social control. Also, in this chapter, I have pointed out difference between people in the two villages and the diaspora with regard to personhood. Furthermore, I have discussed relevant ethnographic cases to justify the overarching argument of this chapter. This chapter reveals that Inuvil has more interactions with the diaspora and global flows than Naguleswaram, and that Inuvil is in an anxious transition from prewar to post-war life. Finally, I pose two questions. Why is Inuvil in an anxious transition? And has Inuvil village lost *kattupādu* due to the war and globalization? I will move on in the fifth chapter to answer these questions ethnographically and anthropologically.

The Chapter Fifth, Inuvil in an Anxious Transition: Reacting to Post-war, Changes, discusses how Inuvil village is in an anxious transition from pre to post-war life because of a perceived loss of *kattupādu,* which older people are attempting to regain through the reconstruction of the village life. At the same time, they are facing challenges to regaining this

past life because of the prolonged war and the breaking up of family ties, relative and friends'

networks, and attitudinal changes. Gradually, they are acknowledging and reacting to these

changes. Even though people have acknowledged the changes, however, they are in a dilemma

and uncertain about those adjustments. At the end of this chapter, I briefly discuss the purpose of

the next chapter, which illustrates how Naguleswaram has a different project of village

community reconstruction in post-war Jaffna. People in there Naguleswaram remembered their

past, which was different imagination of their *ūr* landscape and scared landscape (Naguleswaram

Sivan temple), but now it is impossible to experience in the post-war Naguleswaram, why is it

impossible? The next chapter will answer this question through ethnographic evidences.

The Chapter Six, Naguleswaram: Between Impossible Nostalgia and Daily Survival, provides

more detail about people's impossible nostalgia and daily survival, this chapter begins with two

different ethnographic stories: those of Lingam and Arulamma. These two informants talked

about their natural and scared landscapes. In particular, the informants used stories to describe

their places and to explain how they were attached to their daily lives and village landscape. As

one of the main focuses of this dissertation is also to explore whether traditional village

consciousness changed due to the war and globalization, the next chapter will address how

changes now occurring in *bhakti* religious practices and domestic rituals, how people are reacting

to these changes, how people handle the notion of *kattupāḍu* in adjusting to those changes, and

how innovations are made in a domestic and temple "ritualscape". The next chapter will further

answer these questions through ethnographic case studies.

The Chapter Seven, Innovations, Changes, and Continuity in Everyday Rituals, argue that

"village" or "village-temple consciousness" cannot be understood without discussing rituals,

innovations, changes, discontinuities and continuities because they are a key part of their

everyday life. Furthermore, this chapter addresses changes in religious practices, by looking at

changes in *bhakti* religiosity are now occurring in post-war Jaffna. With regard to changes in

domestic rituals, I describe altered rites of passage (wedding ceremonies, coming of age

ceremonies, and funerals) and how these rituals are now produced for public Internet consumption. Such changes appear to be making daily Hinduism more modern, capitalist and cosmopolitan.

In addition, in this chapter, I also show the links between the study of landscape and place and ritual. I further investigate what happened to the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in the context of the village's ritual-scape in post-war Jaffna. Throughout this chapter, I discuss the linkages between the village landscape and ritual in post-war Jaffna. But this leads me to argue that more ethnographic detail on village landscape is required, which includes details about temples and places (people's land, houses, farming land, etc.) in order to understand "village" or "village-temple consciousness" in post-war Jaffna. Hence, the next chapter will present yet more ethnographic detail about temples, villages, and places in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

The Chapter Eight, Temples, Villages, and Places that "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness" is an empirical reality as well as a constructed product of human experience. This chapter will be divided into two parts: the first part will be named as Chapter Eight and the second part will be Chapter Nine. However, experiencing *ūr* in the post-war context of Jaffna cannot be analyzed in terms of a set of physical properties alone. Rather physical properties like temples, villages, and places should be analyzed through the culturally-organized memories and culturally-constructed emotions of Jaffna people. Village or temple or place can be a content of memory, which is experienced and preserved in a particular time.

More specifically, the post-war reconstruction of these empirical physical properties needs to be understood in light of more anthropological investigation about nostalgia and anxiety about social control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*), and how diaspora and transnational networks influences temples, villages, and places. In particular, temple disputes and animal sacrifice disputes will be discussed along with special reference to Tamil cultural practices of *kouvravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honor), which will finally allow us to answer the question: what happened to *ūrness*? Understanding *ūrness* is explained to connect it to our analysis of Tamil consciousness and state

consciousness in post-war Jaffna, which will be intensively synthesized in my conclusion chapter nice. The Chapter Ten is Conclusion, which discusses the key findings from this ethnographic study and possible future research projects.

1.6   Methods, data collection, analysis, and challenges

1.6.1   Is this an ethnographic study?

Is this an ethnographic study? Yes, of course, this is an intensive multi-sited ethnographic study of the post-war Tamil villages of Inuvil and Naguleswaram in Jaffna Peninsula, Sri Lanka. When it comes to ethnographic research practice, ethnographic methods may include participant observation, life history, case study, interviewing, and other participatory research methods. Although the above listed ethnographic research methods are conventionally in practice, there are many problems with the conventional ethnographic research methods in terms of ethnocentrism, power relations (male-oriented ethnography—e.g. Malinowski did not discuss women as important actors in Trobriand's economy) and Western imperialism (Dána-Ain et.al 2016; Weiner 1988). Even though I have employed participant observation, case studies, life histories, and semi-structured interviews in this study (Lavenda and Schultz 2008; Bernard 2006; Ferraro 2001; LeCompte and Schensul 1999; Emerson 1995; Taylor and Bogdan 1984), I further pushed myself to engage with Powel's (2016) notion of doing a multimodal and multisensory ethnography of place while studying post-war Jaffna Tamil *ūr* in Sri Lanka.

The sensory and multimodality ethnography encourages the use of various theoretical and methodological applications to research (Powel 2016). Thus, I used digital ethnography (Underberg and Zorn 2013; Pink et.al 2004), and cultural mapping (Kingsolver et.al 2017; Crawhal 2007; Poole 2003) methods to explore how human senses shape the meaning of Jaffna home places. There is no universally accepted standard ethnographic practice in anthropology, but scholars like Sarah Pink (2017; 2009) have emphasized a "fragmented map of approaches to

ethnographic practice," which opens to "multiple ways of knowing and to the exploration of and reflection on new routes to knowledge" (Pink 2009:4). Thus, Pink defines sensory ethnography as "an approach to ethnographic practice developed in dialogue with anthropological theories of sensory perception, learning and knowing" (2017:1). And sensory ethnography is not tied up with a single data method, but it encourages a variety of research methods in a study. However, in other ways I have not departed from the classical ethnographic research method that Malinowski (1932) spoke about: "extended residential fieldwork." What I did was to understand the social meanings of post-war Tamil villages and activities of people by my constant participation and presence in the villages I studied. At the same time, I revised the conventional ethnographic research practice by barrowing postcolonial, feminist, postmodern scholarship and decolonizing anthropology (Dána-Ain et.al 2016; Fanon 2013; Abu-Lughold 2002; Narayan 1993; Harrison 1991) and by adopting a multimodal ethnography in my research to grasp how people were innovatively creating ritualscape, villagescape, and religiouscape to deal with post-war circumstances.

1.6.2 My positionality and reflexivity: How did I get into this research?

Since I have been working in my own hometown and district, I followed Powel (2016) in adopting a reflexive approach to research. Hence, I should briefly explain how I came to the study of post-war Tamil circumstances. I am a native speaker of Tamil from the Jaffna Peninsula. I was born in Inuvil and lived there for more than thirty-five years. I am, hence, a fluent reader, writer and speaker of the Jaffna dialect of Tamil. More formally, I studied in Tamil medium schools until I became an undergraduate at the University of Jaffna. My language competency was one advantage I had in conducting the research without any issue. Living with my father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother in Inuvil, I leaned village customs, religious and cultural practices as everyone there did. Since everyone in my family is from Inuvil, I could use their diversified knowledge about Inuvil *ūr*. For example, I noticed that my father talked about Marxism, Tamil

literature, national and international politics, and rationalism (Periyar's *pakuttaṟivātam*)[21]. My mother and grandfather, who are on the same board, talked about *kaṭṭupāḍu,* and my grandmother's way of life was centered on religious practices, religious stories, cultural values, and ritual knowledge. My way of life began through socialization and enculturation by them.

Also, I was growing up during very important in the history of Jaffna; the Civil War from 1983-2009. I directly experienced the war and its multiple displacements. For example, I remember running into a bunker while being bombed and shelled by the Sri Lankan army. Also, I had a horrifying trip to Colombo that involved crossing the Kilaali sea (also known as Jaffna lagoon) while being shot of by the Sri Lanka Army and Navy at night in 1994. This trip was to attend the wedding of my older sister, who was traveling with us, which was to be held in Colombo. It took us three days to reach Colombo. As my father was sick, we left him at home in Jaffna to fulfill the LTTE's requirement that one of the family members should remain at home while others traveled to Colombo. We had to get a pass, which is a paper document equivalent to a visa, to travel to Colombo. Also, we had to produce a surety bond (*piṇai*) to the LTTE until we returned back to Jaffna. *Pinai* refers to some kind of promises that we did through the third person who could be a relative or a friend who guaranteed that we would return to Jaffna.

This personal story communicates how the Jaffnese experienced different types daily of torture to live, which was the life method (*vāḻkkai muṟai*) there for living in Jaffna between 1990 and 1995. Here I offer this preamble is so readers may understand why I have decided to undertake this research project on study how people in two Tamil Hindu villages in Jaffna, are using village-temple consciousness to deal with post-war circumstances. That is, I was interested in this because I too have been trying to use my memories of a past Jaffna to understand its post-war present. More than anything, I was shocked to see dramatic changes occurring in these two villages since the war ended. And the post-war Jaffna villages were dealing with different

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[21] Periyar referred to E. V. Ramasamy who foundered Self-Respect Movement (*Cuya Mariyātai Iyakkam*) and Dravidar Kaḻakam in Tamil Nadu, South India.

development discourses, which are all about how people are fixing, shifting, and negotiating different identities (Kingsolver 1992). So, I could see how localized consciousness about their *ūr*, the cultural form of control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*), and cultural practices were all are shifting, altering, and diminishing. Therefore, I have done this ethnographic study of "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness, even though it was a big challenge to "native" anthropologists like myself.

1.6.3 Native anthropology: Going beyond the etic-emic (insider-outsider) dilemma

For a native anthropologist, according to the literature, conducting and writing ethnography is not an easy task because native anthropologists like myself have detailed information about the community, yet also represent anthropology through an "authentic insider's perspective" that incorporates "personal narrative into a wider discussion of anthropological scholarship" (1993: 672). The classical ethnographic practice of male-oriented ethnographers emphasizes an insider/outsider or etic/emic dilemma in ethnographic research. My ethnographic study, however, was not hindered by this dilemma. I followed Kiren Narayan (1993), the feminist anthropologist, who argued against this distinction between native and non-native anthropology and recommended that we look at how each anthropologist does ethnography in terms of a shifting interpenetration of communities and power relations. For her, the insider and outsider binarism has to be merged into one, and native anthropologists should assume the position of an "enactment of hybridity," meaning anthropologists have to be bicultural in writing anthropology. I feel that my time in Kentucky has helped me here.

Following Narayan (1993), there has been much talk in the methodological literature about the 'native' anthropologist – especially about whether the 'native' anthropologist really is still 'native' once they, like me, have started doing ethnographic fieldwork.
Some would claim that the very act of doing ethnography is so alienating and so separates a person from everyday life that many of the supposed advantages of reflexivity are inevitably lost.

However, these claims are not always true, because native anthropologists do not need to be alienated from everyday life. But I must still acknowledge the need for reflexivity in my research. As a native anthropologist, I still has to learn unfamiliar forms of life, which I do not feel like I am in the field. At the end of the day, I had to maintain a balance between reflexivity and disciplinary knowledge (anthropological theories). This is why I have engaged with digital ethnography and cultural mapping methods to reduce the problem of positionality raised here.

1.6.4 How did I manage my life, project, and challenges during the fieldwork?

Even though I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Lexington, Kentucky, USA (2015), Rome, Italy (2009-2010), Tamil Nadu, India (2003-2005), and Inuvil, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, I experienced many challenges in conducting my research in Jaffna this time. Unlike in earlier days, my informants this time were often more critical about my research topic. My informants were also generally educated and connected to global communication and transnational networks. When I met one of my schoolmates during fieldwork in Inuvil, he asked me if I was an "American spy," why I was working on a project in Jaffna to submit to an American university, and why did Americans need information about his community? I was aware this is not a new issue in anthropological fieldwork because, the anthropologist, Roger Lancaster, who carried out research in a Nicaraguan working-class neighborhood during the 1980s (Schultz and Lavenda 2014) was asked similar questions. This did not make answering them myself any easier.

A like debate emerged in another context during the feast at Inuvil, when some young academics surprisingly asked me, "why are you interested in investigating caste-related issues since we do not think much about caste these days?" So, I asked them, have the people of Jaffna given up using caste criteria when matchmaking? I was told "Yes, we look for people who belong to certain caste, but we do not discriminate against people in terms of their caste identity." As I observed different perceptions about caste among the people of Jaffna, I asked them what they thought about the inter-caste marriages that have already taken place on a small scale in

57

post-war Jaffna (Personal communication with Selvam 2018) and also what they have learned from the case of the Inuvil Segarajasekarap Pillaiyar temple management (where the high-caste people who own this temple management) have not allowed low-caste people to enter the temple for the last four generations. About this, they asked "why are American and European intellectuals now re-investigating caste-related issues in post-war Jaffna. When the A-9 road was closed, those intellectuals did not visit Jaffna to conduct research. But now many foreigners and local intellectuals are visiting Jaffna to study *cāti piracciṉai* (caste problems) and *kōvil piracciṉai* (temple disputes) after the A-9 road has reopened in 2010." Thus, people wondered when local researchers like me do research, to whom the information is given. For this question, there are many potential answers: the disruption of Tamil village community structure, long-term militarization, and political instability in Jaffna.

In terms of the dialectic of fieldwork, I cannot omit the experiences of informants, but at the same time I need to make a balance between the needs of informants and the discipline of anthropology (Schultz and Lavenda 2014). My informants' concern was that western and local intellectuals would overemphasize caste, leading to the impression that it is the only category people use to imagine place and people in postwar Jaffna. That is, that cultural definitions and ethnography would generate "topological stereotypes" about place and people. For instance, this is how Western knowledge has conceptualized caste hierarchy in India (Appadurai 1988: 46). Therefore, anthropologists, even "native" ones, have to be careful about localizations of totalized anthropological voices – they have to be aware of Western biases and foreign ethnography. At the same time, however, as an anthropologist must also pay attention to how a caste-hegemony controls cultural definition about place and people there. Hence, I deal with ethnography "as a form of learning, rather than absolutely, as a form of representation" (Whitaker 1996:1).

I was really fascinated by my long-term residential fieldwork, which I conducted for this dissertation in 2016, and again from May 2017 to December 2018. There were many things in Naguleswaram and Inuvil villages that distinguished them from other villages in Jaffna, Sri

Lanka, and South Asia. This is why I am interested in localized consciousness about home places; what Tamilians call *ūr*. In the past, I undertook ethnographic research projects at Inuvil for undergraduate projects, but for my PhD I restarted my ethnographic work in my own village after a long time.

Revisiting and conducting fieldwork in my own village was interesting, but at the same time, I had to answer questions from my relatives, friends, and village people about why Pappu (my nickname) was around there, what I was doing there, and when did I come. People in my village know me as Pappu and many of them do not know my real name, Pathmanesan. Though these previous experiences and familiarity with the locality were advantages, I, as an ethnographic fieldworker, had to maintain a balance between "distancing and immersing" (Jong et.al 2013:168). Though Jong et. al (2013) emphasize that a "fieldworker's strategy must be making the familiar strange rather than the strange familiar" (2013: 169 [Van Maanen 1995: 20]), I argue that native ethnographers should maintain a balance between these two purposes because they are still learning the strange to be understandable. For instance, since this project was a comparative study of Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages, unlike Inuvil, I had to spend more time in Naguleswaram to learn about their post-war healing process. Also, I have used a complex research design to address the complexity and diversity of the two villages (Palmberger and Gingrich 2014; Stausberg 2011). This project has used a non-probabilistic sampling method (Guest 2014) to select equal numbers of participants based on caste, gender, age, and village differences and to avoid, somewhat my own biases.

Further, though I have used my native village for this research, the temples and informants at issue were selected from divisions other than my own within the village to avoid too much local knowledge. In addition, given a reflexivity that recognizes my own positionality there (Marcus and Fischer 1999; Narayan 1993) -- e.g. my membership in a high caste -- two key-informants from non-high castes were working with me throughout my research in both villages. For Inuvil, I investigated how people were using their village-temple consciousness to deal with fears about,

59

and the fact of, disrupted *kaṭṭupāṭu* or social control. This has justified my talking about temple conflict and domestic rituals since both involve re-inscribing and adjusting relationships between castes, genders, and family hierarchies, as well as international relationships with diasporic people.

In Naguleswaram, because it was completely destroyed, there is the larger issue of having to use memory to reconstruct both the physical and social-hierarchical layout of the place; for this, I looked at how people were going about the resettlement process and rebuilding temples, houses, and community centers. My ethnographic writing in Naguleswaram is somewhat similar to M.N. Srinivas's in his Remembered Village (1976), in which he wrote a monograph about Rampura village in Karnataka, South India, from memory because his fieldnotes were burned in office fire. But in my case, I had to learn about the past of Naguleswaram from other people's memories as their houses has been completely razed, their photos and records were looted and destroyed. For many only, a few things, like the ruins of buildings, remain to tell the story of their past.

My fieldwork went well, but at the end of the day, I felt that I needed more time to stay there. Since my wife works in Colombo and my daughter goes to a Montessori school, I had to leave them in Colombo. I went to Jaffna for my fieldwork by myself, although my mother visited Inuvil to attend the annual temple festival, and I first interviewed my mother to capture her worldview about her *ūr* that is its anxious transition. Though she was raised in a typical Tamil Hindu family, she diplomatically works out things whenever she has problems. She was heading the family in Jaffna while my father was sick at home until his death in 2006 in Jaffna. My mother kept my bicycle in the carriage of our house in Jaffna when I went to India for my postgraduate studies in 2003, and once I took my bike to the repair station at Inuvil junction.

In the past, that bike repair station was owned by Ponnampalam. I remember Ponnampalam and his sons providing an excellent repair service to people at Inuvil. I heard from a man who was standing behind me that Ponnampalam had passed away and his family had moved to Vanni

during the war time. That man told me that "even though he was drunk he was very clean in his work and maintained *mariyātai* (respect) people." Then, the person who currently owned the shop said that, "yes, many people from this village remember Ponnampalam whenever they come to this shop these days." The younger people do not know about Ponnampalam but have heard about him through his parents and village people." People are still waiting for Ponnampalam, but is that just for his bike service or for his respect? Obviously, war and displacement have distorted the village structure and disrupted human relations and their networks. Thus, when people construct their consciousness about their village, it is not just focused on temples, but it can be made of experiencing of anything and everything.

I lived in my parental house at Inuvil during the fieldwork, which is empty now. Like my house, there are many other empty houses in Jaffna, for people have moved to Colombo or migrated abroad during and after the war. I was glad to get back to my old room, which I had in the past. My *citti* (aunt—my mother's sister), who still lives there, was afraid to allow me to sleep alone at night in our house, and so I moved for the night to stay in their house as robbery is prominent in present-day Jaffna. In general, night life is disrupted by two major things in post-war Jaffna: (a) robbery and (b) attacks by the Āva group (a sward wielding gang—*vāḷ veṭṭu* group). These threats create fear among people at Inuvil. Even the movement of people at night is limited unless they have a temple festival. I did not see people on the road after 9:30 PM and people closed their gates by 8:00 PM.

However, my informants told me that this was not the case before the war and during the LTTE period, especially in terms of freedom of movement in the village during the night. It is very important to see how the war, militarization, and political instability affected the nightscape of Jaffna Peninsula. Even I did not sleep well many nights during my lifetime in Jaffna because of its various political changes one after other. People were scared of the Sri Lanka Army, the LTTE, the Indian Peace Keeping Force, and other political mobs during the war. I do remember those nights and tragedies whenever I hear some present situations connected to robbery and the

61

Āva group's attack on people. At some point, Inuvil was better than Naguleswaram in terms of peoples' movement at night. Naguleswaram was also a war zone, but it was under the High Security Zone (the control of Sri Lanka Military Force) and some parts of this region are still under military control. As a result, though people have resettled in their home villages, they are still afraid and limit their movement at night.

This place is always monitored by the Sri Lanka Army, Navy, and Police; so, not only village people, I was also afraid whenever I stayed at the Sivapoomi guest house there at night because there was only one caretaker who stayed at the guest house. Otherwise, I was often alone except during festivals. During my fieldwork at Naguleswaram, I stayed at the Sivapoomi guest house and I brought my bicycle to travel around the Naguleswaram area to visit informants and kept my bike at the guest house with their permission whenever I did the fieldwork at Inuvil. The distance between Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages is approximately 14 KM and I could not frequently travel back and forth between these villages by bike. So, I borrowed a bike from my cousin to use at Inuvil. I travelled by bus to Naguleswaram from Inuvil, but this took more than one hour yet. This is how I had to manage my transportation to do fieldwork there.

1.6.5   A comparative study of Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages and their temples

This dissertation also compares *ākama* and non-*ākama* temples in both villages. *Ākama* temples (in Tamil *ākamam* [in Sanskrit *āgama*] means "shrines built according to the temple scriptures *ākama-s*"; Pfanffenberger 1982:61)[22] are mostly owned by high castes people. Non-*ākama* temples (those not following the *ākamas*) can be owned by both high and low-caste people. However, I argue that this divide is changing, which is also a great transformation in Jaffna Saiva (*caiva*) pantheon. For instance, Sri Nallur Kantaswamy temple in Jaffna originally

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[22] In South India and Sri Lanka, Hindus follow the doctrines of *ākamam* prescribed by the deity. They are sacred writings about divinity, temple architecture and construction, temple rituals, mantras, and four precepts of Saivism (*caiva nāṟppātaṅkaḷ—cariyai, kriyai, yōkam,* and *ñāṉam*).

was a non- *ākama* temple, but it has been following the *ākama* rituals well. In Jaffna, many non-*ākama* temples, owned by the low-castes, were upgraded to the status of *ākama* temples through Sanskritization. Consequently, a complexity of *ākama* and non-*ākama* practices are found in present-day Jaffna.

For comparative purposes, I selected four temples. That is, in Inuvil, (1) the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple, (Veḷḷāḷar owned), *ākama* Hindu temple; and (2) the Aṇṇamār Vēṉukōpālar temple, (Paḷḷar owned), was a non-*ākama* Hindu temple, but it had now been sanskritized. Similarly, at Naguleswaram, I selected (3) the Naguleswaram Sivan temple, (Brahmin owned), *ākama* Hindu temple, and, (4) the Kavunavattai Narasinka Vairavar temple, a non-*ākama* temple, owned by the Kōviyar caste. Although I have proposed these four temples to study temple disputes, I constructed case studies of two temples Inuvil Kanthaswami temple and Kavunavattai Narasinka Vairavar for this dissertation. Though I found temple disputes at the Naguleswaram Sivan temple, I was not allowed to investigate them by the priest. Further, I have not found disputes were not at the Aṇṇamār Vēṉukōpālar temple. However, I will discuss the four temples in relevant chapters in relation to caste, ritual authority, religious changes, and ritual innovations.

1.6.6   Sub-research questions, sampling method, and research tools

I have completed 110 in-depth interviews with peoples in those villages. These include interviews with temples officials of the four key temples in the two villages, as well as 50 in-depth interviews in Inuvil and 60 in-depth interviews in Naguleswaram. Of these 110 interviews, 88 interviews were recorded; the rest were written up in my fieldnotes as those informants did not wish to be recorded. Beyond these formal interviews, I have conducted additional, semi-structured interviews with the diaspora-based founders of two brand-new temples, built in Inuvil in 2012 and 2016 respectively, while they were visiting the village. Further, I interviewed the priests at both temples. In addition, I also interviewed the person in charge of Sivan TV at their Inuvil office, for Sivan TV is a Swiss based organization that does video recording of Hindu

temple festivals in Jaffna for uploading on YouTube for global viewing. Also, I conducted a long interview with a videographer, who records puberty rituals, wedding ceremonies, housewarming ceremony, wedding receptions, birthday party, and other village events in Inuvil.

Overall, this research involved answering three sub-questions. Q.1 *Are the strains of village recovery being reflected in how temple allegiances, statuses, caste and gender hierarchy – i.e., kaṭṭupāṭu (social control) – are being enacted through temple rituals and conflicts in both post-war villages*? To answer Q1, this study conducted 12 semi-structured interviews; 3 members at the Naguleswaram Sivan temple, 3 members at the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple, 3 members at the Aṇṇamār Vēṉukōpālar temple, and 3 members at the Kavunavathai Narasinka Vairavar temple using purposive sampling, with temple officials and priests in the two villages. These 12 semi-structured interviews were with men since only men are temple officials at these temples. Additionally, I conducted 48 semi-structured interviews with devotees, selected by convenience sampling, at the four temples: 12 per temple (3 males and 3 females of high caste, and 3 males and 3 females of non-high castes). I also investigated the Gnana Lnigeswarar (Ñāṉa Liṅkēsvarar) temple, built by the Swiss Tamil Diaspora. many other aspects of "village-temple-consciousness" have been visibly altered by the war and current post-war circumstances while practices of conflict over temple *urimai* (rights/legitimate shares) do not appear to have been altered as much. The notion of 'rights' has removed for people at a moment of great historical and political upheaval even when other aspects of local identity – including feelings of connectedness to specific communities, caste, local and ethnic – have been not much transformed. In terms of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* I found people have been manipulating the practice of social control in religious, domestic, and ritual contexts. The findings of Q1 will be extensively discussed in chapters two, three and four.

Q.2 *Are practices of bhakti religiosity at temples, and domestic rituals such as wedding ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies, and funerals, being rework ed to help people deal with the postwar changes in village social control, and with associated conditions such as the arrival*

of the Internet and increased influence of the diaspora? To address Q2, I participated in annual temple festivals and various special *'pūjas'* (worship rites), and also use participant observation at domestic rituals and temple festivals to see how people relate them to *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control). For participant observation, I have attended temple festivals at those four temples in both villages. I have also attended five wedding ceremonies, three puberty rituals, five funeral rituals, and two housewarming ceremonies. In Naguleswaram, I participated in 20 post-funerary rituals: 15 sponsored by the local people who recently lost family members; and another 5 sponsored by diaspora Tamils who came to Naguleswaram to perform these rituals during my stay there. Finally, I have conducted 11 cultural mapping interviews with elderly and younger people in Naguleswaram. Also, 10 life histories were conducted to understand how people use/d *kaṭṭupāṭu* in temple and domestic rituals; and to see how or whether returnees, in Naguleswaram, are bringing back prior forms of ritual practice to reconstructed temples and homes. At the end of my research, I found that many new forms of innovative religious practices have been identified in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. They represent just part of a continuum of religious strategies (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2015) which work, along with more 'traditional' practices involving caste deities (*kula teivaṅkaḷ*) and favorite deities (*iṣṭa teivaṅkaḷ*) to help people deal with their changed circumstances. The findings of Q2 will be discussed through relevant ethnographic cases in chapter five.

Q.3 *How do people relate their village-temple consciousness to temple-centered sacred landscapes, and how are such landscapes being used/reconstructed in postwar circumstances?* To answer this, I found how people in the two villages imagined their landscapes in daily discourse, including the 'sacred landscapes' associated with temples, with how they experienced traversing them in their daily, postwar lives, including the new, expanded 'landscape' of cyberspace and the diaspora. To address question Q3 (and Q2) historically, I conducted 10 life histories (balanced by caste, gender and village), selected through convenience sampling, with older residents of both villages.

To identify differences between the village as experienced and as imagined and remembered, this study has used cultural mapping (Kingsolver et.al 2017; Crawhal 2007; Poole 2003), a research technique to study how people perceive place, space, time, and memory (Jones and Garde Hansen 2012; Kingsolver 2011; Rodman 2010). Cultural mapping, in this case, involved asking people to use their memories to draw maps of their villages. Although cultural mapping or cultural landscape mapping usually focuses on documenting cultural diversity, local resources, networks, and cultural heritage (UNESCO 2009; Poole 2003), this study has used it to enable me to re-think the history of places and to understand people's local knowledge of sacred landscapes and living places. Through such cultural mapping, I was able to document peoples' cultural knowledge of place. These maps were compared to study village-temple consciousness in two villages. I will discuss this in chapter six.

Finally, I used purposive sampling to select 20 younger people (numbers balanced by caste, gender and village) with whom to conduct semi-structured interviews at the Youth Centers mentioned earlier. They were asked about their worship patterns, festival designs, religious practices and, in particular, their involvement in recent changes involving temple websites, temple Facebook accounts, and the use of video. I will discuss them in chapter three, four, and five. In Inuvil, first, Sri Pararājacēkara Piḷḷaiyār temple launched a website, www.inuvilinfo.com to have a common e-platform to update the religious events of all temples of Inuvil. Later, Kantaswami temple created a new website to update their events. www.nochchiyolaikanthan.com However, these both are not in use now and Kantaswamil temple lunched a new website to have their information at www.inuvilkanthan.com I found that there was a competition between these temples to have a separate website individually rather than to have a common one. The whole purpose of establishing a website to update the temple events to the diaspora members, but this created status-related, *kouvravam* problem at local level. To study digital linkages and digital archives, this study employed digital ethnographic methods: the structure, content, and conversations of temple websites, and temple Facebook pages were taken into an account. Also,

AVD materials of domestic rituals were gathered, with informants' permission, as 'new texts' for this research (Pink et.al 2004).

This multimedia ethnographic information (Underberg and Zorn 2013) allowed an analysis of village temple consciousness in cyberspace. In addition, I have interviewed 10 diaspora people (at Inuvil) and 2 diaspora people (at Naguleswaram) who return to Jaffna to attend annual temple festivals and family rituals. Findings of Q3 will be discussed in relevant chapters of the dissertation. I was surprised that deities of Pillaiyar and Murukan have Facebook pages and temples also have separate Facebook pages. Also, young boys and girls are willing to upload their video of puberty and wedding rituals on YouTube and Facebook for public viewing. This will be discussed in chapter five.

To gain historical background for this study of change – a baseline, as it were, for comparison purposes – I conducted an extensive review of the secondary literature on temples as well seeking out primary source documents from temple archives, Inuvil Public library, the Jaffna *Kacheri* (Divisional Secretariat Office), newspapers archives, government offices and so forth. With respect to temples, I went through the temple constitutions (*jāppu*) and their *kumpāpiṣēkam* (The consecration ceremony of temple) books – the books containing the history and development of the temple and temple management, thus, all of a temple's renovations. In addition, I have at local archives and magazines and also collected temple disputes records.

Hence, both villages have been differently affected by the war and are being reconstructed through different local and international projects. As previously mentioned, the village of Naguleswaram has undergone tremendous changes and the sacred landscape of Naguleswaram has been altered by the war and globalization. At the other ethnographic field site, Inuvil, I had a different experience of the forms of post-war recovery and healing practices. My *ūr*, Inuvil, Jaffna, is currently undergoing an anxious transition while acknowledging and reacting to changes resulting from the civil war, displacement, and globalization. Inuvil, a Tamil Saivite settlement, emerged as a 'temple-centered community' (Sanmugeswaran 2010), in which Inuvil

acted as a 'primordial village of face-to-face' contact and had commonly shared habitual

practices. For instance, taking part in village temple religious services, being a member of the

village community center, and rending services in village events. I am also part of this village,

war, and its displacement journey. What was my war experience, why my positionality is so

important to this project, and how I was so intrigued as to undertake this project; let's go with my

personal history to grasp the essence of this project.

CHAPTER 2.   MY MEMORY OF LIFE DURING THE WAR, VIOLENCE AND DISPLACEMENT: A BRIEF STORY

2.1   Preamble

At the end of the first chapter, I have mentioned that the second chapter will be about my personal history, which is very relevant to this dissertation. I did not realize the value of internalization of my war experiences until my committee advised me to include my positionality in this dissertation. At the very first, I did not think seriously that my war and displacement experiences would be relevant enough to be part of this dissertation, but at some point, I too thought that including my war nostalgia could make my dissertation more relatable to the reader. When I began to write this chapter, forgotten memories screened on my mind. However, I must mention that it was a cumbersome affair as reliving those memories brought back many sorrowful and emotional moments that were perhaps intentionally hidden at the back of my mind. Further, my story and others' war related stories in this chapter delineate war survivals and adjustments to multiple vulnerabilities. This chapter will show how pre-war life is torn into pieces like "kuraṅkin kaippūmālai" [a garland of flowers in the hand of a monkey], and also how members of families and village communities are now scattered within the country and around the world.

The village community structure was collapsed, and primordial interactions were weakened. Of course, the war and displacement changed the Jaffna Tamil community at various levels but also created many opportunities to develop different forms of lives. The chains of war and displacement taught almost everyone to adjust and cope with their lives. Unwanted ethnic tension and unexpected sudden attacks, abductions, assassinations, genocides, prolonged war, encampment, and protracted displacement severely affected the social, economic, political, and cultural structures of the Jaffna Tamil community. During the war, waves of globalization in Jaffna were limited compared to the rest of the country and world; social and economic survivals developed certain strategies to face multiple vulnerabilities, but culture change remained as *culture inertia* (slowness of culture to change). However, after the massive displacement of 1995

and re-displacement in Jaffna in 1996, interactions of the Jaffna Tamil society with the global society had become enlarged. Due to such intensified forms of interaction, globalization and indigenization or domestication have enormously altered the Jaffna Peninsula in terms of social economic, political, and cultural lives. Hence, this chapter will briefly describe my personal story to explain the connections between my story and the rest of the chapters of this dissertation.

2.2   1983 Ethnic riots and my family's getaway from Colombo to Jaffna

I was born in Inuvil, Jaffna and brought up in Colombo where we lived until the riots in 1983. Though we lived in Colombo, we frequently travelled to Jaffna during school holidays to visit my grandmother's home. Thus, I was engaged with my village community since my childhood. Further, I learned the significance of an extended family, temple festivals and domestic rituals in Tamil Saivite culture through these constant visits to Jaffna during my childhood. The multiple horrifying and violent experiences of the 1983 ethnic riot, Black July[23], was a turning point in our lives. Once, my father was arrested and taken by the Sri Lankan Police to the Fourth Floor in Colombo for an investigation prior to the ethnic riot in 1983 because he fearlessly expressed his ideas on Tamils' rights and Tamil self-determination at his workplace (Overseas Telecom Service, Colombo) as he was a believer in Tamil Dravidian Nationalism and Tamil Marxism.

In the July 1983 riots, our family was brutally attacked by the Sri Lankan military while we were at home in Colombo which we were forced to leave. They assaulted my father, uncle and cousin who were with us at that time. My parents had already prepared a small backpack containing milk powder, cookies and a few other necessities for my younger sister who was only two years old in case if we were displaced somewhere. When the military harshly kicked open the front door of our home, my parents asked us to stay inside the bedroom. The military commander,

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[23] It was an anti-Tamil riot and Sinhalese mobs attacked, burned, looted and killed Tamils and Tamils' belongings.

along with two soldiers carrying guns, came to our bedroom and told us to go out. When I came out of the room, I was so upset to see all the cookies smashed and scattered on the floor. The milk powder box was torn and my toys were dispersed everywhere in the living room. I was so frightened that I went closer to my mother and wept. My family members were forced to sit on the ground by the military, and then, they took us to the refugee camp at Mahanama College, Colombo which was literally divided from our home with one wall. I distinctly remember how they forced my family members to raise our hands up until we reached the refugee camp except for my siblings and myself as we were children.

During our stay at Mahanama College, we had a lack of essential amenities and we slept on a classroom floor while my parents struggled to meet our basic needs in the camp for ten days. It was an unbearable situation with our house being so close, while we were sleeping on an adjoining floor. However, I was not aware that the Tamil and Sinhalese ethnic conflict existed at such an extreme level in Sri Lanka. Instead, I was aware of Sinhala only as just another language. Finally, we went to Jaffna on the Lanka Kalyani Cargo vessel in 1983. It was my mother's firm and wise decision to return to her hometown (Inuvil), which was also my father's hometown. She was afraid to continue life in Colombo. Unlike my father, she was not aware of either Tamil Dravidian Nationalism or Tamil Marxism but knew Lord Pillaiyar, her *kulateiyvam,* and prayed a lot and made many vows to save our lives from the prevailing crisis. Finally, I lost my home, school (Royal College, Colombo), my toys and the joyful times playing with my brother and sisters in our living room.

2.3   Beginning of my interaction with the village religious culture

In Inuvil, we lived at my grandmother's temporarily until we built a new house in 1986. A few months after the riots, my father received a notice from his office to resume duties. Noticeably, he could not concentrate on his work while leaving us behind in Jaffna. When he visited Jaffna in 1984, he was immediately hospitalized due to his severe diabetes. He underwent

many surgeries and had to go for an early retirement and stay with us in Jaffna. I lived in Jaffna permanently until I moved back to Colombo in 2009. While in Jaffna, I was glad to continue my interaction with my grandmother who would tell me many village folk tales and religious myths, to which I was drawn, and made me explore more of village life and temples. Also, she took me for village walks in the evenings during which I met many relatives and village people. She was a great devotee of Lord Pillaiyar and took me to the Pillaiyar temple in Inuvil every Friday evening where I saw middle aged and elderly women coming to light oil lamps for the deities. Later, I heard that the reason for this practice was praying for prosperity and healthy reproduction. In particular, I owe my grandmother for taking me to many Hindu temples in Jaffna whenever she could. Her wonderful teaching paved the way for me to learn the 'sacred-geographies' of the Jaffna peninsula. Thus, I was socialized through a form of religious life during my childhood and after.

2.4   Indian Peace Keeping Force's (IPKF) control in Jaffna from 1987 to 1990

After 1983, the political situation became worse in Jaffna. Due to the anti-Tamil riots and discrimination against the Tamils in Sri Lanka, there were many young Tamil militant groups that emerged under different leaderships. Among them, the LTTE was the dominant political force which controlled eventually subdued or defeated the other Tamil militant groups. After 1983, the LTTE became a solidified Tamil liberation struggle movement in Jaffna and also on the island. In these circumstances, the Sri Lankan Government invited the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to disarm the LTTE in Jaffna in 1987. In the latter part of 1987, the IPKF started operating in Jaffna to demobilize the LTTE and to take control of Jaffna by force from them. The struggle between the LTTE and the IPKF resulted in various abuses of human rights. In this political insurgency, many civilians were arrested, killed, and or raped by the IPKF.

2.5 IPKF operation begins in 1987

In September 1987, my mother's sister, who lived next to my house, came over and told my mother, "Akka, the Indian Army has started moving from Palali towards Jaffna through our road, the Kankesanthurai Road (KKS Road). What are we going to do? We have no idea about how the Indian Army would react to our people." Jaffna Tamils already had a negative image of the Sri Lanka Army due to their violent approach to the Tamils. The KKS Road is the main road situated between the Jaffna Fort and Kankesanthurai town, and cross through Inuvil. Inuvil East and North-East are on one side while Inuvil South-West and West are on the other. The houses of my aunts, my grandmother and ours, were in a large compound and we interacted with each other on a daily basis. My aunts and my mother shared food and borrowed things out of scarcity. The large compound acted as an extended family but divided into separate households. Though each family had a separate kitchen, all my cousins used to visit our grandmother's house to grab food whenever she prepared something special.
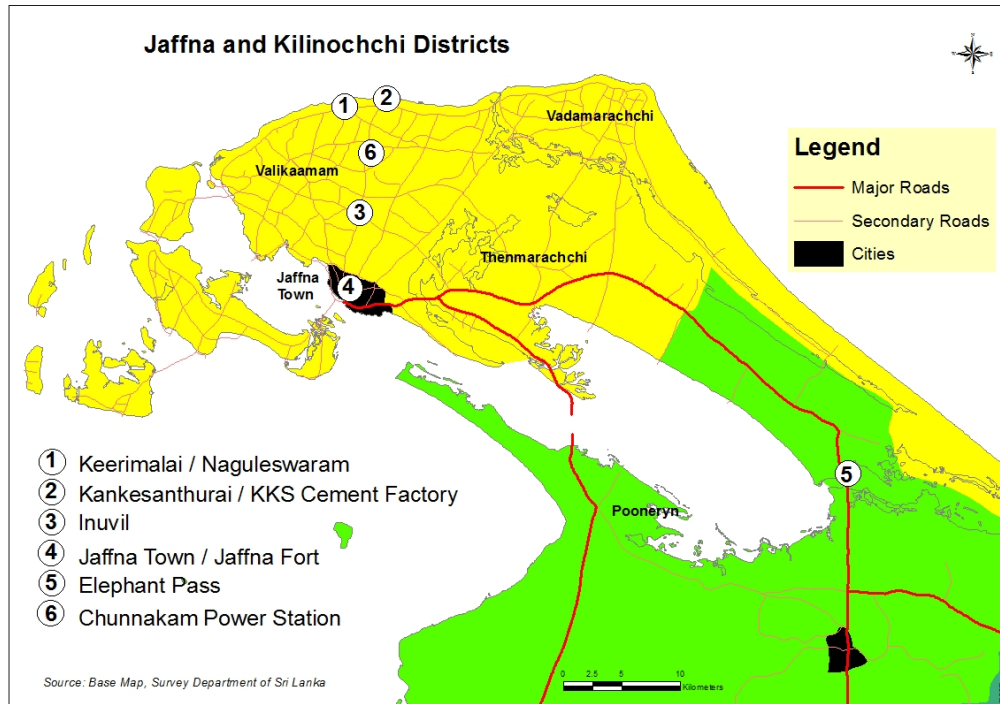
Figure 7 Jaffna District

In mid-September 1987, people were talking in general about the LTTE member Thileepan who began a hunger strike to push the LTTE's demands and devolution of power. He was giving speeches on Nidharshanam, the LTTE's broadcasting service, which started in 1987 to broadcast the LTTE's successes and military training, and to publicize the LTTE movement among the people in Jaffna. Also, they broadcast heroic songs (*vīra eḻuchi pāṭalkaḷ*), to inculcate Tamil or ethnic consciousness among the people. Further, I still remember how people seriously talked about Thileepan's hunger strike saying that if Thileepan died, then there would be a severe war. Finally, he died, and his death resulted in a war between the LTTE and IPKF.

2.6   Our subsequent displacement within the village

As our house was located on the KKS Road in Inuvil, it was not advisable to stay there when the IPKF moved through the KKS Road for their operations in 1987. So, we had to spend the daytime at our great aunt's house which was in the interior of Inuvil and the nights at the Anna Industry building, a four-story building which was next to our great aunt's house. About fifty families from the village gathered at the industry building at night because people believed that this building would be safe from the attacks of shells and bombs. My mother, her mother and sisters went home during the day to cook meals and bring for us while my father was with us as he could not run in an emergency due to his illness. Every day, we would anxiously wait until we saw our mother, grandmother and aunts back at our great aunt's house. In the night, they would recall their old memories of village life, village deities and religious stories.

One day, my mother and her sisters were returning after cooking when the IPKF started firing from helicopters and they were stuck in between. We were panicking and weeping until we saw them. My mother reached the great aunt's house after a while and told us that the Vairavar, a guardian deity shrine located close to our house, provided her protection and saved her life. However, my mother was not able to aid two other girls who were weeping and calling out to people to help their mother who was injured by the gunfire and had eventually died. On the same

day, our relative's son and daughter too were killed on the spot of this attack. I used to play with them during the evenings at my village. During this time, it was very difficult to connect with relatives and village friends to find out what was happening because people limited their movements.

On another day, while we were in the building, the IPKF dropped shells over the building. There were no deaths but eleven were injured. My mother's cousin's husband was injured, and his family members were weeping. Immediately, we came out of the building and I saw that our great aunt's house had been completely razed to the ground. Though my parents had kept some of our belongings in that house, we did not go in as we were scared. We all rushed to leave the building and ran towards the Pillaiyar temple. Finally, we reached the Pillaiyar temple in Inuvil, where more than three hundred families had already gathered. The reason why we gathered at the temple was because the IPKF had told people to stay in temples when they targeted the LTTE camps as most of the Hindu temples in Inuvil and Jaffna were treated as refugee centers. We used to receive similar warning notices from all the militant groups during the war. During that time, daily religious services in the temples were temporarily stopped as the temples became the dwellings for refugees. I had never seen such a large number of people at the Pillaiyar temple before, and there was hardly any empty space at the inner circle road (*uḷ vīti*) of the temple. We spent only one night at the temple due to the bad weather and there was rainwater leaking from its roof. I remember being extremely hungry but having nothing to eat. I was thinking about my mother and father because they were not with us at the temple. As my father was not physically fit, he was accommodated at a relative's house which was located very close to the temple and my mother also stayed there to care for him. What was to be our fate?

2.7   Further displacement from Inuvil to Chunnakam

The following day, we moved to my uncle's rice mill which was in Chunnakam where there were twenty-five families (close relatives and friends) from Inuvil. The rice mill was located beside the Chunnakam Power Station where the IPKF's military camp was established. We lived there from October,1987 to January, 1988. We had no school or studies during this period. We had anyway left our school textbooks at home. In addition, my parents did not compel us to study while being displaced. We had a shortage of food and medicine and could not have all three meals a day. Deepavali day, a Hindu religious festival, also dawned during our stay at the mill but we could not celebrate it because we did not have new cloths. Later, I heard that on that day, there was a massacre at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital by the IPKF. Doctors, patients and nurses were gunned down. Fortunately, Aunt Devi, my father's sister, escaped from the massacre as she was taking care of her daughter who was injured by the IPKF helicopter gunfire. She underwent surgery to remove a shell piece at the Jaffna Teaching Hospital. While they were in the hospital ward, the IPKF started firing. My aunt pulled her daughter down from the bed and kept her near other dead bodies, and she herself laid down on her daughter acting dead when the IPKF entered their ward. She told us that she chanted for her favorite deity, Paramananthavalli (Mother Goddess) more than hundred times to save their lives from this brutal attack. However, we were not aware of this incident while we were in the mill because people did not get a chance to correspond with their relatives and friends due to people's restricted movements in Jaffna. We heard it from a relative after three months. After her daughter's injury, Aunt Devi was very upset and finally migrated to Canada and joined her husband.

Even the people crossing the main road were in danger because the IPKF just gunned people. A family friend was shot by the IPKF when he crossed the road. His family members did not know about it the whole day until they found his dead body by the side of the main road. Some members from the village used a long wooden branch to hook onto his clothes and pulled the body towards the lane. This incident was narrated to us by my father's friend once we

76

returned to Inuvil. Likewise, people shared their terrifying war and displacement experiences when they returned home. When they returned home after being scattered in possible safe places, they had many stories to share. Thus, all created their own space to elaborate their own story to stand out; this was a form of healing or practice for their collective trauma.

2.8   Related stories after returning to Inuvil from Chunnakam in January 1988

2.8.1   Stories from my school life

When we came back to our village in 1988, every family started to share their displacement stories. When I went to school, Kokuvil Hindu College, in January 1988, I listened to many stories. Kokuvil Hindu College is in Kokuvil village, located on the KKS Road, four kilometers from the Jaffna town. In October 1987, there were severe clashes between the IPKF and LTTE in Kokuvil. More than thousand people were displaced in Kokuvil and Annaikodai villages and were living in my school due to the IPKF's bombing and shelling. People treated the school as a refugee camp and hoisted a white flag at the entrance of the school, but the IPKF shelled even the school and more than forty people died within the school premises. However, people could not hold proper Hindu funeral rituals and cremate the dead people because of the political emergency, and the dead were just buried in the school playground. As unexpected curfew and political emergency prevailed, people did the same in many villages in Jaffna, burying their fellow villagers without following the formal Hindu funeral rituals at their homes.

Jaffna Tamil Hindus practice Ritual Pollution (a purification ritual) in a place that has been polluted by birth, puberty or death. They believe that their place and members are contaminated by polluting substances when these specific life cycle events occur. Out of birth, puberty and death, they pay serious attention to the pollution generated by death. Pollution is known as *tuṭakku* in Jaffna. Although Ritual Pollution is derived from a Brahminical pure-impure ideology of Hindu hierarchical society, I cannot simply neglect the people's inner views on this practice. In

77

order to remake a place for dwelling after disaster and deaths, people were instructed by Brahmin priests to do some kind of *parikāram* (a remedy) for the departed souls. Jaffna Tamil Hindus believe that a soul may become a ghost (*āvi*) and linger around the places he/she had lived without traveling to *iyamalogam* (the Land of the Dead, ruled by Iyaman), especially, when they die before the years allotted to them by Iyaman. In general, people are afraid of the dead's *āvi*, which will affect people's lives. Therefore, they perform *parikāram* to calm the departed souls.

Hence, a Hindu priest visited our school to perform the purification ritual (pollution removing ritual) and sprinkled holy water all over the school to make it habitable and without any danger from the dead souls. There was another special ritual, *cānti* (a kind of remedy), on the playground for the buried bodies. The school management and the village people decided to perform the *cānti* ritual in order to make those souls rest in peace. *Cānti* is done in different forms but this *cānti* was done to calm the souls of those who died in school. We all attended this ritual as we were instructed by the class teachers. When I went to my classroom, I was looking for Sureshkumar, my classmate, who sat next to me, and I was shocked to hear from another classmate that the IPKF had suddenly surrounded Sureshkumar's area in Kokuvil, and had ordered his entire family to lie on the road and had driven a bulldozer over their bodies. Tears washed down my face for a while because my friend Sureshkumar was a very good boy and also, some of my friends were not in class as they had moved to Colombo and other districts of Sri Lanka to escape from this violence.

2.8.2   Stories of my family members

Our house was partly damaged by helicopter gunfire and ground-attack aircraft, and things were looted. My father was very sad because his entire collection of first day cover stamps (stamped and franked envelopes) of Sri Lanka and India were destroyed. He had also lost albums of the great South Indian musicians Sirkazhi Govindarajan and Karikurichi Arunachalam. His

magnetic tape audio recording and some of his classical collections of reel to reel recordings were destroyed during the1983 riots. But he lost some other very important reel to reel recordings during this 1987 displacement. Those tapes contained his own father's speeches in his last days, and my eldest sister's first speech when she was a child. I thought my father was unique in preserving memories in this own way. But the war and displacement interrupted his way of life. Our house's roof was partly damaged, and the ceiling had fallen in. Further, the living room's window glass was destroyed. So, my mother borrowed some money from her brother to repair the house.

The first place my mother checked as we went inside our home was the *cuāvmi aṟai* (shrine room) to check whether the pictures of deities were safe. The shrine room is a vital unit of Jaffna Tamil Hindu house architecture and is not only a Veḷḷāḷar caste phenomenon, because I found it as a common practice among the different castes in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. The shrine room is locally addressed by different terms such as *cuāvmi aṟai*[24], *periyaṟai* (big room)[25], *paṭa aṟai* (picture room)[26], *nāḷ aṟai* (day room)[27] and *vīṭṭarai* (house room)[28]. Although these terms denote the shrine room, each term has its own explanation in terms of regional variation. Further, a house is also treated as a significant place for a person's dwelling and identity in the village in the same way a temple is considered important to the social and cultural identity of the gods dwelling in the Tamil village.

More importantly, Jaffna Tamils highly value their dwelling (*vīṭu*) in terms of various aspects. Even though poor families had limited space in their small houses, they allocated space for the shrine they used in their daily religious routines. At the same time, when those poor

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[24] *Swami* means almighty or god and *arai* refers to room. In the Tamil Hindu house in Jaffna, people have allocated a separate room for deities and worship where people maintain purity as a holy or sacred place of the house.
[25] The larger room than other rooms in the house.
[26] The pictures of deities are kept in the room, so people call this as *pada arai*.
[27] People also call this room as *nāl arai* because all the auspicious events are begun in this room.
[28] In a house, the shrine place is recognized as the room which is most important among the rooms of the house.

families or homeless people built a new house, they included the shrine room as a definite part of their house, and this is something I have encountered in my recent fieldwork. When people are displaced from their houses for a short or a long period, their culturally-constructed forms of life are also displaced to a relocated place where 'being' and 'becoming' without their *ūr, vīṭu* and temple are cultural problems for Tamil Hindu people who want to maintain their religious and social life.

2.8.3 Maniyam's story

Likewise, every family started to share their displacement stories. Maniyam was our relative and neighbor who first built a wonderful two-storied house, locally known as an 'upstairs house'. My mother took me around our neighborhood to know what happened to our relatives and whether they had safely returned to their homes. When we entered their gate, he (my mother's cousin) wept shouting, "oh sister, my fort has gone! How I cleaned and maintained this place as a *kōvil* which is now in a dilapidated condition. How much money I invested on building this house!" I was so emotional when I heard his weeping. He was also injured by the shell during his displacement and his knee was bandaged. He was seated on a long chair keeping his leg on a stool and beating his chest with his hands while narrating his sorrow to my mother. While they were displaced, the LTTE had entered their home and fired at the IPKF and run away while the IPKF had shelled where the gun fires were from.

2.8.4 Story of my uncle

Even my own uncle had a story, which I myself witnessed since he was with us in the mill for six months. His wife and two kids were in Kokuvil with her parents. When the IPKF started moving from Palali towards Jaffna, he left his family in Kokuvil for security and could not correspond with them because the Indian Army would shoot at people who showed up on the

road. However, he could not bear to stay without seeing his second son, who had heart disease. Eventually, he tried going to Kokuvil but avoided entering through the KKS Road and instead used the inner ways. However, he was caught by the Indian Army on his way and was ordered to lie down on the road and they severely hit him. Fortunately, he was not killed. He was missing his family for six months without any news about them until he met them in January 1988. Likewise, I gathered many displacement stories from individuals. Ratnam, my family relative from Kokuvil, stayed with his wife and newly born daughter in the bunker when the IPKF shelled his village. When they came out from the bunker, they noticed that their daughter was dead. When their daughter did not cry, they had assumed that she was sleeping. She had died without proper ventilation. She was their first child and he was crying uncontrollably when we met him back at our village.

2.9   Resuming our lives and facing multiple vulnerabilities

When we resumed our life at Inuvil after six months of displacement, it took another year to get back to normalcy. We had lost many valuable belongings when we were displaced. We only took over important documents such as our birth certificates, parents' marriage certificate, deeds of the house and lands. During all the chaos, my horoscope was lost, and my parents consulted with the village astrologer to write a new one for me. We had to repair the house slowly and restore our life with fear because the IPKF frequently entered the houses in the village and arrested innocent people and young boys due to unnecessary suspicion.

As a result, some of the young boys from wealthy families moved to Colombo while some migrated to foreign countries. I have six uncles who are my mother's younger brothers. My uncle, who owned the rice mill, moved with his family to Colombo in 1989 as he lost 3.5 million rupees worth of rice and paddy which were stolen from his mill during the war. After this loss, he decided that Jaffna would not be a peaceful place to do business and joined his brother's business in Colombo. Also, he was pressured by different Tamil militant groups in Jaffna for their

81

financial support which was also another reason for him to leave his hometown. For instance, once, his fifth brother was abducted by an unknown militant group when he was returning from a tutorial class. The militant group demanded either money or the equivalent gold. Finally, my uncle gave away his wife's jewelry as ransom for his brother.

Later, his third brother, who was running a hardware store in the Jaffna town, was abducted by an unknown militant group and they too demanded money. Consequently, his fifth brother was abducted for the second time. As a result, his fifth brother and his two colleagues opted for illegal migration to Canada through a private travel agent in Colombo. However, they were repatriated when they were caught in Singapore. All this occurred between 1987-1990. His fourth brother was caught by the IPKF on suspicion and was released after being kept in a dark room in an IPKF camp for three days in 1988. In the meantime, his fifth brother migrated to London in 1989 to pursue his studies. My grandfather owned two rice mills and a tobacco cultivation business in Jaffna and his children also continued this family business and expanded it in Jaffna and Colombo. As a result, they were always threatened by different militant groups for money. My grandmother's house used to be a very busy place because my six uncles entertained his village friends and businesspeople at home in the evenings. They lead a good wealthy life. However, everything changed immediately after the war began in Jaffna and many members of my grandmother's family started moving to Colombo and abroad in search of peace and security.

The IPKF controlled Jaffna until January 1990, and the LTTE escaped from the IPKF and moved to the Vanni forest, south of the Jaffna Peninsula, where they hid themselves during the war. When the IPKF left Jaffna, the LTTE came back to mobilize their nationalist movement. At the same time, the Sri Lankan military was also re-establishing their control in Jaffna. During the first few months of 1990, we had a peaceful time and people freely moved within the Jaffna Peninsula and also around the country. Children went to Colombo on their school holidays and local pilgrimages and tourism was restored in Jaffna because there were no IPKF checkpoints. From October 1987- January 1990, there were five IPKF checkpoints in Inuvil and people faced

difficulties in moving freely during late evenings because they would close the checkpoint gate at 6:30pm. As a result, night events like temple festivals and weddings were concluded by evening so that people could return home before the gates were closed. Thus, village life was interrupted by such humiliating rules. I distinctly remember Vairam, an old woman from Inuvil, referring to the village as a 'military camp' because the people were controlled by these five checkpoints and the IPKF's treacherous acts.

2.10   After of IPKF and the eventual war between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military

This situation was changed after the IPKF left Jaffna. However, the Sri Lankan military established their camps at important spots such as the Jaffna Fort, Palali and Kankesanthurai. Thus, the Sri Lanka military was trying to regain control of Jaffna from the LTTE. The Sri Lankan Military Air Force attacked the Chunnakam Power Station which supplied electricity for the entire Jaffna Peninsula. Already, the electricity supply was fluctuating for a limited number of hours; but after that it completely ceased. Hence, Jaffna entered under the 'dark age' from 1990 to 1998 without electricity, and we used kerosene oil lamps at home for 8 years. Kerosene oil's price sometimes increased due to the short supply in Jaffna. Thus, kerosene oil became a highly consumable commodity among people and many traders started the kerosene oil business. Small traders started selling it by the side of the road.

In most houses, people cooked before nighttime to save their consumption of kerosene oil. We used two lamps; a table lamp for our studies and a hurricane lamp which had a handle so that we could carry it wherever we went. I used to clean the chimney of the two lamps and check the level of kerosene oil and we were so conscious of the consumption of oil. We used the dining table as our study area where we kept one lamp at the middle of the table. As this situation continued, someone invented a 'battle lamp' (*pōrkkāla viḷakku*) for which the oil consumption was very low. We also had one in our kitchen. I still recall people simply adopting themselves to a nightlife without electricity and longing for the full moon nights. Daily, we struggled for our

83

basic needs and resources; and there were constant battles between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military, which was another tragic chapter in our lives. Every day, life became more dangerous and violent. Our lives became uncertain and a battle with fear.

In the middle of 1990, the LTTE started an operation against the Sri Lankan military to chase them out of the Jaffna Peninsula. The battle commenced from the high end of the north and many were displaced from those areas. People from sixteen villages in north Jaffna were dispersed to the rest of Jaffna. The Sri Lankan military controlled these villages and declared them a high security zone from then onwards, only releasing some of them in 2010 and 2016. Naguleswaram, my study location, was one of these villages. People from these sixteen villages became IDPs (internally displaced people) and homeless people. People lived at IDP camps (Welfare Centers), friends' and relatives' houses, schools and temple. Some families refugeed in our village as well, and I met new friends who were enrolled in my school and tutorial center. Many families moved from Jaffna to Colombo or migrated to foreign countries. My elder brother migrated to England during this time (September 1990). One of my uncles, who once attempted to migrate to Canada, did successfully migrate to London in 1990. A few months after, in 1990, another uncle also moved to Colombo with his family as he could not continue his electricity-based handloom factory due to the unavailability of electricity. Though he bought a new electricity generator to continue his factory work, the LTTE took it from my uncle for their own use. Finally, he decided to move to Colombo and only one uncle remained with my grandparents.

2.11   LTTE state of Jaffna from 1990-1995

Since October 1990, the whole of the Jaffna Peninsula came under the control of the LTTE and continued to be so till 1996. Another tragedy, also in 1990 was the expulsion of Muslims from their traditional homeland of Jaffna, where was carried out by the LTTE. At Inuvil Junction, there was a Muslim tailor, fondly called 'Bai Uncle' who provided the villagers tailoring services. My mother used to take my elder brother and me to get our clothes stitched by him. This network

was broken, and we sought to find an alternative way to fulfill this service. In Jaffna, male garments were largely produced by Muslim tailors and Jaffna Tamils also preferred their tailoring. When the Muslims left Jaffna, tailoring became a serious problem and non-Muslim Tamils were not trained in tailoring at that time. Then, young boys somehow learned tailoring and this became a source of income during the war.

However, certain people more used to Muslims' tailoring were unsatisfied with the work of Tamil youths and complained using phrases such as, "no one can stitch as a Muslims does" and "Muslims' tailoring is just perfect". One can claim that these are stereotypical statements, but this was what people said and reflected the reality of community survival and adjustment at the given space and time. People commented and laughed about the trousers which the local boys stitched during the war from 1990-1995. When I went to attend my sister's wedding in Colombo in 1994, I wore such a pair of trousers and people ridiculed me asking "Where did you buy this skirt from?" and "What is the name of this style?" My uncle, in a serious note, advised me not to wear such garments when visiting places outside Jaffna as it was a sure way of identifying a Jaffna Tamil and gave me with a Colombo-style pair of trousers to wear instead. During this time, whenever young boys from Jaffna visited Colombo, the Sri Lankan Police would suspect them of being LTTE and I never assumed that a garment could lead to such issues. However, my uncle's gift could not be worn in Jaffna because they made me a different person to others when I wore them.

Soon afterwards, the military started shelling, helicopter guns were firing, and ground-attacking was happening everywhere in Jaffna. There was a horrible battle between the military and the LTTE, and the military used ground-attack aircraft on the villages. In particular, the Jaffna town was badly devasted by the shelling of ground-attack aircraft. The Duraiappa Stadium, Subramaniam Children's Park, Veerasingam Hall, S. J. V. Chelvanayakam Memorial Mount, Kōṭṭai Muniyappar Temple, Sri Lanka Telecommunication Department, Jaffna Central College and the Jaffna Public Library (already a burnt building) were located in the central part of Jaffna

and were mostly destroyed. Further, Jaffna town was not in function due to the constant attacks and all the private stores were closed until the LTTE took over control of the Jaffna Dutch Fort which was occupied by the military. We had to shift rapidly because we wanted to be closer to our relatives during the ground-attacks and shelling. We came back to our house after a month and realized that this would be the story of our life. My school was closed for three months and I did not go to school until December,1990.

In terms of self-protection from bomber attacks, each house was advised to have a bunker around. The daily newspapers constantly conveyed instructions on making bunkers and how to escape from shell and bomb attacks. My father wanted to make a bunker in our land, and we hired labors to build it. Thus, a new labor force emerged of bunker makers who were in high demand even though it was a short-term occupation. All my aunts too made bunkers in their lands. Whenever the military bombers were on the move, we all ran to the bunker. But we were scared to do the same at night as we had to carry a lamp with us, and this meant we were visible to the military helicopters and that would made them attack us out of suspicion.

2.12   Closure of A-9 highway (Jaffna Kandy road) and livelihood crises

In terms of transportation between 1990-1996, Elephant Pass (Anaiyiravu) was the Gateway to the Jaffna Peninsula which linked it to the mainland of Sri Lanka. This was the land route (A-9 highway Jaffna-Kandy Road) to travel to Colombo and the railway also ran parallel to the land route. Both the railway and land route transportations were stopped by the Sri Lankan Government from mid1990. People could not travel through the Elephant Pass because there were constant fights between the LTTE and the military. We had a very tough time without electricity and a sufficient medicine and food supply after the closure of the A-9 highway. The Sri Lankan Government also prohibited over 60 consumer goods including fuel, food and medicine from entering Jaffna as it was a rebel (LTTE) held area. An item which was totally prohibited from entering Jaffna were camphor pills (*karpūram*). Hindus use camphor pills to make flames for

rituals in Hindu temples. As a result, the price of consumer goods often fluctuated which affected our daily life. The price of the kerosene oil sometimes would increase up to Rs. 300.00 per liter. The detergent soap's (Sunlight soap) price was Rs. Rs. 75.00 in Jaffna while its price was Rs.13 in the rest of the country.

Further, the Government cargo vessels brought in things from Colombo to Jaffna. Even potatoes, carrots and leeks were sent to the Jaffna markets from Colombo and Nuwara Eliya, and these vegetables were not locally cultivated in Jaffna during the war. Though people cultivated them before the war, they were not satisfied with their quality and taste. Compared to carrots and leeks, potatoes became a highly valued consumer commodity during the war because potato curry was an important dish in the Tamil cultural ceremonies, and everyone liked potatoes cooked in any form. For them, the potato curry was equivalent to a mutton curry. People attended a feast or life cycle ritual expecting potato curry to be served because it was most favorite dish among the people. The traders brought potato from Colombo by cargo but due to the unavailability of required amounts of potato in the local markets in Jaffna, its price was very high. Poor people could not afford them.

Eventually, cultivating potatoes too became a source of income during the war. People called them *ūr kiḻaṅku* (village potato) and *kiḻaṅku* referred to all types of yam in Tamil, but here people used the term *ūr kiḻaṅku* to mean potato. At the same time, people differentiated other potatoes as Nuwara Elya *kiḻaṅku* which were brought by ship to the Jaffna market. *Ūr kiḻaṅku* were cheaper, than Nuwara Elya *kiḻaṅku,* and this price difference also reflected one's status in the village in that people who served a curry made of Nuwara Elya *kiḻaṅku* were considered superior. There were several stories related to potatoes. More importantly, people struggled to find an alternative way to meet the demand for potato during the war and farmers could earn from their new cultivation. Due to the Government embargo on consumer goods, local farmers and people encouraged the local economy to meet our needs, and thus, a dual economic market system evolved during this period to shape the economy and lifestyle in Jaffna. As it was a

87

LTTE's territory, they dominated the economic sector. For instance, they collected taxes from farmers, government servants and businessmen.

2.13   Discovery of different transportation routes

Transportation varied during this period and people also started to travel to Colombo for various purposes taking alternative routes. Some used the Kerathivu-Sankupitty-Poonakari route from October 1990 but then this was attacked and blocked by the military. Certain people started to travel through the Kompaddy-Ooriyan route. However, these two routes were filled with muddy water and people walked through them to reach the mainland avoiding the Elephant Pass Junction. All these travels were unknown to the military forces, and had they been known, there would have been a high risk of civilians being attacked while they travelled. However, the second route was attacked by the military in 1993. The third means was the boat service which commuted between Kilali and the mainland. However, people had to walk through the sea carrying their luggage on their heads and shoulders up to a certain distance to get into the boat. In order to cross the Jaffna lagoon, people had to travel by boat. This journey was dangerous for two reasons. On one hand, this service was operated at night without any lights. On the other hand, both the Sri Lankan navy and military attacked the civilians while they travelled. Though people were well aware of this risk, they continued to travel because there was no other way to reach Colombo. The following needs were prioritized by people during this period: (1) For medical treatment for certain diseases that could not be treated in Jaffna (2) To apply for passports and visas when they hoping to migrate (3) To visit their children who were in diaspora, and to discuss their marriage proposals as telephone facilities was not available in Jaffna (5) To send their daughters to foreign countries for marriages.

Since October 1990, then the A9-highway was closed, and people tried leaving Jaffna in various ways in order to accomplish their needs. But escaping from the war and violence was their main focus. In particular, many young boys and wealthy families left Jaffna between 1987-

1995. For instance, during the IPKF regime in Jaffna (October 1987-January 1990), educated people and businessmen started leaving Jaffna, but more families left Jaffna during the LTTE state (1990-1995). The LTTE subjected people who intended to leave Jaffna to strict rules. In this scenario, many wealthy families paid big money and handed over their houses to the LTTE in order to be able to leave Jaffna permanently. I had my entire school education during this period with limited amenities while witnessing violence, war and displacements. I also travelled south by various routes (boat, ship, air and van) to visit Colombo for many purposes. In addition to the boat service, there was the Irish Mona Ferry Service which was operated by the Government with the support of ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) from Point Pedro of the Jaffna Peninsula to Colombo. In particular, patients, university students, doctors and government servants were granted special permission to travel by the ferry.

2.14   My boat expedition through Kilali sea visiting Colombo

In 1994, I travelled through the Kilali Sea (the Jaffna lagoon) by boat for my elder sister's wedding which was held in Colombo. We took three days to reach Colombo and it was a horrible and terrifying journey. My mother, my two sisters, and I reached Kilali, which is a fishing village and a part of Pachilaipalli region of Killinochi District of northern Sri Lanka. We had never heard of this village before, but the LTTE found a route through this fishing village to cut across the Jaffna lagoon. My Christian friends knew of this place because of St. James Church (Yakappar) located in this town. When we reached Kilali, the time was around 3:00pm and we were seated on the ground in a coconut garden. The boat service started after sun set and it was almost night. We all have had lunch at home and come there and I was so hungry. My mother had brought some food from home, but not cookies or snacks because they were very expensive in Jaffna. Then, my mother bought boat tickets and we all waited in line for four hours. I remember people calling our family wise as we all went through a tiny path crossing the sea.

While we were walking through the narrow path, a military helicopter arrived overhead and just hanged around for a while. I was really frightened and thought we would die that day. At the end of the path, there was a LTTE person who checked and punched our tickets. We all reached the sea and I did not expect to walk through it to get inside the boat while carrying the luggage on my head in pitch darkness. When I asked my mother why she never warned us about this cumbersome journey, especially since she had already experienced it before, she replied that there was no other alternative but to take this route since they were all keen to attend their sister's wedding. While walking through the sea, my trousers got wet as the water level was up to my knees. Though I managed to put my luggage on to the boat, it was very difficult to get inside the boat because it was shaking a lot. I helped my sisters easily, but it was difficult for my mother to get inside the boat. The boat driver did not use a lamp while driving because the lamp light was visible to the military and navy. Ultimately, it was an illegal travel route because the Sri Lankan Government had already warned people not to travel on it. The navy and military killed many passengers when they travelled through this route between 1993-1996. I was so frightened to travel through this route and noticed that many passengers were chanting religious hymns to protect their lives from any disaster. It was an open boat and its edge was almost equal to the water level. So, the sea water splashed on to the boat when the waves hit it. At some point, I thought there was no guarantee for our life on this journey. However, we did not have another alternative way to go to Colombo to meet our needs.

We spent nearly 3 hours to reach the town of Nalloor where many passengers were seated on the ground waiting for the tractor. Our next travel was by tractor from Nalloor to Alankeni town, which was another horrible journey because the tractor was shaking so much on the road as it was not a properly tarred road. Finally, when we reached Alankeni, it was midnight. Then, we had to take the bus from Alankeni to Panrikeithakulam, a part in North Vavuniya. We got into the bus and were so exhausted, physically and mentally. The following morning, we reached Panrikeithakulam. My mother bought a packet of tooth power from a near-by boutique. We all

used that powder to brush our teeth and fetched water from a well to wash our hands and faces. She also bought some tea and buns for breakfast. Then, we walked towards Omanthai which was the last controlled area by the LTTE and handed over our travel permits (pass) to them.

Afterwards, we destroyed all paper documents with the LTTE's stamp. They would be risky to carry if the military ever found them when they checked us of their camp in Thandikulam. Now, we all were walking through no man's land (*cūṉiyap piraṭēcam*) where there was neither LTTE nor military. It was almost noon and was very hot. When we reached closer to their camp, there were separate lines for males and females. My mother and sisters went separately while I was all alone and frightened to see the army soldiers. I had not seen the Sri Lanka Army since the 1983 tragedy in Colombo. They took all the young boys who came from Jaffna and asked us to stay in a room for observation. Since Jaffna was under the control of the LTTE, the military was always suspicious of the youths who travelled through Thandikulam.

After a while, a soldier called my name and took me to their Commander. My mother was trying to explain in Tamil about our purpose for travelling to Colombo and showed my sister's Wedding invitation card. Then, the Commander asked me a few questions about my current status. I told him that I was doing my Advanced Level (high school). He allowed me to go with my mother and sister. Later, I heard from my mother that the military used to keep young boys until evening and then they released them to go to Vavuniya. I was fortunate and did not have to stay for that long. My mother told me that our *kulaṭeiyvam,* Lord Pillaiyar, protected our lives from any danger.

We all took the bus from Thandikulam to go to the Vavuniya Police Station to get permission to go to Colombo. When we reached there, it was around 2:00pm and we had to stand in a long queue to get a permit from the relevant police officer. We had already spent two hours in the police station and had not had lunch until then. Finally, my mother's old classmate from our village, who was working as a police officer at the Vavuniya Police Station, after seeing my mother standing in the queue, quickened the process of receiving the permit. My mother took us

91

to our relative' house in Vavuniya who had moved in there during the war in Jaffna. We rested there for a while and had our meals. Afterwards, we went to the Vavuniya railway station and bought tickets to go to Colombo. We travelled throughout the night, and the following day, we reached Colombo around 4:30am. Our uncles who came to pick us up from the railway station hugged me because we were meeting them after a very long time.

When I came to Colombo, I was surprised to see its urban life flooded with affluence, material availability and modern technology. I felt like I was in a foreign country. I could not move freely in Colombo due to the security problem and also, because I did not know the Sinhala language to answer any questions I might be asked if stopped by the police. Therefore, I travelled with my uncle who knew Sinhala. My elder sister settled well into life in Colombo after her marriage and we returned back to Jaffna a month after her wedding. We received gifts from our relatives in Colombo and my mother also purchased some necessary goods to take to Jaffna. I did not know that my mother bought certain banned items until we reached home.

During the LTTE State in Jaffna, the Government of Sri Lanka banned a list of items (60 items) which people should not carry when they travelled through this route. The banned items my mother bought from Colombo were a pair of white shoes for my younger sister, some batteries for my father's radio, a small can of oil for her sewing machine, and two aluminum pots. I reproached my mother for purchasing and carrying banned goods. Moreover, I reminded her that though she will be pardoned for being a female that I will be severely punished for her ignorance. As previously said, there were over sixty consumer goods prohibited from entering Jaffna by the Government, but we did not bring all of them. They banned those goods because they suspected that the LTTE needed batteries to operate mines and aluminum for making bombs. Also, the LTTE needed sewing machine oil to apply for their guns. The LTTE woman soldiers used white shoes. However, people also needed them for their daily activities.

We followed the same procedure to come back and while passing the Thandikulam military camp, the army soldiers checked each person one and his/her luggage. Males and females were

checked separately. It was very stressful because we had put so many things into the luggage and after they removed them completely, it was so difficult to put them in back again and I was in a hurry to take the luggage. In the meantime, it was announced that if people brought aluminum pots, they were to be signed by an Army officer. My mother had two pots that needed to be signed. They also mentioned that if people brought other prohibited goods, they must be thrown away. Though I begged my mother to do so, she refused to listen to me, insisting that she will be allowed to carry the rest of the goods. A soldier inquired whether she had got her pots signed and when she affirmed, she was allowed to move on without her luggage being further probed. My mother threw a jubilant look at me and moved on with her luggage. She proved to me through her actions that she was truly an empowered woman who never hesitated to lead her life on her own terms. Our father did not join us on this trip for two reasons. First, his poor health, so we left our father with relatives in Inuvil. Second, we had to fulfill the LTTE requirement of leaving one person at home as a surety-bond in order to get a pass (permission) from the LTTE to visit Colombo. This was a LTTE rule. Thus, they controlled people's lives and freedom in many ways. The LTTE modified Jaffna in terms of their state policy. Their policies were applied in the local economy, transportation, security, politics, village disputes and women's protection.

2.15   Massive displacement from Valikamam to the rest of Jaffna Peninsula in 1995

The Sri Lankan military started the war again in October 1995. Due to the military's sudden move, one day the LTTE announced that all people must leave Jaffna within 24 hours. We were clueless about what we should carry with us. Thus, the LTTE forced people to flee from Valikamam, one of the major geographical divisions of the Jaffna Peninsula, as the military's first aim was to capture the Valikamam region. This was a massive displacement in 1995 because the whole population was affected by it. In this sudden political insurgency, people scattered all over. Largely, people went to Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi regions, which are other major geographical divisions of the Peninsula. First, we went to Nalloor, closer to Jaffna, and stayed at

our uncle's friend's house for two days. Then we started moving towards the direction where the rest went. We only took our valuables such as cash, jewelry and certificates. Then we (nine families) went to Navatkuli by bicycle and spent two nights at a rice mill until we finalized where we would go.

On the first night, we slept on the ground of a rice mill. We requested the owner of the rice mill to allow only my father to sleep inside which was already overcrowded with people and sacks of rice and paddy. On the following day, we were informed that one person per family could obtain a loaf of bread from a nearby bakery. So, we all (male members only) followed up the line in front of the bakery in spite of it being a heavy rainy day. On my way to buy bread, I saw more than hundred dead cattle scattered on the road and many more inside an old ruined building. We all ate bread and banana in the morning but were unable to have a bath due to the lack of facilities in the mill. The owner's family and his relatives also stayed in the mill, and therefore, we all naturally got adjusted according to the limited facilities that were available.

The following day, our family along with nine families (close relatives), travelled together by bicycle and finally we reached Nelliyadi which was a part of Vadamaradchi. My uncle managed to arrange two houses for occupation in two different villages in Vadamarachi. Among nine families, four of them went to Point Pedro while the rest went to Nelliyadi. There we (five families) all lived together in one house for 6 months. This house was arranged for us by my uncle's friend as we had no relatives in Nelliyadi.

My mother would often remind us of the pain and struggle of long-term internally displaced people who were uprooted from the north Valikamam in 1990 and we identified them as *iṭampeyarnta āṭkaḷ* (displaced persons). But when we became displaced persons, people from Vadamaradchi and Thenmaradchi identified us as displaced persons. We obeyed the rules of the house owner who did not give permission to use their shrine room since the house owner's belongings were in the room. There was only one kitchen in the house, so we cooked and shared

food together. As there were five families living together, we could heal our collective trauma and live peacefully in the host village.

Eventually, we expanded our new networks with the Nelliyai village community which lived next to us. Displacement created many opportunities that people were able to learn about the different places and cultural knowledge of the community and to build a network with the host community. Later, people invited families of the host community for their domestic rituals. During this displacement, people moved towards three directions. Some went to the villages of Vadamaradchi. A large population moved to Thenmaradchi while some went to Vanni. The settlements were not congested in Thenmaradchi, as it contained large coconut estates. Thenmaradchi also had more empty lands and therefore, more people were able to move to there and build up temporary shelters. Therefore, people faced a scarcity of drinking and in most wells, the water was undrinkable. Most of the government departments temporarily settled in Thenmaradchi as large a number of displaced people settled there. I travelled a lot between Vadamaradchi and Themaradchi by bicycle. The distance was about 27 km between these two regions. Most of our relatives and village people were in Thenmaradchi, so I attended their funerals, weddings, and puberty ceremonies during our stay in Nelliyadi, Vadamaradchi.

This displacement generated many social, economic, and cultural problems among people. The extended and joint families were affected by this as they had lost their land, farming and belongings because people carried only a few things with them when they were displaced. The close relatives and siblings had to live together for many reasons; when several families had only one house to live in, the kitchen had to be shared by all since they had not brought any cooking utensils with them. The families' economic conditions varied, and this created inconveniences and bitter experiences among the members in maintaining the expenses because foods and other amenities were expensive during displacement. Further, I found conflict between displaced people and the owner of the house in the host community due to the owner's conditions and requirements in terms of using toilets and wells. In some places, displaced persons could not cook

non-vegetarian meals during the religious festival season in the host community as the people of the latter observed religious festivals in those seasons.

During displacement, people also started moving to Vanni, Colombo, and other parts of the country to escape from the problems. People, who spent money for building shelter, did not want to move further. People, who invested money in their income generating activities did not want to move any further. However, this situation changed after April 1996 and people re-displaced to their original villages.

The LTTE completely left Jaffna and moved to Vanni after the big battle with the military in 1996. Ultimately, the Sri Lankan military's major target was to chase out the LTTE from Jaffna. After capturing the whole Peninsula in April 1996, the Sri Lankan military allowed people to resettle in their own villages. No one could move to Vanni to escape from the war in 1996 because the boat service was curtailed when the military took hold of Jaffna. People were so eager to return to their villages as they had multiple vulnerabilities in the host community. People realized the value of their place, wealth, belongings, and land while they were displaced and faced problems. Also, people used to hear so many rumors that many houses have been razed to ground and belongings have been looted. People, including us, worried about our houses, land, and belongings. So, we immediately returned to Inuvil though we had a fear of seeing the military after long time.

2.16   Back in Inuvil, 1996

In April 1996, we returned home and rebuilt our home which was damaged by the military. Unlike in Naguleswaram, the temples were not destroyed in Inuvil. Also, our house, our grandmother's house and two aunts' houses had been used as military camps for 6 months and therefore, they were badly damaged. We lost many valuable things such as albums, collections of stamps and coins from various countries and school notebooks. The belongings of these houses were misplaced within these houses as the military occupied them. Also, we found our belongings

of furniture, mattresses, and kitchen utensils in neighbors' houses in my village. At the same time, the neighbors' belongings were also found in our house. The military used those goods and dropped them in different places wherever they made those houses as sentry points for a short time. After witnessing the dilapidated condition of our house, I pleaded with my father to shift to India instead of reconstructing it especially because I was so tired of experiencing the war and chains of displacements throughout my life. I was also very worried about my future. But he simply refused my suggestion stating that he would never barge out of Jaffna until his last breath.

Inuvil almost looked like a forest with bushes grown up all over. Most families had not returned to the village and there were no grocery stores to purchase even basic items for cooking. This was the condition throughout Valikamam. We heard that we needed to go to Jaffna town where the military had opened a grocery store. My aunts' family and ours went to the town to buy the necessities by bicycle but we had to get down at many checkpoints to prove our identity with the use of the National Identity Card (NIC) issued by the Government of Sri Lanka. We had to carry this wherever we went. The military showed some flexibility when interacting with the civilians because many families were returning to Jaffna after April 1996.

After July 1996, there was a sudden change in terms of militarization and securitization in Jaffna. The military asked us to get a Special Identity Card issued by them. In order to obtain this card, we had to visit their office in Jaffna and thereafter, wherever we went, we had to carry both identity cards. After a few months, the military informed the Grama Niladhari officer (village administrative officer) to collect statistics on every household in the village. For this purpose, the village people had to meet him with a family photograph to produce the Family Particular Document. The Village Administrative Officer was responsible for producing this document which contained our family photo, and family particulars including the names, occupations, relationships, genders, address, NIC numbers and the special identity card number. This document was signed by the Village Administrative Officer and the Army Commander.

Whenever the military visited our house, we had to produce this document. Ours is still in our home in Jaffna which I recently found when I was there for my fieldwork.

Further, people had to get a clearance from the military to travel by the ferry from Trincomalee to Colombo which was in service from 1997 to 2002. After Jaffna was liberated from LTTE control, the Government started to re-establishing militarization in Jaffna and all the LTTE camps were converted into military camps. Further, they installed many checkpoints on the road and we had to get off at every single point when travelling in a vehicle. Eventually, our body and mind got accustomed to the military life.

I sat for the Advanced Level Examination (High School Entrance) in 1996 and fortunately gained admission at the University of Jaffna in 1998 to do my undergraduate studies. The delay of two years was due to the war and displacement. I obtained a B.A. (Hons.) Degree in Sociology in 2002. After my High School, I worked as a teacher at the Arul Tuition Center in Inuvil where I taught Social Studies and History for middle school children from January 1996-January 2003. This was an extra source of income while I was an undergraduate student. After my graduation, I planned to pursue my higher studies in India and needed a passport. I was able to travel through the land route to come to Colombo to apply for a passport because there was a ceasefire agreement between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE which resulted in the reopening the A-9 highway in 2002 for public use for the first time after 12 years. I completed my Master of Arts in Anthropology at the University of Madras, India in 2005. Afterwards, I returned to Sri Lanka and was employed as a Temporary Lecturer at the University of Peradeniya from 2005 to 2007. Again, the A-9 highway was closed in 2006 due to the failure of the ceasefire agreement and my younger sister and mother were alone in Jaffna after my father's demise in 2006. I had to stay in Peradeniya and Colombo between 2006-2008 as the A-9 highway was closed and therefore stay away from my family. Then I travelled back to Jaffna to see my family in December 2008 by air. When the war ended in 2009, I moved completely to Colombo where I got the tenure-track position at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

2.17 A recollection of unwritten history and unforgotten memory

Like myself, every Jaffna Tamil person who went through the war has a story, and all these stories are a part of the unwritten history and unforgotten memory of a Tamil's life struggle. People in Sri Lanka have had enough experiences with the war, displacements, assassinations, abductions, genocides and all sorts of other violence in the past and have only slowly started building trust in others since the war ended in 2009. As an anthropologist, I might say each one's experience is unique and special. There is no superior or inferior story in terms of emotions and the internalization of war experiences. The prolonged civil war affected all humans in the country. So, everyone has a story to share.

Although Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka had been geographically portrayed as a main theatre of war zone, Sinhalese, Muslims, Tamils and Veddas were also affected by the war. This claim does not qualify in terms of equality of suffering cross the country, but I would emphasize the learning diversity of suffering through the war and displacement. When Muslims were expelled from Jaffna, they lost their land and community ties. Tamils in Eastern Sri Lanka had their share of sorrowful life through the war and military attacks. The LTTE often attacked the Sinhalese families who lived in boarder villages. Further, Sinhalese families constantly received the dead bodies of Army soldiers during the war. Hence, each ethnic group had their own war memory and unwritten history.

My story is one of them, which is why I have tried to draw a brief sketch of my war memory. The chains of war and displacements taught many lessons about life and survival. I do not mean the biological evolutionary aspect of survival but survival experiences that I had to bodily undergo. We did not have electricity for eight years in Jaffna where we simply adopted nightscape life; I attended to numerous domestic works at home without a lamp and I learned that night life through everyday practice. Thus, this nightscape induced an invention of a different type of life. Throughout the Peninsula, each family had a displacement experience in the three

99

decades of war. I prefer to call them seasonal displacements as all were not displaced at the same time.

Each region experienced displacement at different times which created many opportunities to learn the diversity of displacement stories. Each displacement story tells a unique experience. Also, displacement provided an opportunity for gathering cultural knowledge of a particular region and community. Gathering and learning of regional practices and customs enabled people to understand the multiplicity of Tamil culture in Jaffna. I would argue that the rigidity of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and cultural practices were challenged through the war and displacements since people had to be flexible in order to get adjusted to life during those emergency situations.

Most of the time, researcher write about 'negative sufferings' like death, abduction, shelling, bombing, grief, mourning, rage, bereavement and hardship; but I argue, as a survivor of the war, that there are 'positive sufferings' as well, with people making use of their experiences of coping and adjusting strategies for survival in a given time and space. This is also a part of war related history and memory. This dissertation is not about my personal life history. Yet, at the same time, I do not want to neglect the value of my internalization of my war experiences (my insider's view) in the dissertation. Many people have written about the history of the Jaffna War without revealing much about these inner voices. Of course, I do not consider for a moment that my war memory is a complete version of the war history of Jaffna, but I have definitely witnessed and experienced the war, violence and displacement. Throughout my war and displacement journey, I learned the importance of one's dwelling (home), land, *ūr* and cultural practices from my personal history and the personal stories of others. At the same time, I have also noticed that my *ūr* too has undergone a great transformation due to various forces such as war, displacement, globalization and diaspora connections.

Here, I have briefly narrated my story. It could be further elaborated but I have limited it due to time constraints. However, I intend to expand this section into a small monograph later. Although I have chronologically delineated my war memory, now I do need more time to

contemplate my past life. Throughout my war history, I have clearly pointed out how a village community, Inuvil, is in tremendous transformation. Social and cultural change is a common reality in any society, but Jaffna Tamil village communities experienced war for thirty years, and now they are interacting with different global flows. This does not mean that Jaffna had never interacted with global flows before, but I have seen the intensification of global flows after the war.

This chapter was not only about the political struggle of the Tamil community but also discussed how individuals experienced their *ūr, iṭam, kōvil,* and cultural practices through the historical transformation. Theoretically speaking, I have adopted my theoretical analysis, as previously mentioned in the introduction, based on phenomenological senses of how people are practicing and being in the world. How can one understand the post-war village community by using phenomenological anthropology? Of course, there are plenty of village studies in South Asia, but I argue that some are not much updated for theorizing the post-war village community's reconstruction. In the introduction, I have introduced two key terms "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness," which need more concrete theoretical explanation. Therefore, I have devoted the next chapter to be the theoretical background where I will answer the above questions and discuss the relevant theoretical perspectives extensively.

CHAPTER 3.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1   Introduction

The major focus of my literature review was to build a theoretical argument towards the phenomenological sense of Jaffna village life and belongingness. This is why a phenomenological anthropology of peoples' experiences of *ūr* is, arguably, fundamental to studying life in post-war Jaffna. This is also why a similar phenomenology of belonging may be key to understanding post-war life in other post-conflict societies as well. In this research I have employed a term village or village-temple consciousness as a cultural practice people use to understand themselves, and feel 'at home', in relation to a particular, named place they call their *ūr*. It is a relation to a place of actual or imagined habitation. This is not the only way Tamil people have of understanding themselves and of trying to feel at home in the world. For example, the war demonstrated that Tamil people in Sri Lanka have a form of consciousness they practice in relation to the notion of *īḻam* that involves a wider sense of homeland that includes all Tamil speaking areas of Sri Lanka (Povlock 2011; Kailasapathy 1979).

At the same time, the break-up of the LTTE (the split between the LTTE and Karuna's Eastern Cadre in 2004) (Mehta 2010; Povlock 2011) demonstrated that Sri Lankan Tamils also have a consciousness of themselves in relation to the various regions of Sri Lanka in which Tamils live: Jaffna, Batticaloa, Colombo, Up-country, and so forth (Sivathamby 1995). Also, my definition of village-temple consciousness explains that different castes and genders inhabit or imagine their shared local village worlds differently. At the same time, this village-temple consciousness involves a concern with a person's orientation toward a sacred local landscape, (Aronld and Gold 2001, Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995) that also encompasses the domestic practices and bhakti religious rites that outline a village's social life. Exactly why people have this localizing consciousness, and how people construct themselves within a locality using it, are ethnographic questions that lead to the theoretical core of this dissertation. Therefore, the

following theoretical discussions will explore what this dissertation will contribute to general anthropological theory. First, I wished to explore why village community and village-temple consciousness are significant positions in South Asian region through a literature survey.

Why are "village community" and "village-temple consciousness important in Jaffna and South Asia? I have claimed that "village-temple consciousness" not only constitutes peoples' orientation to their sacred landscape (Arnold and Gold 2001, Hirsch & O'Hanlon 1995), but also encompasses both bhakti religious and village practices. Thus, the "village" is an important social, cultural, political, economic unit not only in Jaffna Tamil culture (Sivathamby 2000, 1995) but in South Asia as a whole (Mines 2005; Daniel 1984; M.N. Srinivas (1963 [1955]). Large populations reside in rural villages in Jaffna. In general, a village community contains unique features such as a "local landscape," "a shared set of mental dispositions," "shared origins," "community feeling," "a common belief system," "a local sense of sameness," (Kowalewski 2003; Yaeger 2000) and "an empirical entity" (Canuto and William 2004). Such a theorization hints at the functionalist idea of 'shared consciousness' (Peacock 1975) or 'collective consciousness/representations' (Durkheim 1995, [1912]), but it remains to examine how this 'shared consciousness' originates or re-originates in the experiences of the individuals.

Likewise, many Asian anthropological theoretical formulations were influenced by functionalism and structural functionalism (Durkheim 1995; Radcliffe-Brown 1922) which defined village communities and religion (Tylor 2018 [1871]; Malinowski 1924). From these perspectives, village communities had been theorized in terms of ideas of society integration, group solidarity, cohesion (Kolb and Snead 1997), face to face association (Murdock and Wilson 1972), static, conservative, closed system, residential proximity, and homogenous living (Murdock 1949). But these are really adequate when it comes to understanding social change? Due to the war and migration, the Jaffna Tamil community became a dispersed community as well as moving community (Maunaguru 2010; Cheren 2002). In this circumstance, people who live in the Tamil diaspora still identify their *ūr* as where they born in Jaffna; thus, they maintain

and interact with their *ūr* at distance (Whitaker 2015). Also, functional aspects of religion, ritual, and society presuppose harmony and integration in society, but in the case of a death ritual in Javanese society (Geertz 1959) argues that ritual was tearing the society apart rather than integrating it. Therefore, the functional aspect of village community has limited utility to the study of the present-day post-war Jaffna village communities, or an any post-war community around the world.

In a similar vein, the Chicago school of sociology and the functionalists and structural-functionalists (Tylor 2018; Malinowski 1924; Durkheim 1912; Radcliffe-Brown 1922) have theorized the village community as a small traditional unit or folk society (Redfield 1930); 'little community', 'indigenous community', or 'isolated unit' (Marriot 1955; Redfield 1930). But post-war Jaffna *ūrkaḷ* (villages) are not little or isolated communities; rather, their landscapes and interactions have expanded to include the diaspora and global flows they are now in contact with. Again, English terms such as hamlet and village can only be awkwardly equated with the Tamil word *ūr* or 'home place', given the distinct cultural and emotional meanings that word carries for Tamil people in South Asia (Mines 2005; Daniel 1984) and an *ūr* can be of any size since the central issue addressed by the term is one's place of origin rather than a community's size. Hence, Daniel (1984) and Mines (2005) defined *ūr* semantically in terms of local, constitutive, substances.

Daniel (1984) was the first anthropologist to have brought up this issue, and I admire his substance and semiotic-based analysis of the Tamil *ūr* (Daniel 1984) in Tamil Nadu. But 'coded substance' and semiotic analysis of Tamil *ūr* narrowly defined the ūr through high caste conversations and representations. For the purpose of this dissertation, thus, I have instead focused, phenomenologically, on how individual Tamil experience is interconnected with an orientation towards a home place (*ūr*), and how, in turn, this orientation is shaped by and is being shaped by their encounters with the Tamil diaspora and globalization (Axford 2013; Cheran

2004; Tekwani 2003). In this way the high caste perspectives found in the classic texts upon which Daniel partially based his analysis can be challenged.

I am not the first person to study village communities in Sri Lanka. Turning to Sri Lankan village studies, Sinhalese Buddhist village communities are defined by their caste systems, *variga* endogamy (caste based local citizenship) (Leach 1971), land tenure systems, irrigation and dagoba (temple) Obeyesekere 1976), and their agricultural village structures with complex systems of ritual practices and beliefs (Baker 1998; Seneviratne 1978). Further, rural villages have been seen as mental constructs of community members and "*gama* (village) is as an estate (land) originally owned by a founding ancestor" (Obeyesekere 1967: 13-14). Thus, village involve psychological attachment to the land (Wiesbaden 1960). Likewise, the idealized picture of the Sri Lankan village was symbolized by *wewa* (irrigation tank) and dagoba (temple), which connected resources to ownership and utilization by a particular lineage, kinship network and caste groups.

Although Northern and Eastern Sri Lankan Tamil villages shares similar characteristics, the community formation is immensely based on the temple (Sivathamby 2000, 1995; Whitaker 1999). Also, Jaffna village social structure specifically constitutes unique characteristics that covered caste, (K.T. Silva et.al 2009; Sivathamby 2000, 1995; Pfaffernberger 1982; Arumanayagam 1976 & 1979; David 1974; Banks 1960, 1957; Raghavan 1953), kinship, marriage, dowry, (Maunaguru 2010; Goody and Tambiah 1973) religion (Sivathamby 2005; Shanmugalingan 1997), astrology (Perinpanayagam 1982), dance, music, drama and so on (Jeyarasa 2001, 2000, Sivathamby 1981).

More specifically, the rural communities in Northern Sri Lanka have a community formation based on *kōvil* (temple). In particular, Sivathamby (2000) has argued that Tamil villages in Northern Sri Lanka cannot be looked at apart from the role played in them by temples. Further, other scholars have explicated the Jaffna notion of *ūr* with caste, kinship, marriage, dowry, religion, astrology, dance, music, and drama (Thambiah 2001; Sivathamby 2000, 1981;

Shanmugalingam 1997; Perinpanayagam 1982; Pfaffernberger 1982; Goody and Tambiah 1973; David 1974; Banks 1960, 1957; Raghavan 1953). In studies of Sri Lankan Sinhalese Buddhist villages and Tamil villages, researchers have not directly addressed the question of how people construct their consciousness of themselves in relation to an *ūr*, a temple, or an *iṭam* (place) per se (or their Sinhalese equivalents), though this same literature makes it clear that doing so is important throughout Sri Lanka. Nor did this literature focus on the sense of *kōvil* (temple), *vīṭu* (house compound), place and belonging through the temple-centered village organization and its related human consciousness, which is the theoretical thrust of this dissertation.

Since the ancient times, the temple was symbolic of the religious, cultural, social, and political life for Tamil Hindu communities in both Tamil Nadu in India and Jaffna in Sri Lanka (Sivalingam 2004; Nadarasa 1979). Such explanations confirm the essentiality of the temple in a Tamil Hindu village, and thus, the local scholars have discussed the essentiality of the temple in terms of notions of religion, fine arts, sculpture, Hindu philosophy, history, myth, and bhakti religiosity. But I argue that the essentiality of the temple is not only associated with the above factors, but caste, kinship, *kouvravam* (honor/prestige), and sub-village territories (*kuṟicchi* and *vaṭṭāram*) are also essential factors to the formation of temple in Tamil Hindu villages.

Thus, the Tamil Hindu community is known as a 'temple-centered' community (Pathmanesan 2010; Whitaker 1999; Kala Shreen 1997) but in such community formations and temple affiliation are involved with disciplining (Foucault 1979) village communities through their affiliation with high caste dominance (Pfaffernberger 1982; M. N. Srinivas 1966) and other forms of social control. I would argue Bourdieu's notion of embodied knowledge (1990) is useful here. That is, if, following Bourdieu (1990, 1977), that the temples help discipline (Foucault 1979) people's consciousness of place through the practices of the people who worship in them -- which, as embodied knowledge (Bourdieu 1990), also helps constitute a person's sense of belonging to what they regard as their *ūr* –then a careful investigation of such practices, and how they have been used, changed, and not changed over time, is a key part of any study of village-

106

temple consciousness. Based on my findings, the culturally embodied practices of village or village temple consciousness has played a pivotal role in community recovery.

Thus, the temple creates the kind of communal feeling among the Jaffna Tamils that I call village consciousness or "village-temple consciousness." More specifically, the central focus of my research concerns changes in terms of what I am calling 'village' or 'village-temple consciousness' that have occurred in Tamil, Hindu Jaffna during and after the Sri Lankan Civil War; and changes in "village consciousness" by war and globalization. Likewise, village temple consciousness denotes peoples' orientation to their sacred landscapes (Arnold and Gold 2001, Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995). People of these two villages maintain a set of culturally organized memories and culturally constructed emotions towards the places where they were born and raised. At the same time, if they also change and modify their cultural practices, which are associated with the notion of *ūr*, then can "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness be static social phenomena?

3.2 Can "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness" be a static social phenomena?

My ethnographic fieldwork in two Tamil Hindu villages in the Jaffna Peninsula has revealed that "temple-centered communities" are changing and altering practices associated with both religious life and secular life (domestic level). Further, interviews and case histories show that this association between temple practices and consciousness changes documented in village temple and domestic ritual practices in Jaffna are due to the long-term civil-war and globalization (Boswatte 2012; Gerharz 2010). When I looked at the classical literature on village community transformation in South Asia, I found it has discussed social structure and social mobility. For examples, Gough (1970) discussed village transformation due to occur the breaking up of the traditional social structure. Marriot (1955) said village religious changes through the process of parochialization and universalization. Sinha (1969) argued that changes of village community

through community development projects. M.N. Srinivas (1966) discovered social mobility and religious changes in the village community through the processes of Sanskritization and Westernization.

However, these studies largely focused on caste hierarchy and ritual-cultural hierarchy, instead of economic and political factors, which also causes social changes in villages. Hence, this research instead intends to reveal the changes, but dynamics of human consciousness by different driven forces. However, caste-based discourse and Sanskrit based understanding of Indian civilization or knowledge is inadequate in understanding the transformations of the Sri Lankan Tamil village. Furthermore, Ryan, Jayasena and Wickremesinghe (1958) theorized the Sinhalese village social structure as experiencing "loosing structuring of Sinhalese culture and social organization", particularly secularization and fluid Sinhalese caste system due to westernization. However, most of this analysis focused on social structure; including Yalman (1967) and others, like Dumont (1981), Leach (1971), and Levi-Strauss (1967; 1969), perceived social structure as cognitive design, and these transformations shows from one structure to other forms of structure.

Likewise, the discussions on village transformation have focused on social structure, caste hierarchy, and ritual-cultural hierarchy (Dirks 2001; Dumont 1981; M.N. Srinivas 1966; Gough 1970; Marriot 1955), and even changes due to political reform, democratization, and development (M.N. Srinivas 1963; Dube 1958). This dissertation reveals these changes but focuses on dynamics of human consciousness in reference to these different forces. Thus, South Asian village communities were discussed in terms of caste system, caste hierarchy, pollution and purity practices, dominant caste "ideology" (Dirks 2001, Dumont 1981; Dipankar Gupta 1993; M.N. Srinivas 1997, 1966, 1963). As a result, caste has occupied a central position in such village transformations discussions. Thus, M.N. Srinivas's (1963 [1955]) "dominant caste" ideology is still valid phenomena for understanding the caste consciousness (Banks 1957), but he meant caste through religion, so religion is *sui generis* for him and he looks at caste from religion, therefore,

caste consciousness requires further clarification that later I will discuss in a relevant chapter in this dissertation.

Though caste is part of my theoretical discussions, I have concentrated on *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control), which is a Jaffna Tamil word that addresses a wider set of concerns associated not only with caste, but also with gender, the scared landscape, the belief systems attached there, and the everyday life. In addition, this study has looked at how people relate *kaṭṭupāṭu* to their home places, temples and domestic rituals, village practices, and everyday life they are trying to rebuild. Furthermore, changes are inevitable, and all human societies are changing and transforming, and yet once Jaffna Tamil Hindu community was characterized as a rigid, culture-bounded community, organized according to high-caste and patriarchal domination. But, that form of rigidity is now weakening and transforming cultural practices; at the same time, caste has reawakened.

Throughout my fieldwork, I discovered caste identity crises and high-caste hegemony exist as a silent form or a hidden social phenomenon. Thus, the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar hegemony never swept away their domination over the low-caste people in Jaffna. Further, I have looked at the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* that people once used to establish and maintain the rigidity of cultural practices towards their *ūr.* In the post-war Jaffna, I have found that people manipulate the role of an older form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in certain ways to replace *kaṭṭupāṭu* to their ownership (*urimai*), friendship, values, and life. Yet Jaffna Tamils in diaspora and living in other parts of Sri Lanka still identify as their *ūr* the places where they were born, and thus maintain and interact with their *ūr* at a distance (Whitaker 2015; Sanathanan 2011; Fuglerud 1999). Thus, this study has discovered that *ūr* remains important even at a distance and village-temple consciousness is capable of being deployed and is both historical and dispersed beyond the physical boundaries of the village.

In the contexts of globalization (Robbins 2002; Axford 2013), this research shows the shifting or altering of village consciousness in Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages. In particular, the traditional conception of the temple-centered villages is changing due to the prolonged civil

war (Korf and K.T. Silva 2003) and globalization (Appadurai 1997). Such changes in consciousness are not limited to village residents. It is important to note that although people have internally displaced and dispersed around the world due to the civil war and globalization, members of an *ūr* usually claim their mutual and emotional attachments with their *conta ūr* (own village) (Van Hear & Liberatore 2015; Gerharz 2014, 2010, 2009; Boswatte 2012) even after they have left it (Whitaker 2005; Cheren 2000).

Here the Tamil term '*conta*' indicates not only a 'possessive' meaning, but also 'relations' that explains how individuals have an image of their *ūr*. This implies that such people have had to construct an 'imagined village' somewhat similar to the way Anderson's national level citizens have to construct 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983). In thinking and knowing their own village, I would say the 'imagined village' is imagined when people of Jaffna live in rest of the country or in diaspora (Appadurai 1990). For instance, Poomani who was an older resident of Inuvil village moved to Colombo during the war and currently resides in an apartment in Wellawatta. Every year, she visits her *ūr* for the annual temple festival at her *ūr* temple in which she meets her relatives and village people. She claimed that though she moved to Colombo, she still remembers it her through her constant visits and interactions. Due to all of these multiple changes and interactions and different effects of the Tamil diaspora and transnationalism (Whitaker 2005; Cheren 2000), I have found that knowing or imagining of *ūr* has been altered or transformed as a practiced because people are creating and recreating many cultural practices through their multiple interactions with global flows.

Hence, we have understood that the Jaffna village community and village-temple consciousness are altered by many factors, but my central focus of this ethnographic study was to look at how post-war Tamils use their village nostalgia to reconstruct their life while reacting to post-war circumstances and global flows. At the end of the war, many sociological and development-oriented studies have been conducted in the northern Sri Lanka including in Jaffna

Peninsula. Let us briefly discuss how the post-war literature have addressed the role of village or village-temple consciousness in post-war recovery of village communities in Jaffna.

3.3 The Sri Lankan post-war literature and "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness"

In the wake of that reconnection there were many studies of Jaffna as a post-war community looking at post-conflict reconciliation, social harmony, peace building, resilience, mental health, and suffering (Peshan 2013; Keerawella 2013; Somasundaram and Sivayokan 2013; Nakagawa 2012; Phillips and Goldberg 2011; Hogg 2011; Goodhand and Walton 2009; Cohranea et.al 2009 Mehta 2010). There has also been much written about Sri Lankan Tamils on trauma, dislocation, and reconstruction efforts (Somasundaram 2014, 1998; Hogg 2011; Mehta 2010). But this work has focused on state-level, collective, reconciliation, social harmony, and peace building for the Tamil community as a whole, or on the resilience, mental health, and suffering of Tamil individuals.

Other literature on post-war Sri Lanka has looked at issues of infra-structure development or economic livelihood (Jayatilaka et.al 2015; Gerharz 2014). None of the above, however, has looked at the recovery of villages as such, or at how temples and related practices of place-making might be playing a role in their postwar recovery. For example, Gerharz (2009, 2014) has written about the role of remittances and the 'Western' practices of diaspora Tamils in Jaffna's recovery. She notes that Jaffna people sometime accept or reject these diaspora practices and money, and that this sometime creates conflicts between generations which cut across caste, gender and class lines. She does not note, however, that this flowing is mostly directed by diaspora people to their respective *ūr.* Hence, my research has looked at how such *ūr* directed diaspora flows interact with *in situ* village notions of social order, or *kaṭṭupāṭu,* in Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

111

Ultimately, the literature on post-conflict recovery in Sri Lanka has not addressed the issue of how people recover their sense of feeling 'at home' in a place shattered by war, or how a remembered sense of belonging might be used by them in the process of community recovery. Recovery literature, both in Sri Lanka and generally, mostly pays attention to physical, economic, and psychological recovery or, more widely, to 'reconciliation' between the warring parties at the level of the state (as in the 'truth commissions' in South Africa and so forth) (Hucklesby and Travis 2002; Anguelovski 2014; Barakat 2010; Wassel 2009; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1999**).** Clearly, all of this is important. Neglected in all this, however, is a sociology of how people in shattered communities remake them so that they might once again feel at 'home' in them; and, further, how people might be using a remembered sense or practice of belonging as a model of and for community recovery in radically altered postwar circumstances – such as the newly globalized circumstances that have arisen in Jaffna since the war.

Moreover, most studies of reconstruction have not looked at how Jaffna Tamils (or people in other post-conflict societies) determinedly maintain and utilize their localized consciousness during and after war. Hence, more useful to this research than the literature on war and trauma are concepts of "place-making," and "sense of place" (Kingsolver 2011; Muehlebach 2001; Feld and Basso 1996) drawn from anthropologists working on the cultural construction of belonging. These notions relate directly to the imagined place of belonging that I call village-temple consciousness. So far, we have defined the concept of village or village-consciousness and briefly discussed village studies in South Asia. To understand "village" or "village-temple consciousness anthropologically, the following sections will be devoted to the anthropology of consciousness, the anthropology of place-making and memory, and the phenomenology of place and sense of place that we need as background to theorize "village" or "village-temple consciousness.

3.4   Anthropology of consciousness: Understanding "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness"

Anthropology simply cannot neglect the philosophical conception of mind as philosophy theorized consciousness before other social sciences. As a result, 'mind' was central to the study of consciousness in philosophy. Thus, philosophers and psychologists define consciousness in terms of "mental processes, 'spiritual beliefs', and variety of "mental phenomena" (Stanford Encyclopaedia of philosophy 2014 [Rosenthal 1986; Gennaro 1995; Carruthers 2000]). Furthermore, "introvert" philosophers looked at "the nature of human mind" while "extrovert" philosophers concentrated on "the observable behaviour of human beings" (Kenny 2010).

More importantly, Descartes' notion of body-mind dichotomy becomes very influential in philosophical conception of mind. Body-mind dualism further intensified in terms of 'notions of thoughts', 'self-awareness', which "includes not only intellectual mediation, but also volition, emotion, pain, pleasure, mental images, and sensations" (Kenny 2010: 592). However, Wittgenstein (1961) rejected the dualism approach as it was not paid attention to the importance of language and meaning in consciousness. These new versions of arguments move beyond the earlier mode of 'mental processes.' On the other hand, Kant argues phenomenal consciousness entailed well developed 'structure of mental and intentional organization'; thus, he proposes "experience of a conscious self-situated in an objective world structure with respect to space, time and causality." (Stanford Encyclopaedia of philosophy 2014: 3) Though I somewhat agree with human intentionality, I may argue that human consciousness should be understood in of existential terms. Therefore, my research has employed Geertzian (1973) anthropology and adopted interpretive method in studying village-temple consciousness.

In psychology, the behavioural approach (Watson 1924; Skinner 1953) failed to capture the notion of 'external stimuli' to understand consciousness, but cognitive psychologists (Neisser 1965; Gardiner 1985) looked at "internal mental process." Although psychoanalysts like Freud (2010 [1930], 1997, & Kenny 2010) has argued that feeling, thoughts, and violation are based on

unconsciousness, phenomenologists like Husserl debates that consciousness possess 'absolute meaning' (Kenny 2010).

Although behavioural psychologists (Watson 1924; Skinner 1953), cognitive psychologists (Neisser 1965; Gardiner 1985) psychoanalysts (Freud 2010 [1930], 1997) have discussed consciousness in terms of behaviourism, internal mental process, and unconsciousness, phenomenological philosophy becomes dominant in the study of human consciousness. Moreover, both existentialism and phenomenological philosophy explore modalities of human existence, which study things as they appear in lived experiences of illness, suffering, body, sensory perception, the mind, consciousness, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity (Desjarlais & Throop 2011; Desjarlais 1992).

Ultimately, a phenomenological conception of consciousness in anthropology emerged to state that "phenomenal structure of experience is richly intentional and involves not only sensory ideas and qualities but complex representation of time, space, cause, body, self, world and the organized structure of lived reality in all its conceptual and non-conceptual forms" (Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy 2014: 10). However, there are shortcomings to understanding consciousness from phenomenology, because it is too attentive to detail to account for broader historical, social, political processes, and phenomenology ignores the political and socio-economic conditions of life (Desjarlais and Throop 2011; Desjarlais 1992). As a result, phenomenological approaches can be combined with other perspectives to restudy conventional ideas of self, society, consciousness, memory, and human. The following sections will explore the exact anthropological understanding of consciousness, and from there I will construct my own theoretical stance to theorize village temple consciousness that will contribute to the general anthropological theory and more specifically anthropology of South Asia.

The anthropological conception of consciousness is an amalgam of psychological, philosophical, religious, and phenomenological perspectives. Based on this, Winkelman has claimed "it refers to a range of phenomena at the crux of life, awareness, perception, interactional

and organizational capabilities, knowledge and the unique representational capabilities of humans" (2008:16). Thus, consciousness involves interacting components of a system, including attention-awareness; phenomenal experiences; self-reference; action-behaviour, including representations and learning; use of information; interpretation of meaning; goal-directed behaviour; and systems of social reference (Ibid). Furthermore, a bunch people have looked at "human capabilities", "body physiology", "bodily experiences" "bodily sensations" and "sensory sensations" (Desjarlais and Throop 2011; Winkelman 2008; Laughlin 1997; Desjarlais 1992; Wilkes 1988) that shapes human consciousness. However, these constructions did not pay more attention to self, but consciousness is closely associated with "self" too, in this view, consciousness involve different forms of self that covers emotional, representational, psychic function (Wilber 1977, 1980).

 Although Wilber (1977) and Winkelman (2008) included Eastern perspectives in their analysis, they narrowly developed it through Buddhist philosophy. Though Winkelman has touched upon the Buddhist philosophical understandings of consciousness in South Asia to surpass current Western scientific understandings of the human consciousness, it lacks to understand holistically due to varied phenomenological manifestations found in other aspects of human consciousness in South Asia. However, South Asia is not a Buddhist society as a whole and I have concentrated on Jaffna Tamil Hindus, not Buddhists.

 In this, I would agree with what Obeyesekere who said that "the Cartesian notion of consciousness, central to Western science and philosophy, lost its primacy since consciousness could be false" (1990:52). So, Western understanding of consciousness is derived from the Cartesian dichotomy of mind and body, but Winkelman and others failed to think other component 'spirit' (*uyir*) in understanding consciousness that is widely discussed in different Hindu philosophies particularly in Vedanta (*vētānta,* Skt. *vedānta*) and Saiva Siddhanta [*caiva cittāntam,* Skt. *śaiva siddhānta*] (Radhakrishnan 1923) in South Asia. However, I argue that Vedhantha and Savia Sidhantha philosophical construction of consciousness seemed to be a

115

dominant discourse in terms of caste, language (Sanskrit), and male domination (patriarchy). Also, these are hegemonic textual traditions. For instance, Arumuga Navalar (1822-1879) constructed *Saiva* (*Caiva*) public in Jaffna through Saiva Siddhanta ritual practice that was hegemonic and privileged the dominant Veḷḷāḷar caste in Jaffna (Ambalavanar 2006). Clearly, this study has identified that Saiva Siddhanta textual tradition and ritual practice excluded non-agamic ritual practices, and also high caste discourses of consciousness are dominant in Jaffna. Though it is a dominant approach, I have included other forms or local knowledge of consciousness derived from orally transmitted narratives and village proverbs. Though these are hegemonic ideas, I have not neglected them, but I also included other forms of local knowledge (particularly from non-high castes) of consciousness, also part of village-temple awareness, and constructs human consciousness.

Moving beyond the Cartesian philosophy of mind and Western scientific theorization of consciousness requires an alternative approach. Hence, the construction of meaning will be treated as central to how people interpret the world, but it does not mean a South Asian or Eastern scientific understanding of human consciousness as the definite form, but it can be a non-scientific definition of human consciousness. Critical steps lead to an etymological sense of conceptualization that narrowly concentrated on Indo-European etymological roots rather than Dravidian (Caldwell 1998 [1856]) etymological analysis. However, it does not explore conceptualization from a Dravidian language base analysis, but it may require to correlating with Tamil consciousness (Kailasapathy 1979) completely to postulate different meanings and interpretations from the Indo-European explanation. This, in turn, might suggest turning to the cultural speculations of important Jaffna scholars like Sivathamby (2005, 1995) and Kailasapathy (1979) and their contributions to Dravidian identity and Tamil consciousness. But their views were overtly political and focused or the Tamil nationalist cause and focused on thinking about a national homeland, or *īḻam*. The sense of *ūr* was not central to this kind of Tamil nationalistic

discourse. Therefore, this dissertation has centred its study on the sense of *ūr* or village consciousness (Goss 2015).

In particular, I found that Goss (2015) was the first to use the term "village consciousness", identified by him as "shared identity," which was more or less a functionalist idea of a village community. But, Jaffna *ūr* sometimes are fragmented not only by caste, but also by specific territorial sub-divisions like *kuṟicci and vaṭṭāram* (these refer to sub-divisions of a village with the same caste) (Pathmanesan 2010), *pakuti* (*kutumpam* (family) becomes a *pakuti*--makes sections or divisions) (Sivathamby 1995), which micro level identities of the village landscape of Jaffna are not just objective units, but refer to the "meaning imputed by local people to their cultural and physical surroundings" (Hirsch 1995:1).

So, landscape anthropology "continues to reflect an interest not just a spatial or ecological relationship but also in how people perceive and construct the unique and often ideologically charged regions in which they live" (Kantner 2007:41). Such explanation is closer to human cognition and subjectivity, which urged me to connect with village consciousness formation in this study. Thus, an individual's perception of this world and their belongings (Golob 2009) operates human consciousness. Also, individual belonging connected to the village may be described as a 'place'; one is linked to a place by a sense of identity with, and belonging to, that has roots, but, it may be contrasted with 'space', which is an "epistemic unit", which provides a way of seeing the world. The space has a deeper and larger connotation, more stable than place (Dasgupta 2005: 66). Hence, this dissertation will discuss the formations of village consciousness through micro level divisional perceptions of *ūr* exist and enables us to have multiple forms of *ūr* due to the diverse nature of the Jaffna social structure given caste, gender and micro level territorial divisions within the village. Nevertheless, there are different types of consciousness, which may require a multiplicity of approaches and interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary perspectives to comprehend different epistemological knowledges. The following sections will address the core theoretical issues of this dissertation.

3.5 Anthropology of place, memory, senses, self, and emotion: Theorizing "village-temple consciousness"

As I discussed earlier, the Sri Lanka post-war literatures have not considered how people reconstructed their home places and dwellings by using localized consciousness during and after the war. Although I admire the worth of war and trauma in community reconstruction, this research focuses on the concepts of "place-making," and "sense of place" (Kingsolver 2011; Cighi 2008; Muehlebach 2001; Feld and Basso 1996) drawn from anthropologists working on the cultural construction of belonging. These notions relate directly to the imagined place of belonging that I call village-temple consciousness. Therefore, anthropological work on "placing" and "place-making" (Jones and Garde-Hansen 2012; Muzaini 2012; Kingsolver 2011; Rodman 2010; Riano-Alcala 2002; Basso 1996) has enhanced this research.

Cultural geography, human geography and archeology have dominated spatial or area studies (Tilley 1994). Cultural anthropology, cultural geography, and tourism studies have also much contributed to the study of places, but each discipline has their own theoretical presentations. In general, cultural geographers took a *particularistic approach* to study landscapes or places, and they paid more attention to morphological features or visual representation when they attempted to study place, but they have also now turned to descriptive, qualitative, symbolic, semiotic, and interpretive analyses in the study of place (Oakes and Price 2008). For instance, Murphy and Jonson (2000) have pointed out that the current trend in cultural geography is to discuss the social construction of place and remaking environment through human intervention. When cultural anthropologists study places or landscapes, they cannot simply neglect the worth of cultural geography scholarship about places, hence I also have embedded the knowledge of cultural geography in the theoretical discussion.

However, I make a slightly different analysis approach towards Tamil *ūr* by conducting through a phenomenological inquiry. Phenomenological inquiry about place discusses the sense of place that concerns how much people relate to their place through their experiences (Trigg

2012; Cighi 2008; Tilley 1994). Place is seen as objective reality, which is derived from the

observer's view. Although geographers or tourism scholars attempt to define place as a

constructed reality through empirically generated descriptions, a sense of place is more about

open to a phenomenological inquiry grounded in human experience (Anderson 2010; Cighi 2008;

Tilley 1994). Some may pay attention to economic rationality when they study a place, and I do

not ignore against this at all; but my work argues that the understanding of a place should come

from an intersectional analysis rather than by dividing the cultural meaning of place from

economic rationality.

Functionalism and positivism have defined the place or area study (Tilley 1994); for example,

a Tamil *ūr* in Jaffna or South Asia, was defined through a functionalistic or positivistic analysis,

when scholars have looked at the social institutions and their functions rather than studying the

changes. But phenomenological anthropologists would ground their theoretical understanding of

place through the combination of philosophy and anthropology (Veena Das 2014). Under these

circumstances, I will build my theoretical argument through a combination of interpretive,

phenomenological, political economic, and philosophic infused anthropology.

To explore this further, this dissertation utilizes work on the anthropology of place, space,

memory and time (Kingsolver 2011; Rodman 2010; Riano-Alcala 2002; Appadurai 1988). These

works clarify that place could be understood through the lenses of "multilocality" and

"multivocality", constituting a "complex social construction of spatial meaning" (Rodman 2010:

640). Once, anthropology defined a place by ethnographic locales or ethnographic imaginations

of place. Appadurai called this "topological stereotypes" (Rodman 2010:643) related to

localizations of totalized anthropological voices; for example, caste hierarchy in India or ethnic

conflict in Sri Lanka.

Multivocality comprises multilocality. Polysemes of places are not merely received from

children, women, and men but should also be received from low-caste or socially and

economically marginalized people in the society. As Rodman (2010) mentions, narratives of

places are not just told with words, but by how people experience those narratives of places through their senses; for here, of course, people individually have various experiences of places. As the power of speech or its narratives always control the meanings of places, individual narratives of places from various castes and genders have been the main focus of this dissertation. These narratives are not just conveyed with words as Rodman (2010) says, but through how senses are fused with those words. For instance, some low caste people I talked to recollected their lived places through the smell of tobacco cultivation; and Saratha, a woman from Inuvil village, remembered her dwelling places through the taste of the mangos she once grew in her home garden. Here the smell of a local product, tobacco, and the sweet taste of Saratha's mangos became, for them, indexical metonyms bringing back the entire region to their minds. Further, through such sensate narratives these informants remembered, also, the entire process of tobacco cultivation, and mango growing along with the many characters who played a role in those events.

As power and agency have conventionally dominated the narratives of places, paying attention to multivocality enabled me to grasp the polysemous nature of places. Thus, multiple meanings are structured in places, which are "physical, emotional, and experiential realities" (Rodman, 641). Those images of narratives are time and power driven. Conventionally, anthropologists have created many regions in their ethnographies, but as Rodman states, they have not discussed specific places with multiple meanings. However, this is not true in Sri Lankan scholarship that Gombrich and Obeysekere's (1988) discussion of Kataragama is precisely a discussion of a place that his multiple means because it means different things to various groups: Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus, and Muslims. What might be better to assert, here is that while anthropologists have sometimes discussed the polysemous nature of nationally important cultural centers such as the wailing wall in Jerusalem or the Mosque/Rama temple in Ajodhya – as we know the one the Viswa Hindu Parishad attached in Ajodhya and tore to the ground because they believe the place is "really" the site of a Rama temple – few have applied

this same insight to the places important to people in their everyday lives. That is, their hometowns, their neighborhoods, and their *ūr*. That is what I have done in this dissertation. Generally, although Inuvil and Nagulesaram have revealed themselves to be part of the larger regional ethnography of post-war reconstruction, those two physical landscapes have also represented multiple places as well as multiple meanings. However, post-war Inuvil and Nagulesaram still hold the issue of power and agency in narratives of places where high caste domination by the Veḷḷāḷar is still found in the creation of places and the construction of meaning. So, the social construction of peoples' engagement with place, their embodiment of place, and their memory of places result in different discourses of place by different castes, classes, regions, and genders. For instance, unlike during the pre-war time, low-caste people attempt to construct their own narratives of places within the limited power structures in these two villages. , That is, even though post-war writing about villages is still dominated by the high caste people and the state (Government of Sri Lanka), the low-caste people nonetheless also produce their imaginations of *ūr* through their own narratives, especially as seen through their increasing control over how their own domestic rituals are portrayed on the Internet. In particular, then, the postwar period has empowered low-caste people and women to advance their own perspectives on *ūr*.

Interestingly, I found that one marginalized woman, Sakti, from the low caste, Naḷavar background, provides astrological consultation services in Inuvil, and people of all castes started visiting her house to receive her services after the war. Sakti has been married and separated from her husband for more than twenty years. Before and during the war, high caste Veḷḷāḷar people never visited her house where her father, before her, also provided the service of astrological consultation. But this has now changed, and people of all castes visit her house. One day I saw many clients from various castes at her house waiting for her astrological consultation. But she stopped her service halfway through because she wanted to attend a ritual at a temple in Inuvil. She apparently felt no intimidation against turning her high cast clients away. She had, then, not

only her own way of providing this service in the village within her own power and knowledge structure (astrological knowledge), but also construct her world view and narratives about places, temples, rituals and village life through her own astrological knowledge and experiences.

Thus, the sense of place and spaces are influenced by the form of power, which people perceive and experience in their daily life. It is also important to consider power. Studying place only by doing an ethnography of imagination (Rodman 2010, Appadurai 1988) may create problems by leaving out power (Foucault 1972) and agency (Robb 2010; Giddens 1979). For example, in Jaffna as among the Apache, less powerful people have little voice in publicly defining habitation, place-making and naming (Basso 1996). In Jaffna, all of the place-making/cultural construction of the home place, and official displays of cultural symbols, are dominated by Veḷḷāḷar caste discourse. Also, Jaffna constructions of sacred landscapes and of domestic rituals are heavily influenced by a version of Saiva Siddhanta ritual practice that became hegemonic (Gramsci 1971) in Jaffna, and also privileged the Veḷḷāḷar caste and its *ākama* ritual practices (rituals based on ritual recipes found in texts; see Ambalavanar 2006). Clearly, further study is needed to resolve the issue of the exclusion of non- *ākama*, and non-high caste people and ritual practices, from Veḷḷāḷar dominated circumstances, or to assess the role, if any, of a possible, alternative non- *ākama*, sacred to village consciousness. To connect these hegemonic ideas, this study also explores how other forms of local knowledge (particularly from non-high castes) are also part of village temple awareness. That is, to examine this issue even further, I utilize Rodman's notions of "multilocality" and "multivocality", to allow a "complex social construction of spatial meaning" through multiple constructions of a place in terms of castes and genders (Rodman 2010: 640).

Hence, this study explores people's sense of *iṭam* (place) as stemming from multiple definitions rather than a unitary definition; and use "memory" and "remembrance" (Jones and Garde-Hansen 2012; Muzaini 2012; RianoAlcala 2002) to explicate people's sense of *ūr* or *iṭam* through "story-telling" and "cultural mapping" methods (Crawhal 2007; Poole 2003; Basso

1996). Although critiques have been made of "state memory" verses "non-state memory" and "oral history" "verses "literate history" (Muzaini 2012; Basso 1996), this study balances this challenge rather than rely on a binary claim requiring rejecting half to study local consciousness. For instance, a state memory can be a public memory that will undergo manipulations (Muzaini 2012), but a non-state memory can also involve fabricating or exaggerating narratives. Thus, one cannot fully rely on literary history to study the past. Moreover, these literatures (Jones and Garde-Hansen 2012; Muzaini 2012; Riano-Alcala 2002) do not pay enough attention to caste, class, religion, and power (education and language ability), factors that also could influence narratives.

However, I observed during the fieldwork that Jaffna Tamils do not perceive *iṭam* just as a physical setting, but looked beyond any soil, wood, and other commodities there to their own primordial sentiments of attachment to the places where they have lived, had experiences, past memories, and family stories (*kuṭumpa kataikal*), and to where new stories are circulating. So, this study demonstrates how Jaffna Tamils construct cultural meanings of place and people, and to see how local (and nonlocal) knowledge is interwoven with this place-making process in post-war Jaffna.

However, as Kingsolver (2011) has pointed out, the literatures on consciousness and place-making have paid less attention to interpretive and linguistic analysis (Douglas 2002 [1966]; Geertz 1971; Wittgenstein 1974) than they should. Yet language and meaning are central to the interpretive methods required to make sense of them. For example, one could usefully say village consciousness consists of related 'forms of life' (Wittgenstein 1961); in other words, various enacted practices of cultural belonging that show a certain 'family resemblance' to one another. But, as Basso has said (1996), such similar practices will still differ from territory to territory because groups of men and women will have invested themselves in a place through their thoughts, values, and "collective sensibilities." In this way people make up differences between "our territory" and "their territory." These divides are what make local consciousnesses distinct

from one another for the people who construct them as living places. These distinctions, in turn, suggest a reason why village consciousness might provide some people with a kind of refuge from other, sometimes more dangerous, forms of allegiance and identity based on ethnicity and nationality even while, of course, potentially having their own dangers.

Also, the anthropology of consciousness and place-making have perhaps focused too little on the role of "knowing" that is a key aspect of remembering or feeling part of a place, although Kingsolver (2011) in her work in rural Kentucky has addressed this issue. In general, Jaffna Tamils, and perhaps Sri Lankan Tamils in general, seem to perceive their place, not just as a territory, but by knowing people in it through their kinship and friendship networks, and their membership in the same *ūr* and the same caste, and so forth (Whitaker 2015). Here I push this point further by relying on the work of those who have written about how people's knowledge of each other and of places are expressed through memory, embodied practices of everyday life, and emotions (Desjarlais & Throop 2011; Kenny 2010; Geurts 2002; Desjarlais 1992; Lutz & Abu-Lughod 1990; Lutz 1986; Lutz and White 1986).

Some of the existing literature on consciousness did not pay considerable attention to emotion and self (Abu-Lughod & Lutz 1990; Lutz & White 1986; Desjarlais 1992; Lutz 1986; Geurts 2002), but this dissertation incorporates people's emotional attachment to their home place, memory, and temple. This study moves beyond the psychological or biopsychological aspects of emotion because cognitive or motivational dimension of emotion alone do not capture communicative and phenomenological aspects of emotion (Lutz and White 1986). Thus, emotion will be viewed from an interpretive way; in this, emotion is perceived as a cultural construction or "embodied thoughts" (Ring 2006; Wautischer 1994) rather than mind related reasoning. Similarly, Clark-Decès constructs the same idea on Tamil emotion when she says, "emotions are deeply configured within a culture's wider web of meanings and significations, values, and ideals…" (2005: 24). Although Clark- Decès conceptualized Tamil emotion, I found in Jaffna during my fieldwork that present-day Jaffna Tamils innovate beyond their cultural meanings and

values. This dissertation provides adequate examples for concretizing this conception on emotion. Such a theoretical contribution will enhance the fields of anthropology of emotion and consciousness.

The study of place, space, and time are closely associated with memory, emotions, and self, which are best communicated through descriptive, interpretive, and phenomenological methods than any other methods in anthropology. Therefore, phenomenological philosophy has become increasingly prominent in the study of consciousness (Kenny 2010). In the phenomenological stance, this study intends to show how the body is a locus of experience of the world; how experiences are shareable and create an inter-subjective world; and how the world is a dynamic, shifting, and constituted through inter-subjectivity in studying villages (Desjarlais and Throop 2011). This approach encourages exploring the modalities of human existence, including studying things as they appear in the lived experience of illness, suffering, the body, sensory perception, the mind, consciousness, subjectivity, and inter-subjectivity (Desjarlais & Throop 2011; Desjarlais 1992).

Even though critiques have been advanced by those who claim phenomenological approaches neglect the political and socio-economic pre-conditions of life (Desjarlais and Throop 2011), I argue that this approach can be combined with other perspectives, such as Geertz's interpretive approach among others, to restudy conventional ideas of self, society, consciousness, and memory. Even though physiological conceptions like "human capabilities," "bodily experiences," "bodily sensations" (Desjarlais and Throop 2011; Winkelman 2008; Laughlin 1997; Desjarlais 1992; Wilkes 1988) shape human consciousness, these do not pay close attention to the self, yet consciousness is closely associated with the self too. Furthermore, this dissertation synthesizes Canessa's (2012), Desjarlais' (1992) and Geurs' (2002) works to identify "forms of being" and understanding of the self through identity, body, and senses. Their works focused on the importance of everyday human life, which enabled me to understand "forms of being" and the "self" among the post-war Tamils in Jaffna. However, this is not just an ethnographic detail of

"everyday life", but "ways of being" and "nature of being" in the world, and their anthropological

phenomenology scholarship enabled me to grasp how "everyday Tamil life" forms and shapes *ūr*

identity, body, emotions, self, and senses in post-war Sri Lanka.

Nevertheless, Desjarlais and Throop (2011) explain phenomenological approaches through

ethnographic field methods, which focus on peoples' lives and on the interrelatedness of social,

biological, corporeal, sensorial, cultural, political, economic, and environmental dimensions.

Hence, what I would suggest from their analysis that they stress the reformulation of conventional

ideas of self, society, consciousness, memory, and human. However, the phenomenological

approach has some limitations in terms of methodology and theory: phenomenology is too

attentive to detail to account for broader historical, social, and political processes. For example,

subjectivity is a product of the modern west; rejection of subjective experience entails inattention

to individual lives as lived; and such an inward focus may disarticulate the social and political

from the concrete engagements of people with the world. Nevertheless, this research has looked

at the existential and ontological terms to understand everyday life in post-war Sri Lanka. By

doing so, existential terms, as Csordas (2012) stated, we will be able to understand how "the

existential stance is more directly concerned with description of the life world or world of

everyday life, the phenomena encountered in the course of existence and being in the world"

(Csordas 2012: 57).

In an ontological turn, although there are different critiques made about ontological

anthropology, Latour (2013) explains that the use of the term *ontology* has been widely diverse

and as such there is not a defined school or movement that characterizes the "ontological turn,"

but it can be used to explore the different "modes of existence." The classical anthropological

study is largely discussed about human rather than non-humans. Further, ontological turn can be a

movement in revising anthropology by adopting philosophical sense of analysis of human, non-

human, and non-living objects. The emergence of ontological paradigm is a remarkable turning

point in anthropology in terms of revising anthropological understanding of the world.

Anthropology always focuses on human world, but ontology looks at a world which includes humans and non-humans.

However, non-human concept is narrowly defined because people try to understand non-humans by looking at animal world. But I argue that the non-human should include physical objects too. For instance, in South Asian society and culture, I found and experienced that people believe a house has a soul and physical material has a soul; thus, people treat them as living organisms. In this circumstance, I argue that the non-human concept has to be expanded by adopting multidimensional perspectives. Multidimensional perspectives are, of course, varied from culture to culture, because each culture has many multidimensional approaches to study the differences and complexity. In addition, anthropologists talk about self, emotions, and personhood in day-to-day life, but they relate all these attributes to the human body, but I would argue that these attributes are applicable to non-humans too. I saw my grandmother offer a very small piece of cooked meal to the fire from the pan while she was cooking in the kitchen. When I asked my grandmother the reason, she told me that it was for *aṭuppu* (burner) *nācciyāṟ* to satisfy her to complete the rest of cooking. *Nācciyāṟ* refers to a woman. Also, whenever I tried to pluck flower buds for a play, she never allowed me to do it. When I asked the reason, she told me that people would breed dumb children if they plucked buds from flower trees. I gathered many similar folk beliefs from my grandmother and other village people, which explains how people treat non-humans also as living organisms.

Even, I am a bit confused how to use the word non-human for animals because the meaning of "non" signifies negative notions; it means "none or "nil," which requires further investigations. Therefore, I would claim that there is no single ontology to view social reality and world life; rather there are multiple ontologies in practice (Harris and Robb 2012) Further, Western theorization might claim ontological singularity in understanding and viewing the world. Desjarlais and Throop (2011), Escobar (2010), Kohn (2007), Viveiros de Castro (1998), and Descola (1996a; 1996b) have discussed varieties of issues in relation ontology, phenomenology,

127

and self, which enabled me to construct an ontology paradigm. They argue that an ontology is a fundamental set of understandings about how the world is: how we understand the world, how it works, what kinds of beings exists, how they relate to each other. It seems to me that we need to revisit the areas of emotions, self, and personhood to discern in line with an ontological paradigm.

As for the literature on globalization and the Tamil diaspora (Axford 2013; Cheran 2004; Tekwani 2003; Robbins 2002), there is an ambiguity. Some have argued that newly created transnational social spaces and diaspora networks (Boswatte 2012; Wood 2008; Gerharz 2010) have changed the cultural values and domestic ritual practices of people in Jaffna yet.

More specifically, the existing literature does not discuss the relationship between the village consciousness, war (Wood 2008), cyberspace, (Bell 2001) the internet (Slevin 2000; Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002), diaspora and globalization in post-war Jaffna. For Wood (2008) , the civil war and its effects led to transformations in social networks and community reconfiguration and Boswatte (2012) also has a similar view that diasporic and transnational social relations affect non-migrant members at home, which provide insights in to how the Jaffna Tamil community behaved as a whole abroad and at home. Therefore, I argue that both interactions shape consciousness. However, Either Wood (2008) or Boswatte (2012) did not touch on the role of new communication technologies. Yet these new emerging networks of internet, and the new sense of community they create challenges the Tonnies's ideal type of *Gemeinschaft* (Slevin 2000). Though this research agrees with Slevin, it tries to view how village communities differently incorporate new global networks into their daily lives.

Contrariwise, others claim that global media cyberspaces and computer technologies (Jones et.al 2015; Underberg and Zorn 2013; Pink et.al 2004; Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002; Bell 2001) are engaged in a project of modeling villages, and digitalizing villages (Kantner 2008); and this project, according to Kantner (2007), indicates how such powerful new technologies can visualize complex multidimensional landscapes like villages. Could this, perhaps, be a new form of cyber 'placing'? Such questions are why this project must study whether the post-war

circumstances of the Jaffna community, and its increasingly globalized interactions, are producing newly built forms of consciousness of locality (*ūr*) to absorb these new global flows (Appadurai 1996). However, the above literature has paid no attention to the power relations with reference to the relationship between *ūr* and *iṭam* in "cyber-placing". There are different categories of power relations. An *ūr* website or a temple website intends to represent a totalized voice of the village, but an *ūr* is fragmented by different castes and sub-territories. Also, an *iṭam* is a specific locality, which individually varies from person to person. Further, "cyber-placing" is another form of language or hypertext, which projects a powerful identity in a virtual community. For instance, I found some individual Facebook accounts about how temples construct a particular language about temples and places through their diaspora connections. However, such "cyber-placing" belonging is not possible for everyone because socially and economically marginalized people often do not own the equipment for this kind of belonging. Further, microlevel place-based belongingness is also not covered in the large *ūr* representation in "cyber-placing". Furthermore, I would suggest one must first grasp the phenomenological sense of Jaffna village life and belonging that people have; hence the central purpose of this dissertation. This is why a phenomenological anthropology of peoples' experiences of *ūr* is, arguably, fundamental to studying life in post-war Jaffna. This is why a similar phenomenology of belonging may be key to understanding postwar life in other post-conflict societies as well.

3.6   Conclusion

Nevertheless, this dissertation's theorizing of *ūr* consciousness using phenomenological practice, ontological and existential theories needs one more approach. For, I found one component of *ūr* consciousness by realizing it trains people to act in a particular way that Bourdieu (1990) describes as practice within a system of structures known as habitus. Thus, practice actually rests as the site of the dialectic between the structures and habitus. In Bourdieu

sense, this dissertation discusses space and place in post-war Tamil geographies through Tamil dispositions or Tamil habitus (Selby and Peterson 2008).

Likewise, I grasped the phenomenological sense of Jaffna village life and phenomenological anthropology of South Asian expressions of *ūr* to understand what the Jaffna *ūr* means in post-war Jaffna and how social-cultural productive life is constructed there. To understand the everyday lives and practice in the post-war Jaffna, Mines (2002) applies globalization through Appadurai's and Breckenridge's (1988) notion of "public culture" which enables one to examine how Jaffna *ūr* becomes public form while engaging in localized (localization) or globalized cultural forms (Mines 2002). For instance, I discovered in Jaffna that domestic rituals are public performances within the *ūr* locality, but this public space is connected to the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora for public consumption. Hence, different global flows (Appadurai 1990) also shape the practice and imagining of their *ūr* in the post-war Jaffna.

Hence, I believe this dissertation contributes to general anthropological questions rather than those simply concerned with South Asia or Jaffna. This study argues that an ethnographic phenomenology of place, as worked out here, makes a valuable contribution to anthropology as it struggles to make sense of the various confrontations between the local and the global that are so pertinent today, and particularly in post-conflict circumstances. More specifically, this dissertation wants to show that although the Tamil separatist movement was defeated, *Tamil national* identity is not weakened in post-war Jaffna. The LTTE's Tamil Elam (*īḻam*) geographical territory and homeland have been lost at the end of the civil war. Once Jaffna Tamils worked for Dravidian identity and Tamil consciousness (Sivathamby 2005, 1995; Kailasapathy (1979), but for many Tamils, in the wake of the war, these forms of belonging came to be seen as too overtly political and Tamil nationalist, and too focused on thinking about a national homeland, or *īḻam*, to be much discussed in post-war public circumstances. The sense of *ūr*, however, was not central to this kind of Tamil nationalistic discourse. That is, while, in the wake of the war, such national forms of identity have become, temporarily anyway, difficult to

support, the sense of *ūr* remains. Could it be argued, then that this form of belonging provides a refuge, and a 'place' to be Tamil in, and thus a form of belonging alternative to ethnicity per se., at a point in time when other forms of Tamilness are temporarily more dangerous? Is it possible that other post-conflict populations, elsewhere in the world, may also focus for a time on changing their own practices of local belonging in similar ways to handle challenges posed by the national and the global forces confronting them – particularly in times of political weakness and danger? These are the questions my dissertation will discuss.

The following chapters will be ethnographic chapters to discuss a phenomenological sense of Jaffna village life and belongingness in post-war Sri Lanka. From now onwards, each chapter will present how cultural constructions of place and space have been phenomenologically addressed in post-war villages in Jaffna. In this context, the next chapter will be the first to briefly demonstrate the ethnographic accounts of "village or "village-temple consciousness" and *kaṭṭupāṭu* in two villages of post-war Jaffna.

CHAPTER 4. "VILLAGE" OR "VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS" AND *KAṬṬUPĀṬU* (CONTROL)

"We did not know much about our *ūr* (village), Keerimalai[29], as we were not born there. Our family returned back to Keerimalai in 2012 after 21 years of protracted displacement within the Jaffna Peninsula. Our parents were born in Keerimalai and know the history of the village and village temples better than us. My sister, brother, and I were born in Sandilipai where we relocated during the civil-war and had subsequent displacements. Finally, we have come to our *conta iṭam* (own place) and enjoy our *conta kāṇi* (own land). Our parents used to tell many stories about Keerimalai during our childhood; thus, village older people share many stories about this place. Now, we are feeling, knowing, and experiencing our place because Naguleswaram temple is one of the ancient temples in Sri Lanka and we are proud to be a part of this sacred landscape (*puṇita piratēcam*)" (Vani, a young girl, Keerimalai, October 2017).

"We now settled down in France, but we visit our natal place (*piranta iṭam*) every year during the annual festival at the Sri Pararjasekera Pillaiyar temple in Inuvil, Jaffna since the war ended. My children should learn about our ūr, ūr temple, and our *conta pantam* (kindred bonds); these *niṉaippukaḷ* (consciousness) should grow in their heart and minds now itself among my children; otherwise, they have no chance to learn and feel about our village. However, our village has changed a lot and it is not like before. The control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) is not like before and it has gone away" (Ganesh Inuvil, 2018)

4.1   Introduction

On Saturday, October 14th, 2017, it was early morning, I heard the ringing bell sounds from the Naguleswaram Lord Shiva temple while I was staying at Sivapoomi *Maṭam* (a pilgrim guest house)[30] in Keerimalai in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. I woke up and came out of the *maṭam.* Kidinan[31] (from Kōviyar community) was plucking flowers in the garden for offering to the deities, which he has at the main hall of pilgrim guest house. He asked me, "have you not gone to the Naguleswaram temple today? Today is the last day of *Puraṭṭāti Sani*.[32]" I told him that I have not yet scheduled my work plan today, but I will certainly think about it. Although I already knew that during the month of *Puratāti,* Jaffna Tamil Hindus observe every Saturday as auspicious to

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[29] A sub village of Naguleswaram

[30] Sivapoomi madam is a pilgrim guest house built by the Sivapoomi trust in 2012, and I stayed there in one of those rooms during my fieldwork in 2017 and 2018. There were many madams (pilgrim guest houses) in Keerimalai, but all of them were destroyed during the war, and none of them were not rebuilt after the war.

[31] One of the caretakers of the Sivapoomi pilgrim guest house.

[32] *Puratāti* is the Tamil month (September-October) in the Tamil Almanac calendar, and Sani refers the planet Saturn (Saturday).

Saniswaran (*Caṉīsvaraṉ*, Skt. *Shani Dev* or *Shani Bhagavan*)[33]; The Lord Saturn, a male deity, is one of the nine planets (Navakirakam) and people especially like to light an earthenware lamp filled with gingelly oil (*eḷ eṉṉai caṭṭi*)[34] in front of the Saturn's idol in Hindu temples in Jaffna. I asked Kidinan, "what is the special on *Puraṭṭāti Sani*? Why do people visit temple on this day? He laughed and sardonically asked: "are you not a Hindu? Were you not born in Inuvil? Inuvil is a land of temples and people associated with temple culture, your *ūr* (village) is Inuvil, but you do not know about *Puraṭṭāti Sani*," I sometimes encountered this problem throughout my fieldwork in Jaffna, that a foreign ethnographer does not have a problem asking these kinds of questions to informants.

This is because the informants assume that foreign researchers do not know about their culture, but native anthropologists like myself may face a different situation when asking questions about certain known religious practices. I was enthusiastic to see a *Puratāti Sani* religious observance at the Naguleswaram temple. I practiced this religious observance with my grandmother and mother in Inuvil for more than thirty-five years, but I was surprised to see a huge crowd in the Naglueswaram temple for this religious event. After the *pūja,* I waited to speak with devotees regarding their *ūr kōvil* (village temple) practices. My key-informant, Indran, introduced me to Vani, who had just finished her religious observance and was returning to her house. Here is her story. Vani is a 19-year-old girl[35] from a low-caste background who was

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[33] People in Jaffna use different names of *Caṉīsvaraṉ* and *Caṉi Pakavāṉ* to address the Lord Saturn.

[34] *Eḷeṉṉai caṭṭi- eḷeṉṉai* is gingelly oil, which is locally known *naleṉṉai* in Tamil. *Caṭṭi* refers to earthenware lamp made with a wick, which contain black sesame wrapped in black cloth. The black color symbolizes two different meanings; first represents the Lord Saturn who prefers black color cloth and flower and his body is also dark (black) according to the Hindu astrology. Second, the black color symbolically denotes darkness and dangerous effect from Saturn in one's life, which is gotten rid of by burning (finally the wick will be burned) the wick to invoke divine blessing from Saturn.

[35] In Sri Lanka, the children are addressed as boys and girls until they will marry.

pursuing an Advanced Level Education.[36] Her parents were born in this village and lived here

until they fled the village in 1990. They were displaced to four villages, one after the another, and

finally lived in the Vanni where Vani was born in 2000.

Her family returned back to their own village, Keerimalai after 21 years. I asked her if she

had lighted an *el eṇṇai caṭṭi* lamp for Sani ([Saturn] *Caṉi,* Skt. *Shani*) today? She had, but only

because her mother asked her so as to remove her *Caṉi tōṣam* ([Skt. *Shani dosha*] a dangerous

spirit from Saturn).[37] After that, she invited me to her house, and we walked together towards her

house, which was closer to Naguleswara road and Naguleswaram temple. First, I had to pass her

father's carpentry workshop in front of her house. This carpentry workshop was previously their

house before the war, and they did not want to demolish it, so had modified the place for her

father's work.

Finally, we reached her house; it was a newly built one, but it was still incomplete, and they

needed a house to live in, so they started to live in that house without having a housewarming

ceremony. Although Vani was not born in Keerimalai, she now has a feeling and built-emotional

touch towards her residential hometown, or *ūr,* through a shared narrative passing down from

their parents and from friends and older people in the village. This chapter focuses on how this

cultural memory about her village landscape was seeded in her mind while resettling in her own

village after a very long time. This, of course, is thrust of my research.

In particular, Vani and her siblings were born in another village in Jaffna and they

sometimes remember that previous village as far better developed than Keerimalai in terms of

facilities. However, her mother Ganga argued that Keerimalai was under military control for

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[36] Advanced Level Education is a General Certificate of Education (G.C.E A/L) qualification and it is a collegiate level education where the students will have to spend 2 years (Grade 12 and Grade 13) to sit for the public examination at the end of the second year, which is conducted by the Department of Education of the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka. This system similar to the British Advanced Level.

[37] Saturn is one of most important planets in Hindu astrology as well as in one's horoscope. Also, Saturn is considered as most feared planet in Hindu astrology because people believe they will be in troubles/dangerous position (*tōcam*) if Saturn is in a wrong place of their horoscopes.

more than two decades and war destroyed their farmlands and residential areas. Other villages somehow continued to survive during the war, and then they have gradually developed again through global economy and communication. Keerimalai, however, was completely out of touch with such global communication connections since it was under the Sri Lanka Military Force control for 21 years. For this reason, Ganga further explained the prewar situation in Keerimalai: that her father was a technical officer at the Kankesan Cement Corporation, where most of the village people worked. They had a good life in the Keerimalai area, including the adjoining sub-villages of Naguleswaram, were popular for beetle and grape cultivation.

Though Ganga and Vani had different perceptions of their lived places, Vani has developed a certain emotional attachment to Keerimalai village because she has learned about its historical significance, which had a connection with the ancient Jaffna Kingdom. Thus, opposing perceptions were readjusted to co-exist and produce in her a form of village consciousness about her post-war village. Indeed, Vani's worldview about her *conta iṭam* (natal place) and her village identity were not enacted through substances, as some-----of *ūr* would have it, like soil or substance attachment to *ūr* (Daniel 1984). Rather Vani's consciousness about her village was cultivated through learning stories and shared narratives drawn from culturally-organized and place-based memories.

Vani's claim was that though she and her siblings were not born in Keerimalai, they perceive Keerimaial as their own village because her village membership seems like an "toppuḷ koṭi uṟavu" [umbilical cord relation][38]. This Tamil metaphorical expression describes the mother-child relationship as an inseparable connection because was made through an umbilical cord when the child was in the mother's womb. Thus, Vani claimed her ownership of her village was similar to a mother-child connection. Vani's story about her displacement and replacement needs further

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[38] By umbilical cord relations, Vani explains that mother-child relations begin through the umbilical cord when the infant formed. I have found the use of proverb in conversation of everyday life among the people in Inuvil. People often use this proverb when they need to show something is very strong connection in human relations.

135

intensive anthropological discussion with special reference to the term "Village-temple consciousness," which I coined in my ethnographic study of these two Tamil Hindu villages, Naguleswaram and Inuvil. Hence, this chapter will examine the role of "village and or village-temple consciousness" and conventional form of control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) over cultural practices among the Tamil Hindus of preset-day Jaffna.

This chapter demonstrates how people used their village-temple consciousness as *models of* or *for* such endeavors, and that an ethnography of the role of 'place-making' in community rebuilding in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. On the one hand, such *modes of or for* are problematic when it comes to the conventional form of social order or control that Tamils call *kaṭṭupāṭu* because *kaṭṭupāṭu* became powerless among the younger children after war and globalization. On the other hand, I found that people appreciate that global flows and the circulation of commodities that change and reshape their conventional forms of life. Thus, people have both pessimistic and optimistic views of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* and both need to be discussed along with "village" or "village-temple consciousness" to see how these changes also reshape the form of consciousness people hold about their villages.

More specifically, this chapter is phenomenologically focused on how individual Tamil experience, from various castes and genders, is interconnected with an orientation towards a home place (*ūr*), and how, in turn, this orientation is shaped by and is being shaped by their encounters with the Tamil diaspora and globalization (Cheran 2004; Tekwani 2003; Axford 2013). An existential analysis shows how *ūr* nostalgia engages with everyday life and the reconstructions process in post-war Jaffna villages must be seen through spatial, sensual, temporal, discursive, and moral dimensions. Following Martin Heidegger's Being and Time, this dissertation proposes *ūr kōvil* (village-temple) consciousness as a key component in Jaffna Tamils' being- with-all-kinds-of-global flows. However, my analysis does not end with Geertz's (1973) symbolic or interpretive approach; rather this chapter also adopts human agency, practice theory, a political economy approach and phenomenological anthropology to map out how

136

village-temple consciousness or village consciousness evoke a sense of place, which represents a certain emotional state of being attached to one's perception of his or her natal place; in other words one's *ūr* in Tamil.

In this chapter, I will be discussing how people deal with culturally-organized memory to express their "village" or "village-temple consciousness." However, I will not be discussing all of these three components in detail in this chapter; rather I will demonstrate how people re/construct their consciousness towards their *urimai* (rights/legitimate shares), religious practices, and village landscape, and how and why people change their older form of consciousness towards the above three components and replace new form of consciousness illuminated with restructuration and manipulation through the influence of global flows. I will also place the role of conventional form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control) in shifting, fixing, and negotiating village/village-temple consciousness in post-war Jaffna. The selected life histories and case studies will be discussed to support my overall argument in this chapter. First, I will reexamine the Tamil term *ūr* before discussing the culturally-organized memory in both villages because this study is about Tamil *ūrness* and the transformation of villages in the post-war circumstances. There is a problem in defining/theorizing the Tamil *ūr* through existing anthropological studies; hence one cannot understand the necessity of culturally-organized memory in post-war Tamils in Sri Lanka without a reexamination of post-war Tamil *ūr*.

4.2   Tamil *ūr*: Reexamined

Before going over the details of *ūr* or *ūrkōvil* (village/village-temple) consciousness in post-war Jaffna, first of all, I would explain the concept of *ūr* and how it is meant and conceptualized among the Tamils in post-war Jaffna, which is also part of my larger theoretical question. There are always power relations in the conceptualization of *ūr*; therefore, this study attempts to balance the power relations in terms of castes and genders, which paved the way to examine how *ūr* is defined or thought of locally. In particular, this dissertation argues that the

Tamil practice of imagining an *ūr* has also been altered or transformed in post-war Jaffna. Post-war Jaffna interactions with global flows have been intensified compared to during the war. As a result, global communication technologies and global capitalism frame the post-war *ūr*; however, multiple projections are constructed about Tamils' imagination of *ūr* through diverse the worldviews re/created by the post-war Tamils in Sri Lanka. First, I will briefly discuss two ethnographic examples of people re/making their worldviews about their *ūr* in post-war Jaffna, and then move on to reexamine anthropological work on Tamil *ūr,* and so illustrate my theoretical argument about the altering or transforming of Tamil *ūr* in South Asia.

When I asked Velan (an 88-year-old man), one of my low-caste informants, "What is your *ūr*?" He told me "*yātum ūrē yāvarum kēḷīr….*"[39] [To us all towns are our own, everyone our kin]. Velan was a returnee to Keerimalai after 25 years of living in many villages due to the war and displacement and he met many new friends and people throughout his displacement journey. He worked at the cement corporation and moved from Keerimalai to Ampanai in 1970 as he had a personal problem with his neighbor in Keeriamali before the war. Ampanai was a new village for him, but he easily built his network with the community, which allowed him to build a new house there and had eight children. In 1990, he was displaced from Ampanai to several different villages within the Jaffna Peninsula until 1995.

Then, he moved to Vanni in 1995 and returned to Jaffna during the war in 1998 and lived in different villages in Jaffna until he returned back to his own village Keerimalai in 2013. He told me that though he lost his job and house, he was able to get jobs in host villages and survived. Also, he encouraged his wife and children to seek works during the displacement. He easily earned many friends through his friendly interaction and all his children got married and moved to different places. He returned back to his own village (*conta ūr*) Keerimalai because his house,

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[39] Kaniyan Poongundranar, Puranānūru – 192 Sangam literature. *Yāthum ūre yāvarum kēleer* is the first line of a poem of Puranānūru, and there is a Tamil cinema song also begins with this first line. However, Poothan did not learn this phrase from Puranānūru, but he knew that Tamil cinema song.

which he built in Ampanai, was transferred as dowry to his daughter. He believed that he has successfully gone through the horrifying war and displacement journey.

Thus, he was making a worldview of his *ūr* as a global landscape; for him, it is not just a metaphorical or linguistic expression, but a way of living of physical and social experiences by metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 2006). On the other hand, global media cyberspaces and computer technologies (Jones et.al 2015; Underberg and Zorn 2013; Pink et.al 2004; Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002; Bell 2001) are engaged in a project of modeling villages and digitalizing villages (Kantner 2008).

The post-war circumstances of the Jaffna community, and its increasingly globalized interactions, are producing newly built forms of consciousness of locality (*ūr*) to absorb these new global flows (Appadurai 1996) within local circumstances. For instance, members of the Inuvil diaspora are curious to see their village members and to know what is happening in their village through videos and photos upload[ed] to the temple websites and Facebook pages. For this, the diaspora members requested that the operator of the Inuvil Sri Pararajasekera Pillaiyar temple website and Facebook upload not only the videos and photos of temple festivals and deities' processions, but also photos and videos of people who were around and gathered in the temple premises. Likewise, not only this Pillaiyar temple, but also other temples in Inuvil have developed their own temple websites and Facebook accounts to update the ritualscape of the sacred landscape. I would argue that not only can these powerful new technologies visualize the complex multidimensional landscape of a village, but these can also, perhaps, be a new form of cyber placing.

Remarkably, early ethnographers and colonial administrators thought that the English word village and the Tamil word *ūr* had the same meaning. But they do not. Again, English terms such as hamlet and village can only be awkwardly equated with the Tamil word *ūr* or 'home place,' given the distinct cultural and emotional meanings that word carries for Tamil people in South Asia (Mines 2005; Daniel 1984). Notably, in literary Tamil, people use *kirāmam* as the term for

village. But Daniel (1984) contrasted *ūr* with *kirāmam,* and arguing that *kirāmam* denotes fixed a boundary of a place which is "bounded, standard, universally accepted and [in] constant spatial units" (Daniel 1984:102); but *ūr* expresses oneself; it is person-centric, contextual and fluid (Daniel 1984).

During my fieldwork in both villages, however, I found that both words were used interchangeably in everyday life, even though Daniel (1984) argued that *kirāmam* and *ūr* have different cultural meanings. For instance, people use both words for literary writings (Logeswaran 2015; Sivalingam 2004) but *ūr* is more often used in their daily conversation. When it comes to *kirāma ellai* and *ūr ellai* (village boundaries)[40], Daniel (1984) discovered different expressions; but last December 2018, people in Inuvil had an *ellai piracciṉai* (boundary problem) in which people mostly used the term *kirāma ellai* in legal documents while they used *ūr ellai* in casual conversations related to the boundary problem. Thus, people did not differentiate these two terms whenever they wanted to use them, but Daniel placed them in two different entities that: *kirāma ellai* referred to a administrative village boundary and *ūr ellai* was a person-centric boundary that people construct based on their own notions of village boundary.

However, a village boundary is a very complex matter because while the boundary line is made for village administration purposes to physically separate one village from another. People invest a certain consciousness into a place through habitus and are not bothered by this administrative boundary line. For example, the Inuvil village landscape is covered nearby four different villages. Some inhabitants of these settlements at the borders of Inuvil village administratively belong to those four other villages. But I found interestingly that those people nonetheless claim Inuvil village identity instead of their official village affiliations, and even

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[40] Village boundary is a line which legally separate the land belong to one village from the land belonging to neighboring villages, see also, Daniel (1984).

140

though they use their official village name for legal and administrative purposes, their *ūr* consciousness is towards Inuvil.

However, Daniel distinguished these *ūr* identifications by *kirāma ellai* and *ūr ellai* terminological classifications, but in Inuvil, people used both terms interchangeably to address *ūr* identification though they practiced differently. This is because their everyday lives and cultural practices are tied to the Inuvil landscape. More important, after the war, Jaffna Tamils have become more conscious about redefining and rewriting their villages. Even though the boundary line was often shifted and adjusted in Inuvil without too much fanfare in the past, but the current Inuvil boundary problem was more politicized and widely distributed through social media and public campaigns by young people. This could simply be because of the loss of Eelam (*īḻam*) homeland landscape, and a consciousness shift towards their villages. However, I found that people have not actually lost the Eelam ideology, because the Eelam ideology is still active in the Tamil diaspora, which shapes the post-war Tamil villages. I will discuss the relationships between village consciousness and Tamil state consciousness in detail in the seventh chapter.

Therefore, an *ūr* can be of any size since the central issue addressed by the term is one's place of origin rather than a community's size. As Mines stated, a village is always open to the world rather than "bounded, closed, and inward-looking" (2005:209). Similarly, post-war Jaffna *ūrkal* (villages) are not little or isolated communities; rather, their landscapes and interactions have expanded to include the Tamil diaspora and the global flows they are now in contact with (Whitaker 2005; Cheren 2002, 2000). Due to the war and migration, the Jaffna Tamil community became a dispersed community as well as moving community (Cheren 2002). In this circumstance, people who live in the Tamil diaspora identify their *ūr* with where they were born in Jaffna; thus, they maintain and interact with their *ūr* at distance (Whitaker 2015).

Consider six brief examples: (1) In Inuvil, people sometimes use the term *velinātukārar* (white foreigners) to talk about people who have family members in the diaspora in conversation. This is a common practice among all castes in Inuvil, (2) Brahmin priests from Inuvil are

frequently invited to do the ritual service for the annual festival (*mahōtsavam*) at the Shri Kanaga

Thurkkai Ammon (Goddess) temple in Ealing, London. (3) Temples musicians (Icai Veḷḷaḷar or

Nattuvar caste) from Inuvil are invited to perform at many Hindu temples in European countries

and Australia. (4) The Inuvil Onriyam – London branch (*ūr* Association) and Inuvil Public

Library (London branch) organize meetings in London to discuss village development matters;

but these two organizations are dominated by the dominant caste, Veḷḷaḷar, and invite their

teachers, priests, and musicians from the home village (Inuvil) to London and other diasporic

places. (5) People in Inuvil maintain an intense interaction on a daily basis with their family

members who are in diasporic countries through Skype, WhatsApp, Viber, and Facebook

messenger. (6) Even the Inuvil Kanthan (the Lord Murukan) has a Facebook account, which is

owned and operated by a local person from Inuvil. Thus, post-war Inuvil is not limited and small

isolated unit like in early days (during the war but is globally framed now.

     Many anthropologists follow Daniel's theorization of the Tamil *ūr* when studying Tamil

villages in both Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, but I found some issues with his theorization of Tamil

ūr. In particular, Daniel (1984) and Mines (2005) define *ūr* semantically in terms of local,

constitutive, substances. Daniel (1984) was the first anthropologist to have brought up this issue,

and I admire his substance and semiotic-based analysis of the Tamil *ūr*. But his 'coded substance'

and semiotic analysis of the Tamil *ūr* narrowly defines the *ūr* through the high caste

conversations and representations.

    All village matters exclude the low-caste people, but as an anthropologist, I was trying to

capture their views and grievances, which are never taken into an account of continuity of Inuvil

village in post-war Jaffna. Daniel corelates a close relationship between the *kuṇam* (quality) of

villagers and the *kuṇam* of the local soil. Some Kalapurians (the villagers whom Daniel studied)

even claim the soil itself has a characteristic, *putti,* which refers to intelligence. Thus, Daniel has

theorized *ūr* and Indian culture through icons and indexes rather than through symbols or

metaphors. But I would argue that metaphors and symbols are powerful in constructing the

human conditions in Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages. The following sections, then, are devoted to Daniel's semiotic analysis of Tamil *ūr*. For why did he use Peircean' semiotic analysis to explicate Tamil *ūr* rather than Geertz's (1973) interpretive method?

 For his analysis of *ūr*, Daniel (1984) confined his focus to certain "properties of substances" by looking at certain phenomena in the cultural world of the Tamil villager. He further explained that a phenomenon is "part of daily, ordinary, and routine life" (1984:3). I disagree with this claim because while it may be true for Kalapurians (the Tamil community he studied), but we do not have to see this is the case in other Tamil villages elsewhere in South Asia. In order to sustain his argument, Daniel used Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory, which he believes is a more "coherent and comprehensive classification of signs" to discuss Tamil *ūr* (1984:14), and he rejected the works of David Schneider (1968 and 1976), Clifford Geertz (1973), and Victor Turner (1967, 1978), including de Saussure's semiology, because he thought them inadequate and inconsistent (Daniel 1984: 14).

 Further, Peirce mentioned that "a sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect on capacity" (Daniel 1984:14). For instance, Daniel argued that the soil represents a quality (*kuṇam*) of a person in the Tamil village of Tamil Nadu. So here, soil addresses somebody in respect to capacity. In this way, Daniel explicated the semiotic constitution of the reality of the sign through a triadic structure: "*sign, object, and interpretant*" (1984:15). To differentiate his triadic structure from de Saussure's dyadic nature of sign, Daniel pointed out that de Saussure examined the sign through a 'dyadic relationship between a signifier (a concept) and a signified (a sound image)" (Ibid). By following Peirce, Daniel formulated a definition of the sign that "A *Sign, Representamen,* is a First which stands in such a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its *Object*, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its *Interpretant* , to assume the same triadic relation to its Object in which it stands itself to the same Object" (Daniel 1984: 16). This is what Peirce and Daniel meant by semiotic realism. It is why substances, for Daniel, are indexical.

143

Hence, Daniel's semiotic cultural account of *ūr* does not only include symbols, but also indexes and icons as well. This also falls into a kind interpretive anthropology, although his interpretation is a complex system of iconic, indexical, and symbolic analysis. I admire his substance and semiotic-based analysis of the Tamil *ūr*. Also, I acknowledge the worth of his own style of ethnography about a Tamil *ūr*. But his theorization might not extend to other Tamil villages in South Asia, or even post-war villages elsewhere. I cannot suggest to the Jaffnese should adopt Peirce's theory to experience their own notion of *ūr*, which they have previously experienced through their own embodiments. I do not neglect the role of sign and symbols in constructing the meaning of *ūr* and culture, but I developed my theoretical claim through combination of Bourdieuan (1990), Geertzian (1973) analysis, and a phenomenological sense of practicing and being in the world.

In addition, this dissertation focuses on post-war Jaffna villages as seen through intersections of caste, ethnicity, gender, Tamil diaspora, transnationalism, and global capitalism, all things Daniel's analysis neglects. Another approach to studying villages of complex systems of signs is that of the Chicago school of sociology's ethnosociological model. But I do not believe it is useful as Daniel's work on Tamil *ūr* and will comment on it no further. Many South Asian anthropologists have argued, like Daniel, that Tamil people believe their personhood is formed from the physical substances, the soil, the *maṇ kunam,* of their communities. Daniel's Peircean theory of village-based personhood, of course, developed in reaction to McKim Marriot's ethnosociological theories about caste. However, this substances-based understanding of South Asian human being is derived from the Hindu texts, particularly the *Manu-Smriti* or *Manu Dharma Sastra*. While inspired somewhat by Daniel's analysis, this chapter will point out that it is not always appropriate to the situation in Jaffna, particularly after the war, and for the generation that has grown up since it ended in 2009.

For me, however, Daniel's Peircean semiotic analysis of culture is both complicated and limited because he theorized *ūr* in terms of indexical, dialogical, and semiotic frameworks. On

144

the one hand, he argued against conceiving culture as a fixed system of symbol because life

decisions are not fixed or ordered as in a text. On the other hand, he advanced the study of culture

through a dialogical analysis, while following Schneider's (1968) idea of the natives' point of

view more than Geertz's system of symbols and meanings. Geertz (1973) did not consider

indexical and iconic signs in his analyses in addition to symbols, but Schneider's analysis

included both indexical and iconic signs in addition to symbols. However, my own theorization of

Geertz's *models of* or *for* synthesizes it with Schneider's (1968) notion of the point of view by

considering native categories instead as a system of symbols of meaning (Geertz 1973), wherein

native categories of "village" or "village-temple consciousness" are defined, constructed, and

manipulated through human knowledge and power (Foucault 1979). Here, I mean knowledge and

power as not only discussed by Giddens' (1968) as individual agency within the notions of

cultural habitus and structuration, but also by Robb's (2010) notions of multiple agencies,

collective agencies, and material agencies.

As I mentioned earlier, Daniel (1984) was too involved in the triadic relation of "sign,

object, and interpretant" (1984:15), which makes it more complicated to theorize Tamil *ūr*. This

is because he overtheorized the whole community, which did not allow him to address how an

individual to experiences what he or she means for his or her *ūr* in existential and

phenomenological terms. I, therefore, focus on how individual Tamil experience is interconnected

with the way people are oriented towards their home landscape (*ūr*), and in turn, how this

orientation is being shaped by and is shaping their encounters with the Tamil diaspora and

globalization. Finally, fixed systems of signs, icons, symbols, and even substances are highly

problematic for the purposes of explaining social change because they are not permanent fixed

categories and individuals experience them differently.

Although people were internally displaced and internationally dispersed due to the civil

war and globalization, members of an *ūr* usually continue to claim their mutual and emotional

attachments to their *conta ur* (own village) even after they have long left. Here the Tamil term

'*conta*' indicates not only a 'possessive' meaning but also 'relations' that explain how an individual has an image of their *ūr*. For instance, in Naguleswaram people often use the terms of *conta kāṇi* (own land), *conta vīṭu* (own house), and *conta iṭam* (own place) to experience their self as a part of their *ūr*. Here they have past and present to claim relations towards lands, houses, and places. Thus, people remember the past to relate to their present life through culturally-constructed memories.

Furthermore, when I visited Jaffna Tamil homes in Colombo, London, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, India, Malaysia, the United States, and Singapore I found that even though people who reside in those places were either out of their *ūr* or in the diaspora, they still held this notion of their own *ūr* as being in Jaffna. This implies that such people have had to construct an 'imagined village' somewhat similar to the way Anderson's national level citizens have to construct 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983). Due to all of these multiple changes and interactions of different effects of the Tamil diaspora, and transnationalism (Whitaker 2005; Cheren 2000), however, I argue that the Tamil practice of imagining an *ūr* has also been altered or transformed.

A Tamil is generally keen to *iṭam* (or place) (Kingsolver 2011, 1992; Muehlebach 2001; Feld and Basso 1996) another Tamil by asking whenever they meet, "what is your *ūr*?" (Daniel 1984). But this is not always true because doing so this depends upon a context; for instance, Jaffna Tamils always are keen to ask *evvaṭam nīṅkaḷ*? (where are you from) when they meet people. For them, the *ūr* landscape is a larger entity, which is sometimes created for their identity construction. For example, old Tamil scholars, artists, musicians, and writers were addressed by adjoining their names with their village names – Navaliyur Somasunthara pulavar (poet) Inuvil Veeramani Iyer (dancer, song writer, musician, and music composer), Inuvaiyur Thiruchenthinathan, and Inuvaiyur K.S. Ananthan (writers). Post-war Jaffna still continues this practice. And the question "*evvaṭam*" or "*enta iṭam*" (which place) is not only about the more specific entity of their ownership of a particular dwelling, but also denotes their larger

imagination of *ūr*. Another promising example is that in Jaffna, bus conductors never ask passengers "in which *ūr* you are going to get down" but instead *evvaṭam* (what place): this however is not caste-based practice, for all Jaffna Tamils have this localized consciousness. Hence, people rarely say *ūr,* but they often say in what place they live. Because place is a more accurate destination of one's own dwelling; thus, a form of consciousness (*iṭam* consciousness) is invested in a place where Tamils dwell.

Furthermore, Daniel claims that knowing the *ūr* of someone can reveal the person's *kuṇam,* character (Sharika Thiranagama 2011: 18 [Daniel 1984:102]); and so *ūr* can offer some kind of presupposed meaning of character and possible interaction. In contrast, I would argue that Jaffna Tamils are keen to know one's caste instead of one's *kuṇam* by asking "where are you from?" or "what is your *ūr*?" In particular, as Banks (1960) mentioned, Jaffna inhabitants use a few proverbs to express the characteristics of the particular villages. I too observed that people sometimes talk about *kuṇam*, but a *kuṇam* related explanation is a high-caste Veḷḷaḷar ideology. High-caste power and domination impose a *kuṇam* structure over other people. But this is not a standard category for all to imagine a Tamil *ūr* because non- Veḷḷaḷar people oppose this *kuṇam* based *ūr* imagination.

Ultimately, I relate to the *ūr* landscape by comparing how people imagine it in daily discourse, including the 'sacred landscapes' associated with temples (Whitaker 2015), versus how they have to traverse it in their daily, postwar lives, including the new, expanded 'landscape' of cyberspace and the diaspora that now intersects with the Jaffna Peninsula at every moment. Hence, Tamil *ūr* work as a set of practices (Bourdieu 1990), and, phenomenologically (Ram & Houston 2015; Desjarlais & Tharoop 2011), as a way of experiencing and dealing with the world that produces a Tamil person's experience of being in the world.

By using phenomenological and existential anthropology, I see post-war Tamil villages like Inuvil and Naguleswaram can be recognized as having a heterogenous reality made and remade through villagers' multiple activities (Mines 2005). For instance, I have found that present-day

Jaffna villages appear as "visiting *ūr*" when dispersed Jaffna Tamil community members visit Jaffna for village temple festivals, funerals, weddings, puberty ceremonies, housewarming ceremonies, and visiting families. Even members from the Tamil diaspora visit *ūr* to celebrate their daughters' weddings and puberty ceremonies and sons' weddings. For instance, Kumar's family from Inuvil migrated to London in 1990. He visits Inuvil for the temple festival every year and had his two daughters' puberty ceremonies in Inuvil in 2013 and 2016. Kumar told me he feels that if he had this ceremony in London, then he would have missed his relatives, friends, and village people. He wanted to see his *iṉa* (his own caste people) and *caṉaṅkaḷ* (people – which denotes his relatives) and uplift his *kouvravam* (prestige) by having his daughters' puberty ceremonies in his *conta ūr*. This was not a simple journey, visiting his *ūr*, but he had to face making multiple arrangements for getting a visa, tickets, gifts, clothes, and permission from his workplace in London to visit his village in Sri Lanka.

As Mines (2005) stated, the relation between self and world is a productive, dialectical process where actors engage in what is given in their lives (the social, historical, and environmental conditions in which they are placed, the contingencies they are thrown into) as well as "what is imagined to lie ahead" (Mines 2005:19 [Jackson 1996])." In doing so, villagers orient not only themselves but also face new conditions (diaspora, transnationalism, war, displacement, migration, and so on) for existing, which finally put people in a form of being and a form of becoming within a given context and time.

Although Mines (2005) and Sharika Thiranagama (2011) primarily followed Daniel's semiotic analysis of *ūr*, each emphasized different domains. Mines (2005) focused on phenomenological and existential factors while Thiranagama looked at *ūr* as a home/natal village. For Thiranagama, one's mother/natal village reflects more about one's personhood, which people natured through the soil in which they live; however "personhood" or "self "or "person" may be an intriguing but thought-provoking and "fluid analytical term," (Shir-Vertesh 2017) because they are not identical universal categories to discern what personhood is to be considered for study or

how we can differentiate selfhood from personhood (Rasmussen 2008). I, of course, do not deny the importance of using of personhood or self to construe Tamils' mother/natal village, but an intra-cultural and cross-cultural comparison is needed as both are varied in terms of caste, ethnicity, class, and gender differences. Inuvil and Naguleswaram are multi-caste communities where I found multiple *ūr* projections, in which people's sentient being is embodied through culturally-constructed emotions.

By saying *conta ūr* (my own village), people orient not only a form of possession, but they also have lived and shared experiences. In Naguleswaram and Keerimalai, young people perceive their *ūr* from memory, which their parents, peers, and villagers shared with them because they were not born in those places. For example, their parents and grandparents share many stories about the Keerimalai freshwater spring[41], Kavunavathai animal sacrifice[42], the Mahā Shivaratri (*Civarātri*) festival[43] and Āti Amāvācai[44] in Naguleswaram with their young children to invest in them a form of consciousness about "their *ūr*" since the younger generations are new to their post-war villages. However, personhood or self or person are not concrete, static attributes, but dynamically negotiated through such dialogical constructions.

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[41] Keerimalai freshwater spring is referred to as a 'spiritual heritage' associated with the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple. It is locally known as the Keerimalai *kēṉi* (pond) where sea water (saltwater) and natural fresh water are mixed. There are many religious stories about this sacred pond that if people bathed in it, their deceases or illnesses would be cured.

[42] Kavunavathai animal sacrifice is an annual festival, which is celebrated at the Kavunavathai Vairavar temple in the village of Karukampanai. In this ritual, many goats and chicken are sacrificed.

[43] Mahā Shivaratri is one of the Hindu religious festivals fasting celebrated in the name of Lord Shiva. Mahā Shivaratri means a 'Great Night Dedicated to Lord Shiva'. This religious fasting is held in the Tamil month of Māci, which is between February 14th and March 15th according to the English calendar. Thousands of devotees visit the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple to observe this fast.

[44] Āti Amāvācai denotes the day of the new moon in the Tamil month of Āṭi, which falls between July and August according to the English calendar. This day too has a religious significance, which is treated as a special observance by Tamil Hindus who have lost their fathers. On this day, Tamil Hindus fast in the morning and break it in the noon by offering cooked food to their dead fathers. They adopt vegetarianism on this day and many Tamil Hindus visit Keerimalai to observe this fast as it is considered as an important place.

Ūr further should be understood in the contexts of massive displacement and specific historical and political trajectories (Sharika Thiranagama 2011), in addition to substance, personhood, and interactional modes of understanding the *ūr* (Daniel 1984). I agree with the multiplicity of narratives needed to mean one's *ūr;* ultimately, *ūr* is more about the "everyday language of love, affection, sentiment, and memory" (Sharika Thiranagama 2011:19), which is an interesting interpretation of *ūr* in phenomenological and existential terms. I am impressed by Mines' (2005) phenomenological and existential analysis, which shows how Tamils deal with their practice and habit (*paḻakkam)* through a human capacity to create themselves and their world through action. Though human capacity alters the human condition through possible chances, I argue her claim that such human capacity is culturally constructed, which shapes human action in a certain way, and at the same time, limits its construction in a particular way.

By limits, I mean the Tamils cultural practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, which shapes consciousness. It relates to how the body and self are expressed through cultural practices in a place. A Jaffna Tamil Hindu person's everyday life is constructed on cultural taboos and social norms, which I term as social control or *kaṭṭupāṭu.* These cultural taboos and social norms structurally vary in terms of castes, genders, and regions. High-caste Veḷḷāḷar used to control the low-caste's everyday life in the past and the low-caste people were obliged to obey certain social norms sanctioned by the high-caste, which is also a form of social control.

However, I will be focusing on the cultural taboos and social norms, which are common to all people that must be obeyed and practiced. For instance, I observed that in one of my village groceries stores, the owner refused to sell eggs to a boy who walked into the shop at about 7:30pm. The owner explained that he refused to do so as certain commodities such as egg, gingelly oil (sesame oil), and salt are forbidden to be sold at night as they are considered as *uyiruḷḷavai* (living beings) to which the young boy ridiculed the shopkeeper for still believing in *mūṭanampikkai* (superstition) in the 21st century. The latter argued that just like the boy justified his need of buying eggs, he too refuses to sell eggs after a particular time based on his business

being affected by acting against a cultural taboo. The owner further retaliated by stating that one cannot even borrow them from a neighbor at night. Furthermore, people believe that Goddess Lakshmi will leave their house if they give money and the above commodities to people after 6:00pm. Here, Goddess Lakshmi represents wealth and prosperity of the house. In Jaffna, cultural practices are commonly structured in two realms; 'must do' and 'must not do'. People must do certain things and must not do certain things in their daily lives and both these forms come under the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu*. However, global communication connections, the interactions of the diaspora and transnational networks, and attitudinal changes influences the practice of social control in Jaffna villages. This is greatly reflected in generational differences like the grocery's owner and the customer boy. Understanding the place, one cannot neglect the cultural practices and social control because these attributes shape one's consciousness and expressions.

Thus, "place is not a dead or limited container" and "our bodies are being in places is an inseparable part of our outreaching selves, our expressions, our perceptions, and our makings," (Mines 2005:209) but place sometimes appears as a dead and inaccessible container; for instance, once people were uprooted from Naguleswaram and now they are rebuilding their places or *ūr* through spaces (memory). Understanding Tamil *ūr* should not only be sought in terms of the anthropology of place and body, but of space and memory also. Time-space compression (Harvey 1990), as Ann Kingsolver (2011) discusses in her book, *Tobacco Town Futures*, plays a crucial role in place-making process, which I discovered in post-war Tamil villages where Tamil civilians have rebuilt their *ūr* from the new form of temporality (post-war time) and from their experienced embodiments (memory). Unlike the past (during the war), post-war Jaffna peninsula is experiencing "flexible modes of capital accumulation" and new patterns of consumption. Post-war economy and opportunities have intensified forms of "commercial, technological, and organizational innovations" in Jaffna, which have influenced people to "respond to new set of experiences of space and time" (Harvey 1990).

In addition, people have also rebuilt their villages based on embodied experiences. These embodied experiences are driven from the memory. For instance, Naguleswaram and Keerimalai villages are no longer in the same shape they had been before the war but are now distorted and appear as different landscapes. In this circumstance, people have used their memory to reconstruct their *ūr* and dwellings accordingly; such a process explicates relations from a memory-place, but not from place-memory. Hence, in memory, place is not the only imperative, but also space, temporal awareness, and relational aspects. To make this analysis, I have adopted a multi-disciplinary approach including phenomenological, philosophical, existential, ontological and human agency approaches to reexamine post-war Tamil villages in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Now, I turn to explaining what culturally-organized memory is and how people re/construct, organize, and maintain them to deal and heal from the consequences of war and globalization in post-war Jaffna.

4.3   "Village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness in Inuvil and Naguleswaram

 People are invested in certain types of localized consciousness about their villages and their lives in Inuvil and Naguleswaram before and during the war. The end of the war was a new opportunity to rebuild their villages and also create tremendous changes through globalization and localization processes (Appadurai 1996); hence, global flows, translocal spaces and interactions reshaped Tamils' localities and lives. Thus, a village is the place of "memory and memory as an experience preserved in time" (Trigg 2012:46). Such a culturally-organized memory revels nostalgic attachments to their lived and living environments. However, it was tricky to make a comparison between these two Tamil Hindu villages while both share similar kinds of practices related to the "village" or "village-temple consciousness," this study also found differences between them. In philosophical terms, a "village" or "village temple-consciousness" can be "thought of as an empirical idea" and a "constructive product of human experience" (Trigg

2012:3), in which empirical reality has a scientific view of the place, but it is separate from the human experience of *ūr*, and "constructive product of human experience" is also separate from human experience of place as this approach is limited to particular sociopolitical circumstances. For instance, both Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages have their own village administrative boundaries and both villages have constructed high-caste/class-based village identities.

However, the experiencing of an *ūr* in the post-war context cannot be investigated only in terms of the above set of objective properties, because "village" or "village-temple consciousness" is not only limited to high-caste/class individuals, but also includes post-war Tamils who are attached to their *ūr*, and whose attachments are not reducible to a particular locality, but are spatially connected and experienced by the Tamil transnational and diaspora ties in their daily lives. Hence, neither "realist" nor "constructivist" approaches, nor simply sociopolitical approaches (Trigg 2012) to ways of understanding "village" or "village-temple consciousness," would capture the existential dimension/phenomenology of village/village-temple consciousness.

Nevertheless, "village" or "village-temple consciousness" does not neglect the sociopolitical dimension of place, but I paid more attention to the interpretive aspect of village" or "village-temple consciousness, which is more apt for an uprooted village like Naguleswaram; since it is reconstructed through a set of culturally-organized memories. This claim does not deny that this memory-based, place-knowing, and place-remembering analysis is also necessary for Inuvil, because both villages have experienced war, violence, displacements, political instability, and militarization.

Unlike Inuvil, however, people in Naguleswaram have had a different experience with reconstructing their "village" or village-temple consciousness" because there people worry about the loss of the former lives they had in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai villages prior to the war. Returning to their *ūr* after a long period of absence, they had their memories to use to reconstruct their communities; they have sentimental values for their places, for temples, schools, pilgrim

153

guest houses, houses, community centers, animal sacrifice, festivals, toddies, beetles, freshwater springs – I can make a long list, but these were repeatedly mentioned to me by my informants in Naguleswaram.

On the other hand, *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control/power) also shapes and reconstructs *ūr* consciousness in post-war villages. For instance, people in Inuvil worry more about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* compared to Naguelswara; however, this claim does not mean that people in Naguleswaram are not concerned about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, but rather that people in Naguleswaram worry more about the loss of their former lives. Both issues are somewhat related to their *urimai piracciṉai* (rights problems). However, I would argue that *kaṭṭupāṭu* has changed rather than saying loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*. Understanding the changes of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, the Jaffna Tamil concerns of *māṉam* (honor/reputation), *mariyātai* (respect), *perumai* (greatness), *kovravam* (prestige), *tayakkam* (hesitation to act), *veṭkam* (shame), and *māṉakkēṭu* (dishonor) require paying special attention to this discussion as these are all terms that highlight characteristic feelings, practices, and beliefs important to people in Jaffna Tamil villages. Also, these terms express the emotions and sense of self that are centrally important to a person being conscious of their own village-localized, Tamil identity, prior to the war; but these terms are now re-meant and some of them are being reconceptualized to deal with post-war consequences and globalization.

To map this out, this chapter analyzes "village" or "village-temple consciousness" at three distinct levels. The first is about practices related to temple allegiance, status, *kōvil piracciṉai* (temple disputes), *urimai piracciṉai* (hereditary rights/legitimate share problems) including notions of caste hierarchy, and *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social control/power). The second is about *bhakti* (devotional) religious practices, including temple festivals and domestic rituals. The third is about village (*ūr*) consciousness as this relates to the landscape as imagined and lived in, including how this landscape has had to be re-imagined in the wake of the war and the post-war intrusion of cyberspace. This chapter will briefly discuss these three components of "village-temple

consciousness" as these three components are extensively discussed throughout the chapters of this dissertation.

The cultural practices of *bhakti* religiosity and *ūrkkōvil* (village temple) consciousness have been visibly altered by Sri Lanka's recently completed war and current post-war circumstances while practices of conflict related to temple ownership (*urimai*) (Whitaker 1999) have been altered very much. My findings show that temple dispute court cases, regarding *urimai,* have increased after the war, which I will discuss with more detail in chapter eight. The *bhakti* religious practices have also been changed. To elaborate on it further, I incorporate another concept, *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control), to explain this existing control over the temple ownership, caste orientations and identity, temple management, *kavuravam* (prestige), *mariyātai* (respect) and heroism show how temple conflict has changed. The social control has weakened or become flexible in the cases of larger domestic rituals because people manipulate the traditional values and customs in religious and ritual practices. Jaffna domestic and religious rituals are now on digital media for global viewing. For example, people upload videos of temple festivals on YouTube and social media (Facebook) and people also request that the videographer to produce small video clips of their puberty and wedding ceremonies to upload on social media to project their self-images.

The post-war circumstances of the Jaffna community and its globalized interactions was produced newly built forms of consciousness of their locality (*ūr*), life, existence, and identity that altered conventional notions of control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) operation in patriarchal ideology, astrology, and local values and beliefs? Thus, I argue that the new localization of Jaffna village community becomes a cyberspace community through the influences of Tamil diaspora, globalization, and Tamil transnationalism. First, I will briefly describe *kaṭṭupāṭu* because this is part of my larger anthropological investigation to understand village or village-temple consciousness.

4.4   *Kaṭṭupāṭu* (Control/Power)

The Tamil local term *kaṭṭupāṭu* means control, but does not refer to the sociological sense, which is associated with deviance and crime. This term is more about culturally constructed power and strictly adheres to ritual practices and daily lives. As previously discussed, Jaffna Tamil Hindu person's everyday religious and social lives are structured on cultural taboos and social norms, which I have termed as social control or *kaṭṭupāṭu*. I wondered many things about *kaṭṭupāṭu*: how people define *kaṭṭupāṭu* at the village level; how do they get this idea? How do they practice it?; if there any changes on this, and if so, what changes have taken place, why it has changed, who changed it, who continues it, control is practiced by the high-caste people alone or all castes, why there are different control practices in terms of genders, why *kaṭṭupāṭu* is necessary and how do people alter and manipulate it in post-war Jaffna.

My questions provoked by my surprise at seeing the sudden shift in practices of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in post-war Jaffna. Also, I was struck by the manipulated practices of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, which people are currently doing. My surprise was not about the changes happening in contemporary Jaffna, but my expectation was to investigate how *kaṭṭupāṭu* on the ritual order and social norms were strictly practiced during my life in Jaffna, which have been changed now. Though they once strictly practiced, now it is not always true because *kaṭṭupāṭu* has changed over time. Although *kaṭṭupāṭu* has changed time to time, Jaffna society was portrayed as *kaṭṭukōppuṭaiya camūkam* (culturally bounded society) by Veḷḷaḷar caste people. Such a culture-bound society was continued to maintain Veḷḷaḷar *status quo* and their domination over religion, culture, and society.

However, the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is not limited to Veḷḷaḷar caste people and I found that all castes of people presently worry about loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in post-war Jaffna. Anthropological investigation into *kaṭṭupāṭu is* required for understanding "village" or "village-temple consciousness" as changing cultural practices alter their consciousness about their *ūr*. At the same time, reorganizing the concept of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is currently happening in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram to reconstruct *ur* identity while younger generations accept and oppose them.

156

Hence, it was difficult to map out exactly what is going in both villages, but I concentrated on those three distinct components of village consciousness that link with *kaṭṭupāṭu.* Breaking the traditions and customs for liberative lifestyles in post-war Jaffna is where I wanted to investigate more on '*tuṇiccal*' (courage), which people have cultivated to alter their older practices and innovate new practices.

The conventional notion of control is a kind of power/authority, which can be of many types including patriarchal ideology, astrology, local values and beliefs. In addition, there are other types of controls such as state control, LTTE control, and high-caste control (Brahmins, Veḷḷaḷar, and Kōviyar castes in my case) which are also part of this discussion. Further, the notion of pre-war *kaṭṭupāṭu* means a *model of* or *model for* (Geertz 1973) but *kaṭṭupāṭu* is not viewed as the same *model* in the villages of Jaffna. Many old people mentioned that "now no control" (*ippō kaṭṭupāṭu illai*), but younger people argued that a different form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is now being practiced. This generational gap highlights the conflicting and debating consciousness of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* However, I perceived *kaṭṭupāṭu* as a cultural practice, rather than psychological entity, so *kaṭṭupāṭu* is a learned thing and people discuss about this in the village.

Furthermore, I more often came across many older people saying the "control is in my hand" (*control enra kayiltān*), which is a reflection of self or expression of one's *kouvravam. Kaṭṭupāṭu* is an ongoing issue among all castes and genders. Although high culture or great tradition has defined the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, there is a diversity of learning is found among people. *Kaṭṭupāṭu illai* (no control) explains that something is slightly going in a different way from the actual learning of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* So, Bourdieu's (1990) sense of culture of the field can be seen as a field of social control, which maintains the control at one level, but on another level, I could see people operating *kaṭṭupāṭu* in different ways. In both villages, I found "village-consciousness" and *kaṭṭupāṭu* as cultural practices; in this practice circle, people are always concerned of *kouvravam*. So, *kaṭṭupāṭu* and *kouvravam* constitute lots of pressure, which limits

people by distancing themselves. The following sections will discuss how these three components are addressed in Inuvil and Naguleswaram through ethnographic evidence.

4.5   *Bhakti* religiosity, *kaṭṭupāṭu* and envisaging of *ūr* in Inuvil

4.5.1   Veḷḷāḷar' perception on self-discipline and weakening of spirituality

On Saturday 20th October 2018, I met Selvam (60 years old) at his tuition center. This tuition center is a private institute where school students go after school for studies. I was a student there between 1987 and 1992, and then served as a teacher between 1995 and 2003. Selvam has been running this educational institution and teaching math there for the last 40 years. He was born in Inuvil south west, married Kalaimathy, who is from Inuvil west and has twin sons. He now has more than 400 students in this institution and 70% of those students are from Inuvil. He has expanded the place from its earlier size and actually this institution was his house during the war; 10 family members including him lived in that house, but everybody went their separate ways after their marriages, and thus, he also moved to a separate house after his marriage.

During the war, this place acted as a house as well as a tuition center. Now, he has expanded and completely turned it into a tuition center. Additionally, he built a separate office for his administrative work, where I saw his wife acting as a manager of this institution. I was surprised to see her liberated from domestic sphere and engaged in the public sphere (Linda 2014; Yanagisako 1987), and she never did this job during the war when she got married and came to his family. Selvam practiced a strict patriarchal ideology and was very strict about students' discipline and behavior. I do remember how much he controlled us in class and how he would excommunicate students when they failed to follow his discipline and morals.

In terms of infrastructure, the tuition center is well developed through diaspora funding, but Selvam worries about the students' *oḻukkam* (discipline) in present-day Jaffna, which has gone down. For this sudden shift, he correlated the link between temple culture and children's *oḻukkam*

because in the past, parents ordered their children go to the temple in the morning before going to school, but this has now changed; children get up late in the morning, so they cannot make their temple visit for worship. Hence, such a *kōvil kalāccāram* (temple culture) is changing so that even children are reluctant to go to temple in the morning and they get up late. Also, he argued that belief in god and faith are in decline among the children. When temple worship and belief in god are given up, then the "ārampa oḻukkam illamal pōkiratu" [the primary discipline is diminished].

As a result, he felt, the younger generation lost their belief in god. When the children become a temple goer, they are afraid of God, which is known as *paya bhakti;* when they believe in God and have faith, they are reluctant to do criminal activities or deviate from self-control (*cuya kaṭṭupāṭu).* In the past, the religion was the very first thing taught in the morning at school, so their moral learning continued from temple to school and there was a continuity, but now different classes are taught in the morning instead of religion: Hinduism or Christianity. Selvam continued to say that Inuvil is not like old Inuvil, there are substantial changes that have occurred. When people do criminal activities (*kuṟṟa ceyalkaḷ*) or intend to do them, they are afraid that God will punish them. In school, the students had a *natcintaṉai* (good thoughts) event at school, which shaped children's moral philosophy. When the children do not have *cātvīka toṭarpu* (a peaceful virtuous link) between temple and school, then they are morally weak and not scared to do crime. There is a big change in children's moral behavior. Inuvil now does not look like the previous Inuvil, and children have given up those moral values and go on a different path (*vittiyācamāna pāthai*).

There is a radical change among the young children; some students use drugs (*pōtai vastu*) and formed groupism among themselves. Furthermore, Selvam claimed that in the past children were afraid of parents, but now they are not afraid of parents. The main reason is war, because during the war, parents had a fear that children would join the LTTE (*iyakkam*), parents limited their control over the children. But even parents kept controlled during the war period with their

moral stories to socialize their children for not joining the LTTE. Since war ended and the LTTE have gone, parents are still struggling to bring back the normalcy of their controlling mechanisms over children, because the flexible mode of controlling has been processed for some years. As he used the Tamil term, *kaṭṭupāṭu* to refer to this control, I was so curious to know from Selvam "what is *kaṭṭupāṭu*?"

He explained through an example. He said that if he heard his father would be coming to the school, then he would be so frightened because his father would meet the principal to collect some information about him, so then he would think of any blunder or naughty things that he would had done. After that, he was afraid to come home because he did not know his father's reaction towards him would be. Thus, he claimed that he had two types of control over him; one is from school and other one is from home. He used the term 'watch' (*kaṇkāṇittal*) that was from both parents and schoolteachers. So, there was not any possible circumstance that would lead children down a bad path (*piḻaiyāṉa vaḻi*). Furthermore, Arumugesan, one of my key informants, emphasized that unlike in the past, the value of *kaṭṭupāṭu* has gone away.

He claimed further that *kaṭṭupāṭu* should pass down like training from parents to children. For example, there is a mother cat, it teaches to her kitten; likewise, a dog teaches to her puppies; and a chicken teaches her baby chicken how to eat and learn things; but young people now do not get similar training from their parents. Consequently, young people do things in their own way. He claimed that was why his two sons did not go down a bad path (*piḻaiyāṉa vaḻi*) because he did not have any bad habits such as smoking or drinking alcohol. He even proudly said that "my sons have watch and rings, which their brother-in-law sent from London, but they do not wear them. They do not even eat or drink from unknown or unfamiliar places in my village, because they want to be like me." Overall, the majority of informants' conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is that children should learn from parents or older and elderly people; if they followed their conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* then only they can be protected from loss of their *kouvravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honor). However, a Veḷḷaḷar's conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is a very complicated and context-based,

which they tactfully manipulate to function; for example, smoking local tobacco cigars (*curuṭṭu*) is not considered a bad habit, but smoking other cigarettes is a bad habit.

4.5.2 The low-caste People' Views on *Kaṭṭupāṭu*

As a Jaffna native, I thought the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is more of the Veḷḷaḷar patriarchal ideology, but I also found the same practice among the Naḷavar and Paḷḷar (the low-castes). Rasathi, who is a young girl from a low-caste background in Inuvil, told me that if she wished to do something, then some powers (*caktikaḷ*) would block or oppose her wishes. By *cakti*, she means that the 'control' is from gods, parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and known people from the village. Her wishes can be good or bad, but these above people will stop us from achieving our desires. Rasathi argued that young children now enjoy more freedoms while *kaṭṭupāṭu* is weakened after the war. In Inuvil, many elderly people and young people worry about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* among the present generation, and there is a conflict between parents' desires and children's desires.

Even I received a similar argument from Sivasankari, a middle-aged woman from the low-caste background (Naḷavar caste) in Inuvil who argued that many cultural changes in Inuvil have occurred due to mobile phones, South Indian Tamil cinema movies, and South Indian television drama serials. She further explained that the major purpose of these movies and serials is to create awareness among people and particularly direct young people to follow a good path. In contrast, children and young adults simply follow the events depicted by the heroes and heroines of these movies and drama serials who have become their role models. They in fact, try to emulate these characters. Those movies would convey both criminal events and non-violence events, but the young children are bound to learn violence and criminal acts quicker. This has led to an increase in robberies, murders, and rowdyism in Jaffna. Thus, she claimed that these changes symbolize a potential destruction, which seems continue in villages because there is no unity, love, control,

and bond among the people. Hence, today divide (*piḷavu*) has simply emerged among people, brothers, families, and neighborhoods.

4.5.3 Conflict between parents' desire and children' desire and loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*

In post-war Jaffna, there is a conflict between parents' desires and children's desires. For this, I draw a good ethnographic example from my fieldwork in November 2018, when I visited Vel's house in Inuvil; he is married and lives at his parental house, which is located on a large piece of land where he established his own institute Kumara Narthanalaya (Dance Institute) in 1997 to train girls and boys in Bharathanatyam dance. He has no caste and gender preferences in recruiting students to his institution and he also teaches dance in a government school in Jaffna and teaches dance in his institute after school. His mother and sisters live in different houses on the same land, and they were emotional to see me after such a long time.

When I entered his dance hall, he was teaching a dance for the Carnatic music song *Māṭu mēiykum kaṇṇe* composed by Uthukadu Venkata Subbaiah Iyer*,* which is a classical Tamil *kīrttaṉai*[45]; this Tamil *kīrttaṉai* is about a dialog between the little Lord Krishna (in his childhood stage) and his mother Yasoda. The core meaning of the song is that Yasoda wanted little Krishna to stay at home, but the Krishna wanted to go out with his friends. However, she decided to make him stay at home for the whole day and kept giving reasons as to why he should stay, but this little child kept giving explanations as to why he should leave home immediately, so the dialogue is her objections were verses his explanations. Finally, the little child was very capable of taking care of himself; let us have a look at that song.

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[45] *Kīrttaṉai* is a kind of song form, which is the category of musical compositions in Carnatic music.

Yasoda:
Māṭu mēiykkum kaṇṇe nī pōka vēṇṭām coṉṉēṉ

My dear cowherd, I said you'd better not leave!

Krishna:
Pōka vēṇṭum tayē taṭai collātē nīyē

But I want to go, Mother! Don't say things to make it so hard!

Yasoda:
Kāiycciṉa pālum tārēn karkkaṇṭu cīṉi tārēṉ
Kaiyi niraiya veṇṇai tārēṉ veiyyililē pōka vēṇṭām
Māṭu mēiykkum kaṇṇe …………

I'll give you some boiled milk, I'll give you some hard sugar-candy'
I'll give you a handful of butter, boy, but you'd better not go out in the hot sun.
My dear cowherd…………………………

Krishna:
Kāiycciṉa pālum vēṇṭām karkkaṇṭu cīṉi vēṇṭām
Ullācamai māṭu mēiyttu our noṭiyil tirumpiṭuvēṉ
Pōka vēṇṭum tayē

I don't want any boiled milk, and I don't want hard sugar-candy
It'll be fun taking the cows out to graze, and I'll be back in the blink of an eye,
I do want to go, Mother! Don't say things to make it so hard!

Yasoda:
Yamuṉā nati karayil eppoḻutum kaḷvar payam
Kaḷvar vantu uṉai aṭittāl kalaṅkiṭuvāi kaṇmaṇiye
Māṭu mēiykkum kaṇṇe ………………

I'm always afraid of the thieves on the Yamuna Riverbanks.
If thieves come and beat you up you'll get all stirred up, my dearest, dear boy.
My dear, dear cowherd, I said you'd better not go!

Krishna:
Kaḷvarukku kaḷvaruṇṭō kaṇṭatuṇṭō collum amma
Kaḷvar vantu yeṉai aṭittāl kṇṭa tuṇṭam āeiykiṭuvēṉ
Pōka vēṇṭum tayē.............................

Is there a thief for a thief like me? Has anyone ever seen that, tell me mother?
If thieves come to beat me, I'll cut them to pieces.
I want to go, Mother. Don't say things to make it so hard!

Yasoda:
Kōvarttaṉa kriyil kōramāṉa mirukaṅkaḷ uṇṭu
cṅkam puli karaṭi vantāl kalaṅkiṭuvāiey kaṇmaṇiyē
Māṭu mēiykkum kaṇṇe ……………………

163

There are fierce beasts on Koovardana mountain.
If you see a bear or a tiger, you'll get all stirred up, dearest dear.
My dear, dear cowherd, I said you'd better not go.

Krishna:
Kāṭṭu mirukaṅkaḷ ellām eṉṉaiey kaṇṭāl oṭi varum
Kūṭṭam kūṭṭamāka oṭi vantāl vēṭṭai āṭi veṉṟiṭuvēṉ
Pōka vēṇṭum tayē.................................

If all the jungle animals see me, they will come running, wave after wave.
I'll hunt them down and defeat them.
I do want to go, Mother! Don't say things to make it so hard!

Yasoda:
Priyamuḷḷa nanta kōpar pālan eṅkē enru kēṭṭāl
Eṉṉveṉru colliṭuvēṉ ēkkamuṭan tēṭiṭuvar
Māṭu mēiykkum kaṇṇe..........................

If kindly Nanda Gopar asks where the young boy is,
what answer will I give him, my dearest dear?
My dear, dear cowherd, I said you'd better not go.

Krishna:
Vītiyilē pālaruṭan pantu viḷaiyāṭukiṟāṉ
Kaṇṇē enru nī kural koṭuttāl
Oṭi vantu niriṭuvēṉ
Pōka vēṇṭum tayē taṭai collātē nīyē

Say that he's playing ball in the street with the boys.
When he comes, he'll run over and stand right there looking for me.
I do want to go, Mother! Don't say things to make it so hard![46]

Readers may wonder at the relevance of this song and Vel's choreography. But there is a close relationship between the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and post-war Jaffna villages was appeared to Vel. In this context, Vel describes how the Lord Krishna argued with his mother to go out, and so younger children also have the similar experience of *kaṭṭupāṭu* from their parents. Furthermore, Vel argued that Krishna is a God who was capable of taking care of himself because God has *cakti* (power), but some young children are struggling with the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and cleverly overcome the control of their parents like Lord Krishna; but during the war, many young boys

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[46] The credit goes to Dr. David C. Buck who translated this song from Tamil to English. He was a professor at the Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, Elizabethtown, Kentucky, USA.

had similar arguments with their parents about going away from their hometown and houses in order to escape from the LTTE, the Sri Lanka army, and the Sri Lanka war. On the one hand, parents wanted to keep children at home to protect them from the above forces; on the other hand, the children wished to leave Jaffna or the country to escape from the above forces from which their parents could not protect them.

However, the argumentative conversations always emerged between parents and young children and in relation to restrictions on children's freedom; in particular, to personal wishes like love marriages. In addition, Vel also started talking about loss of control in many ways; for example, students now do not place importance on *Guru-kula-vasa* (*kurukulavasam*)[47] education like music and dance. Most of the students have not much interest in learning dance, but they learn it for their parents' wishes. In the past many students wished to learn, but the students now turn towards technology and younger students spend more time on Facebook and their mobile phones. Vel's story and Selvam's story have some similar interest on the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu.*

Furthermore, Selvam argued that before and during the war, parents carefully practiced 'surveillance' (*kaṇkāṉippu*) over their children to maintain their morals, but this practice has changed now. He further pointed out that parents are also partly responsible for this change, because in the past, parents would double-check whether their children went to the school or to the tuition center, so parents just followed up with them. All the parents did not do this for their children, but parents who suspected that their children's behavior was changing, they checked. But parents now do not come to his tuition center to double-check, and so children often inform their parents that they are going to school or tuition, but do not go and meet their friends on the road. I do remember my days in Jaffna standing or talking with friends on the road, whose

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[47] *Kurukulavasam* means students living near or with the *guru* (teacher) at *guru*'s house in ancient India and performing arts were taught through such a system until performing arts education institutionalized. In Sri Lanka and India, many students lean dance and music from a *guru* and it is private educational system, and the students also follow a particular disciple through this *kurukula vasa*.

messages would be immediately passed onto their parents; and increasingly the control is not only from the domestic level, but also from the village-public level. So, I would also argue that nobody has talked about the masculinity movement, restrictions and space before and during the war, and thus, many restrictions are not only over women, but also over men in Jaffna. Selvam further claimed that now parents also watch their children less because parents are working, and their needs are endless (Sen 2006) due to the intensification of global flows (Appadurai 1996) in post-war Jaffna.

In addition to loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* people believe, *ātmīkam* (spirituality) is going down among the present generation; here *ātmīkam* means that young children are expected to possess *teiyva bhakti* (devotional expression towards god), morals, and *nal oḻukkam* (good discipline). Girls and boys are now equally progressing in education and employment compared to the past, but at the same time, they are expected not to lose their cultural values while progressing as well. This is the prewar practice of patriarchal *kaṭṭupāṭu,* which maintained the cultural order while keeping the cultural values, and young children were expected to act within this limited boundary. Many informants argue that the prolonged war period was a great support for maintaining the cultural order as the war limited opportunities to change the system, and people's focus was on daily survival, security, and fear.

On the other hand, people say temple disputes and *urimai piracciṉai* (hereditary right problem) have increased in Inuvil after the war. Ruban, one of my informants, stated "yāḻppāṇattil viḷakku illāta kōvililum pārkka vaḻakku illāta kōvilē illai" [In Jaffna, just as you cannot see in a temple that has no ritual oil lamp, there is no temple without a court case]. These temple disputes do not refer just merely to conventional temple conflicts about rights related issues, but various other issues are identified in temples in Inuvil and Naguleswaram in post-war Sri Lanka. A common shared narrative is that today temples have become more business centers; for example, the temple priests' cash demands are high, some temples have many priests who fight with each other to get *pūja* (worship rites) right, and temple *nirvāka cabai* (temple trustees

166

board) disputes among the members. New institutions are established within the temple administrative body, like wedding halls and cultural centers; all of these disputes are managed by the temple administration. The temple also intended to control these new establishments for money and power. In the past, temple administration just handled the temple's administration only, but at the end of the war, diaspora money flowed in building new wedding halls and cultural centers. Now the temple receives more income through these organizations, and so disputes emerged about the distribution of income. At the end of the war, temple disputes, the high-caste authority/power over the temples, and *urimai* struggles have not changed in substantive, but they have increased more than before in Inuvil. I will discuss more on this in chapter eight. Now, I will move to discuss how temple disputes, *urimai piracciṉai* (right problem), *bhakti* religiosity, *kaṭṭupāṭu* and their imagination of their village landscape are addressed in Naguleswaram.

4.6   *Bhakti* religiosity, *kaṭṭupāṭu,* and nostalgia of *ūr* in Naguleswaram

On Monday 4th December 2017, around 4:00 PM, Velavan who was one of my key informants in Naguleswaram came to take me to visit some informants' homes. Although I had visited Naguleswaran and Keerimalai before the war for pilgrimage purposes, this time I was there for fieldwork. Velavan took me in his three-wheeler to Karukampanai, a sub-village of Naguleswaram, and I was passing many abandoned houses, which were all destroyed by shells and bombs during the war, although a few houses that have been rebuilt. Finally, I reached Sidra's house, one of my informants who lives with her husband in Karukampanai village, which was mostly populated by Veḷḷaḷar caste and Kōviyar caste people before the war. At that time, fifty-eight Veḷḷaḷar families and six Kōviyar families were there, but this caste demography has now changed so that nine Veḷḷaḷar families and six Kōviyar families currently reside in Karukampanai. Many Veḷḷaḷar families migrated abroad and moved to Colombo and other villages in Jaffna during the war. Dashan, Sidra's husband, was a retired government servant who started to narrate their displacement story and the loss of their *ūr* life. Sidra brought some cookies

and tea to serve us, this is a typical hospitality practice in Jaffna. I noticed their house was half-completed; they would need financial support to complete the rest.

Although her husband has lived in Karukampanai since he was married, he expected Sidra to speak about the village because he is from Myliddy village and only moved to Karukampanai after their marriage. They worried about their only one child who was also displaced from the village with them in 1990 when the whole population fled due to the battle between the Sri Lankan army and the LTTE. Their child died due to an illness in Sandilipai where they lived after being uprooted from this village. They returned to their village in 2011 and slowly rebuilt their house. As they were worried by remembering their terrible displacement journey and the loss of their child, I wanted to change their sad moment and so I suddenly asked them "what do you feel about your village after returning back to your place?" Sidra told me "we were so glad to see our *kulateiyvam*[48] Kavunavathai[49] Vairavar who is a very powerful (*cakti vāiyntavar*) guardian god for our village, but Jaffna court has put a ban on *vēḷvi*[50] (animal sacrifice) two years ago." Like Sidra, many people in the village worried about the ban on *vēḷvi*, which is a major festival as well as their *urimai* issue in Naguleswaram. Kavunavathai *vēḷvi* is a popular religious ritual in Jaffna Peninsula and people even performed this ritual during the war time with the Sri Lanka army's permission. The ban on animal sacrifice is an ongoing dispute in post-war Naguleswaram, but at the same time, this ritual is their *urimai piraccinai* (*urimai* problem) as many informants argued. Naguleswaram is being rebuilt from collective and individual memories, about the sacred, cultural, and physical landscapes of Naguleswaram.

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[48] *Kulateiyvam* refers to family, clan, caste-deity or even village guardian deity also can be a *kulateiyvam* for some people.

[49] Kavunavathai is a *kurichi* name, which is part of the larger Karukampanai sub-village of Naguleswaram.

[50] Etymologically, *vēlvi* also denotes *yagya,* which means religious devotional ritual with the sacred fire, but here *vēlvi* means animal sacrifice; it is also known as *paliyidal*, but many informants used the term *vēlvi* throughout my interviews in Naguleswaram, Keerimalai, and Karukampanai areas.

4.6.1 Three components of "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" further expanded

The following examples demonstrate the three components of "village" or "village-temple consciousness;" I will briefly explain them here, but the details will be discussed in relevant chapters. They are as follows:

(1) there is a control over animal sacrifice from the state and the All Ceylon Hindu Congress. (2) The concept of *vīṭu* (house compound) has changed in Naguleswaram because most of their houses were destroyed during the war and people have not visited their places for more than 21-26 years. The housing schemes of the Government of Sri Lanka and of the Government of India provided financial support them to rebuild their houses, but this compensation was not equivalent to what they really lost in their old dwellings. Further, their houses were supposed to be built according to the Government imposed housing scheme's plan (model houses) and restrictions, which did not allow them to build houses as they were in the past. Also, many informants told me that the housing scheme granted financial support that was not adequate to complete the work. (3) Naguleswaram temple is owned by a Brahmin family; the current chief priest's authority has increased after the war and the chief priest has family disputes in terms of *urimai* over the temple, which were all created after the war by him to take the control of the temple. His father was the chief priest before and during the war; at the end of the war, his son (the current chief priest) came from Canada and has taken over the authority of the temple from his father. However, temple decisions are made by his father, and those decisions are made in consultation with the Veḷḷāḷar members who are actively involved in temple management. Due to the chief priest's health condition, his son looks after the temple. His father already established a good connection with the previous Sri Lanka government (during Mahinda Rajapaksa regime 2005-2015) which provided financial support rebuilding the temple after the war. Although the temple belongs to the Brahmin family, the local Veḷḷaḷar elite power and control are involved in temple matters. I will write in more detail about this issue in chapter eight. (4) Although the Naguleswaram Sivan

169

(*Civaṉ*) Temple is the largest and most historical temple in Naguleswaram, people have invested their consciousness in different *kulateiyva* deities. Thus, people accomplish their devotional practices in different temples, to which they are attached. Before the war, people had a close connection with this particular Sivan temple. It does not mean that people have totally given up on attending the temple. Instead, they are unsatisfied with the current priest's authority over the temple and his disrespectful attitude towards the poor people/devotees who approach him for *arccaṉai*[51] for a lowest rate. As a result, some people feel uncomfortable with him in accomplishing their devotional purposes and vows, which induce them to go to other temples in Naguleswaram. (5) A change of caste-demography and caste geography has altered people's imagination of their post-war *ūr* in Naguleswaram. (6) Restructuring caste hierarchy and the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* are being more attention in order to rethink village consciousness in Naguleswaram. That means, the caste hierarchy is restructured due to the caste demography, which is altered that urged me to explore how the pre-war caste order and control practices are reorganized in post-war Naguleswaram.

Furthermore, this dissertation also requires the discussion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* at two levels: how the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is flexible for some cultural practices while strictly inflexible for some other cultural practices, and how the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* reshapes caste, gender relations, temple disputes, *urimai pracciṉai*, and temple and domestic rituals in post-war Jaffna. Let us draw some ethnographic narratives from my fieldwork.

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51 *Arccaṉai* refers to chanting and *puja* done by the temple priest, in which he chants mantras including the person's name and star who purchase an *arccaṉai*

4.6.2 Murthy's nostalgia of *ūr* and religiosity

Murthy is an 80 years old man from Keerimalai with the Kōviyar caste background who worked as a technical officer at the Kankesan Cement Corporation.[52] Notably, many Kōviyar caste people from Keerimalai worked at the Kankesan Cement Corporation. First, he was displaced in 1990 and lived in many places (Vilan, Vanni, India, and Colombo), and returned to his *conta ūr* in 2014. I asked him "what do you now think about your life in your natal village after 24 years?" He told me, "his village is now slowly improving." I asked him further, "what do you mean by improvement"? Murthy explained that by improvement he meant that the government is providing aid for renovating houses and temples. Murthy has seen many different places throughout his displacement journey, but unfortunately his *ūr* was badly destroyed, and people had to spend money for cleaning their lands to rebuild their houses.

Murthy's house was a small hut before the war and he planned to build a house on his land, which was given to him by the cement corporation (the Government of Sri Lanka). The Government of Sri Lanka's housing scheme helped Murthy rebuild his house after returning to his village in 2014. Although many displaced people were provided with a fairly decent life in their host villages or Welfare Centers (Internally Displaced Persons' Camps), their sense of attachment to their own villages where they were born and nurtured including work, cultural practices, and religious beliefs is way stronger.

In terms of Murthy's religious practices, he is a Vishnu devotee, but he is unable to go to the Krishnan temple, Srimath Narayanaswami Devasthanam (the Lord Krishnan is one of the incarnations of the Lord Vishnu). This because this temple falls under the High Security Zone, and the Sri Lankan military do not allow people to enter that area. As a result, Murthy started practicing *māṉacīka vaḻipāṭu* (worship/pray to the Lord Krishnan by heart and mind without

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[52] "The Cement Factory at Kankesanthurai which was established in 1950 under the Department of Industries was converted to a Public Corporation in 1956 under the provisions of the Government Sponsored Corporations Act No.19 of 1955 and named Kankesan Cement Works" (Sri Lanka Cement Corporation Annual Report 2012:1).

being physically present at the temple) and visiting other Vishnu temples in Jaffna. Although he visits other Vishnu temples, he feels something *kuṟai* (lacking) in his religious practices, because he is unable to visit his *urkōvil* (village temple). Apparently, I found many Kōviyar informants worried about the same issue of the refusal of the military to allow visits to the Krishna temple in post-war Naguleswaram. Even though some of my informants had already talked with the Sri Lanka military commander to get permission to see the temple, the military rejected their appeal and did not allow people to visit the temple.

   People like Murthy have nostalgia on the Krishnan Temple and the surrounding landscape of Keerimalai and Naguleswaram though they are still under military control. Based on my interviews and my ethnographic research in Naguleswaram, I have understood that releasing people's lands from military control does not indicate a complete resettlement of people in their villages as their religious and spiritual belongings are not yet free proving that the whole reconstruction process is a failure that has excluded them from their native land. I too was not allowed in this area and had to learn about the religious, social, and cultural significances of Keerimalai and Naguleswaram through the ethnographic recalling provided by Nadarajah and Murthy on their *ūr*.

4.6.3   The significance of remembered *ūr* in post-war reconstruction

   Nadarajah is, 64 years old man from Kōviyar caste background, the president of the Krishnan temple's *nirvāka* or *tarmakartā capai* (temple trustee board) and had worked as a driver at the cement corporation. He was happy to talk to me about people's restricted movements in Keerimalai when I met him at his house. Nadarajah bought a piece of land before the displacement in 1990. He did not build a house when he was displaced from his village, Keerimalai, and was now building a new house under the housing scheme from the Government of India. Nadarajah further explicitly pointed out that not only the Krishnan temple, but also the *intu mayāṉam* (Hindu cemetery), the Kathirai Āndavar temple, the Sadaiyamma's (a saint)

camāti[53] (Skt. *Samadhi*) shrine, and a Goddess Kali (*kāḷi*) temple all fall under the High Security Zone. Thus, Nadarajah pointed out that the whole of Keerimalai village had not really been released by the army because some parts of this village are still under Sri Lankan military control. They tried to convince the military to let people enter those restricted places, but the military refused their requests. But this is the only cemetery for people who live in Naguleswaram, Keerimalai, Pannalai, Karukampanai and Kollan Kaladdy villages. When people were not allowed to use this cemetery in 2013, they explained the issue to the military. Finally, the military allowed people to use the cemetery. However, since the main road remaining blocked, which connects to the cemetery, people have to carry their coffins through a small one-foot-wide road. Thus, Nadarajah and his wife had several grievances from where they lived in host villages during the displacement, and so returned to their *ūr* with the hope that they would be able to regain their past life. But their daily survival involves multiple struggles.

In terms of reconstructing villages, Murthy said that "we were in Vilan after uprooting from our village; however, we did not know much about that place and we are like second citizen of that village, but we knew about our own village's history and religious significance." He pointed out that, unfortunately, their village was destroyed by the war, otherwise, Keerimalai would have been a religious resort because not only people from other villages, but also Sinhalese and foreigners to attend Keerimalai and Naguleswaram Shiva temple in the past. People still visit now, he said, but it is not like before. While I was talking to Murthy, his three granddaughters (Sharmi-19 years old, Nilogi-20 years old, and Vasuki -22 years old from Kōviyar caste) joined the conversation. In terms of transportation and basic facilities, they preferred the previous village where they temporarily lived because of the lack of transportation and basic infrastructure

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[53] Here *camāti* means a site is built to honor a Saint or Yogi after his or her death. *Camāti* also denotes the ultimate stage in meditation. It may be a small or big shrine. This c*amāti* may not contain a Saint's or Yogi's deceased body. Keerimalai contains many *camāti*, which contained their deceased bodies. They became a small shrines and people honor them on the anniversary of their deaths every year. When a Saint or Yogi attains the state of *camāti* people burry the body and build a shrine over the burial grave, but some *camāti* shrines contain their ash as well.

facilities have affected their studies and daily life in Naguleswaram. For instance, in

Naguleswaram they do not have a tuition center, a photocopy shop, a bank or a pharmacy.

Development and restructuring works were being implemented, but many told me they felt their

village, or Naguleswaram temple, would not get back to the 'old stage' (*paḻaiya nilai*). Although

people have limited facilities in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai villages, they have moved back to

their *conta iṭam* (own place/natal village) because they believe *cutantiram* (freedom) and *nimmati*

(calmness) can be achieved in their own villages. Their caste identity was another factor that their

freedom and peace were restricted in their host community.

Furthermore, the low-caste people did not get an opportunity to access proper housing

when they were displaced because they had limited contacts and social networks in the relocated

villages. As a result, they had to live in welfare centers (refugee camps), under trees, in schools,

temple premises, railway station, rice mills, abandoned buildings, and so on. Even the low-caste

IDPs became a vulnerable group compared to the high-caste people, because they were not

allowed to stay either in public schools or temples for a long time. Further, they neither had land

or permanent houses or a temple for worshipping. Though they tried organizing festivals in the

temples around where they lived, the temple owners refused to accept it because those temples

were run by Vellalars.

4.6.4   Regaining the past life and social status in remaking *ūr* project

Regaining their lost past life and social status are another aspect of the reconstruction of

their villages. However, the three young girls had a different experience of their caste identity

while in exile. In the host community, they had a chance to mingle with other students and friends

in the school and tuition center there. So, that their friends did not pay much attention to their

caste identity. In contrast, they were unhappy about the reemergence of caste-related practices in

villages of Naguleswaram. In schools and tuition centers, different castes were mixed, so that

students did not consider each other's caste, and so these three girls were used to interacting with their friends without paying attention to their friends' respective castes.

In contrast, caste-based identification and practices in Naguleswaram are being rebuilt along with the community's physical reconstruction, and older people would like to bring back their practices as they were years ago in villages of Naguleswaram. The three girls further emphasized that people would look down on them when they spoke to low-caste people in the village. This is when they realized that caste identity was coming back to this land. That means some older generations would like to maintain the old customary practices. In addition, after returning to Keerimalai, caste-based prohibitions are continued; for instance, in Naguleswaram Shiva temple, the idols of deities are allowed to be carried by the Kōviyar and Veḷḷaḷar castes only, and Sharmi told me that once the priest kicked a man when a low-caste person attempted to lift the deity's *vākanam* (vehicle). Suddenly, Murthy said that "Veḷḷaḷar are the ruling party and the senior caste, and even in the past Shiva temple management did not allow the Kōviyar to carry the idols, but now that the majority of Veḷḷaḷar from Karukampanai and Keerimalai have left the place, the Kōviyar are now given the chances due to a shortage of labor."

In terms of caste and control, I received comments from three young men (Kaanthan-18 years old, Thanushan-19 years old, and Sajanthan-20 years old) that the notion of caste is increasing among people more than before and it is a remerging fact. In Naguleswaram Shiva temple, "we three are member of *toṇṭar capai* (young devotees association) and do not allow others (castes) to carry the idol because other caste people also do not allow us to do so in their temple." Thus, in this Sivan temple, Veḷḷaḷar and Kōviyar are the majority castes, which control the ritual and religious spaces of the Naguleswaram temple.

With reference to religious practices and *bhakti* religiosity, these three girls proudly dwell in Keerimalai; their consciousness about their village and temples were developed through learning stories from their grandparents and parents while they were displaced, but they are now in their natal villages and bringing back those collective and individual memories to rebuild their identity

in their villages. In that sense, they are proud to be in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai villages because of the religious and historical significance of their villages. Although the Lord Shiva is closer to their residence, they associate more with Māri Āchi (Goddess-Muthu Mari Ammon temple is located much closer to Keerimalai sea beach). Many people visit this temple, which is good for removing *nāka tōcam* (Cobra's dangerous power/blemish), which delays one's marriage according to Hindu astrology. Though some people did this ritual practice in Nainativu Nagapooshani Ammon temple where many Jaffna Tamil Hindus perform this ritual, it was not successful; those devotees therefore visited Māri Āchi to fulfill their religious need.

As a result, their vow was successful as they performed it in Māri Āchi temple. Mostly girls do this practice and women go to this temple to talk about their family disputes and daily survival with the Goddess. In addition, the Keerimalai holy freshwater spring, many Saints' *camātikaḷ*, and post-funerary rituals are very popular in Keerimalai; thus, these three girls briefed their notions of the village. The three boys argued further that Māri Āchi temple is a small temple, but it is dominated and controlled by one caste, the Kōviyar, as they have financially supported it after returning back to Keerimalai, and this temple presents so many problems between Kōviyar and other caste people on festival *urimai* in post-war Naguleswaran. Furthermore, the three boys explained that Māri Āchi is a mother Goddess, so a *tāi* (mother) listens to people's problems and caste issues, but the Lord Shiva controls his temple as *appa* (father), so there is no problem in that temple, and everything is under control.

Regarding remaking *ūr*, the three girls had a critical view of donations going to the temples and the religious associations rather than to poor children's education and schools. Many temples are newly built and renovated, but not people's houses, and people are struggling to build their houses with the limited financial support received from the Sri Lankan state and Indian housing schemes. Beyond this, many older people complain about the use of mobile phones and the internet as major causes for changing the children's behavior and morals, which is happening because of a loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*.

However, the three girls claimed that people do practice *kaṭṭupāṭu* more in this village and place more control on girls than boys. Murthy told me that people worry about the chastity and virginity of their teenage girls; if they would lose chastity, then they would lose their dignity. Among the three girls, Sharmi started to narrate the present generations' worldview regarding control practices; for example, there are two types of plates: *caiva kōpai* (a plate for vegetarian meals) and *acaiva kōpai* (a plate for non-vegetarian meals).[54] Here, she symbolized *acaiva kōpai* as a male and *caiva kōpai* as a girl. As she explained to me, if people put vegetarian meals on a vegetarian plate, then no problem as per customary practice; but if they put non-vegetarian meals on the vegetarian plates, then the plate would become a non-vegetarian plate. However, this theory does not affect a non-vegetarian plate when someone puts either vegetarian meals or non-vegetarian meals on the non-vegetarian plate, which does not change the status of the plate. But if they put non-vegetarian meals on a vegetarian plate, then the status of the vegetarian plate would be changed. Likewise, when girls deviate from the *kaṭṭupāṭu* it affects their status, but when boys do the same, it will not affect them. Thus, boys are privileged to enjoy the flexible nature of *kaṭṭupāṭu* practices while girls are expected to follow cultural values.

4.7   Comparison and Conclusion

This chapter has briefly discussed temple disputes, *urimai* problems, *bhakti* religiosity, *kaṭṭupāṭu* and the imagination of the *ūr* landscape in Inuvil and Naguleswaram in the context of post-war Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Temple disputes or temple politics are a common problem in both villages, that has increased after the war. During the war, people's consciousness was more focused on their daily survival, war, security, displacement, and their constant movement, though there were still temple disputes. Although temple disputes are a common problem in both

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[54] In Keerimalai and other villages in Jaffna, Hindu people maintain their kitchen utensils and vessels separately for cooking and eating vegetarian meals and other plate for non-vegetarian meals in terms of purity and pollution practices. vegetarian meals denote purity and non-vegetarian meals symbolize pollution/impurity.

villages, these cases are varied in terms of caste, the nature of the disputes, power relations, and time differences. For instance, Inuvil Kanthaswamil temple disputes have a long history, which are largely between Veḷḷaḷar caste families only, although some cases were documented between the Veḷḷaḷar and Brahmin caste families in the past. This temple is a public temple according to a Jaffna district court decision in 1953 (Nadarasa 1960). Until recently, there was an ongoing temple dispute, which was simply about competition and egoism between members of the temple trustee board (*tarmakartā /nirvāka capai*) regarding the decision-making process and membership on the board.

Unlike Inuvil, Naguleswaram is being rebuilt after the war, but different types of temple disputes have emerged at the end of the war. For instance, Naguleswaram Shiva temple is owned by a Brahmin family, but three distinct court cases were filed there against the current Brahmin priest in terms of claiming *urmai* (rights) over the temple *pūja* and temple property (houses). This dispute is within Brahmin caste families only. But there are two other court cases, which are between the temple's Brahmin families and Veḷḷaḷar families; these two court cases are also about rights over the land tenure. On the other hand, as I already discussed there is the issue of the ban on *vēlvi*, which is a new problem that has emerged since the end of the war. The Sinhala Buddhist majoritarian government of Sri Lanka passed a legislation of banning animal sacrifice at Hindu temples because the government considered the animal sacrifice as a primitive method of worship and practice, which will be harm to human society (Boaz 2019). Thus, ritual slaughtering is banned through a justification based on the *ahimsa* or non-violence philosophical sense. On the other hand, freedom of religious expression is controlled, and minority religious faiths are persecuted, which can cause religious intolerance in post-war reconstruction of Naguleswaram. The ban on animal sacrifice will be discussed in more details in chapter eight.

All these temple disputes express a kind of *urimai* problem, but each has its own unique core argument. Inuvil Kanthaswami temple has been managing different kinds of temple disputes before, during, and after the war, but for the Naglueswaram temple, new *urimai* problems were

178

arisen since the war ended. I will discuss all these temple disputes in detail in chapter eight.

Moreover, these temple disputes and *urmai* problems denote Brahmin and Veḷḷaḷar hegemonies

over the sacred geographies (temples including villages), which shape the concept of *urimai*.

Ultimately, these *urimai* problems are more about Brahmin and Veḷḷaḷar domination and

hegemonies that have increased since the war ended. Furthermore, these *urimai* problems have

excluded other castes, and are narrowly understood. That is, *urimai* issues are just limited to the

upper caste's hegemonical conceptions that there is either Brahmin's authority or Veḷḷaḷar

authority. These conceptions failed to expand the problem of *urimai* to a broader concern. For

instance, the temple entry *urimai* struggle was a popular caste struggle in Jaffna in 1960s and

1970s, which was also about low-caste's *urimai* problem of temple entry.

In particular, temple entry *urimai* problem was understood by many as just about allowing

low-caste people to enter the temple for worship; however, this problem has to be explored.

Further, for *urimai* should involve not only allowing them in for worship, but also including them

as members on temple trustee boards, and the right to carry the temple *vākaṉam.* Also, a temple

tiruviḻā (festival) *urimai* is limited to high caste people only; hence low caste people's *urimai* is

limited to worship only but not for other privileges in the ritual and religious landscapes of post-

war Jaffna. For instance, the *urimai* to carry temple *vākaṉam* during the festival is only permitted

to the Veḷḷaḷar and Kōviyar castes in Naguleswaram, and Veḷḷaḷar, Panndāram, and Isai Veḷḷaḷar

castes in Inuvil. Hence, Veḷḷaḷar are the dominant caste in both villages.

In this larger context, we need to understand how caste-based *kaṭṭupāṭu* played a crucial role

in shaping the *urimai* problem; furthermore I would argue that the *urimai* problem was

understood through high-caste patriarchal ideology, which excluded not only low caste people but

also female participation in the temple trustee board based decision making processes. In

addition, in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram, *kaṭṭupāṭu* is founded more on *tiruviḻā* (festival)

urimai, which means that temple festivals are controlled by Veḷḷaḷar domination in both villages.

For instance, even though the *upayakārar* (people who sponsor the *pujas* and festivals

hereditarily) are not in the country and reside in the Tamil diaspora, those *pujas* and festivals have not been transferred to other Veḷḷaḷar families or to other caste families in the village.

In addition, those *upayakārar* who are in the diaspora conduct their *pujas* and festivals through their kin or other "known people"[55] in the village. At the same time, there is a contradiction between hereditary *upayakārar* (Veḷḷaḷar people who were mostly farmers in the past) and new *upayakārar* who are from the middle class Veḷḷaḷar who became rich through diaspora remittances. Diaspora remittances also altered the ritualscape and sacred landscapes of post-war Jaffna villages. Selvam also pointed out that the Tamil diaspora funded not only the building of wedding halls, libraries, and cultural centers, but also the establishment of new temples. Emerging new elite class formations among the Veḷḷaḷar caste through foreign remittances have thus altered temple and village landscapes. Donations for temples and *ūr* developments are largely contributed by this emerging new elite class of Veḷḷaḷar caste members of the Tamil diaspora rather than by the high-caste elites who were economically rich in the village's past.

On the other hand, this chapter has also addressed to looking at *bhakti* religious practices and changes occurring in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram. In Inuvil, Selvam and Vel felt that *ātmīkam* (spirituality) and *oḻukkam* (discipline) have declined compared to the past in Inuvil, and these indicated a weakening or loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*. However, in Naguleswaram, few people I spoke with placed much of an emphasis on loss of control, and few have mentioned that *bhakti* religiosity has declined. However, I encountered in many interviews people who are trying to rebuild the *kaṭṭupāṭu*. There is a contradiction between Selvam's claim that *bhakti* religiosity is declining and the increasing number of new temples.

I would argue that Inuvil was portrayed by most people there as a land of temples, which are strongly associated with aesthetic values, music, Tamil music drama, dance, temple music,

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[55] Known people refers to the people, who are from the same Veḷḷaḷar caste, may be friends or neighbors. The known is understood through how people trust each other.

and flower decoration and garland making culture. In this vein, the older generations' expectations are relatively high that the younger generation people should follow all these values. Older people want to keep the structure as it is. Thus, Inuvil is in an anxious transition of altering the cultural practices, and new forms of explanations are embedded within their narratives for changing practices. In Inuvil, many are worried about the decline of *bhakti* religious practices, but there are different groups of older and younger generations involved in different kinds of new religious and cultural practices. For instance, some are engaged with new religious movements where people started to worship Human gods like Shirdi Sai Baba, Amma Bhagavan and Sathya Sai Baba, and other groups of people follow the Hindu religious deities of Hanuman and Iyappan, but they have recently (after the war) been introduced to Sri Lanka from India (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2015. Some people are engaged with new schools of thoughts such as Art of Living, Brahma Kumari Meditation, and Arivuthirukovil (temple of consciousness) which enable their spiritual development through meditation and yoga practices.

However, these new engagements do not mean that people have given up their traditional deities, *kula* (clan/lineage) deities, and *iṣṭṭa* (favorite) deities, but this practice works like a continuum (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2016) in that people orient with multiple practices to deal with consequences created by the war and globalization. In addition, some young boys (two of them are Engineers who work as Tamil Saiva priests for part time) have associated with a new temple in Inuvil, Gnanaligeswarar built by the Swiss Tamil diaspora and Saivanerikoodam (Switzerland) which introduced Tamil mantra prayer method that is completely against the Sanskrit-based (anti-Brahminism) ritual and prayer system. Also, these young boys intend to promote Tamil Saiva ideology, which is exactly what Arumuga Navalar (1821-1879) did in mid-nineteenth century Jaffna. Another group of youngsters cultivate Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalistic ideas along with religiosity and cultural values, which of course convey the Jaffna Veḷḷaḷar patriarchal ideology. Thus, Inuvil has more interactions with diaspora and global flows, but Naguleswaram and Keerimalai villages are recently released from the military control and they

181

have less diaspora connections and influences. Thus, the people of Naguleswaram are slowly rebuilding their villages and temples but struggling with livelihood developments and facing multiple challenges for their daily survival. In order to tackle their daily survival of social, economic, and cultural life, people are trying to bring back their past to the present, which are driven from collective and individual memory and shape the current consciousness of Naguleswaram villages in post-war Jaffna. Thus, both post-war villages are moving with different kinds of alterations and changes, which I have already discussed briefly in this chapter, but we need more detail and ethnographic narratives to confirm the argument; therefore, the following chapters, five and six, have been dedicated to discussing how Inuvil is in an anxious transition stage and how Naguleswaram is being built between impossible nostalgia and daily survival.

CHAPTER 5.   INUVIL IN AN ANXIOUS TRANSITION: REACTING TO POST-WAR CHANGES

Inuvil is not like before and it has changed a lot in terms of cultural values and customs. *Kiramiya* (villageness) life has destructed due to the thirty years dirty war; as a result, we have lost our village stability, kin relations, and close-interactive neighborhood. *Kālam* (time) has changed and children does not obey parents, teachers, and elderly/older peoples' advices and teachings (Kumari-70 years old woman, Inuvil August 2017)

5.1   Introduction

On Thursday, June 22nd, 2017, it was early morning when I saw the *kāvaṭi*[56] procession

accompanied by temple music[57] moving towards the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple for

accomplishing their vows and attending the Lord Kanthan's annual *tēr tiruviḻā* (temple car or

chariot festival).[58] The noise of the *kāvaṭi* dance woke me up in the morning and I had to get

ready to go the temple as I had already planned to attend the *tēr* festival where I could meet

diaspora members who visited for the temple's annual festival. I, of course, needed a *vēṭṭi* (Skt.

veshti)[59] to wear to go to the temple because village males should be dressed in *vēṭṭi* and females

in saree (*cāṟi*)[60]. I had some of my old clothes at our house in Inuvil and found one *vēṭṭi*. My

sisters' families and my mother were there too to attend this festival. We all went to the main

road to see the *kāvaṭi* procession; the devotees who danced *kāvati* were drinking soda, and my

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[56] *Kāvaṭi* consists of two semicircular pieces of wood which are bent and attached to a cross structure that can be balanced on the shoulders of the devotee. It is decorated by flowers made of papers and peacock feathers. Mostly young and old male devotees practice this vow.

[57] Temple music or *Periya Mēḷam* music ensemble consists of four types of instruments: *nātaswaram* (a double-reed aerophone), *tavil* (the double-headed drum), *tāḷam* (a set of two small hand cymbals) and *cruti peṭṭi* (the free instrument to provide the drone). See also Yoshitaka Terada, Performing Auspiciousness: *Periya Mēḷam* in South Indian Marriage Ceremony.

[58] Temple cars or chariots are made of wooden, which are used to carry idols (representations) of deities of the temple. Temple cars or chariots are varied in terms of design, color, and size. Each temple may have more than one temple car. Inuvil Kanthaswami temple has three different temple cars.

[59] *Vēṭṭi* is a men's garment, which is made cotton or silk material; it consists of a length, which can be 8 *mulam* (3.65mts or 4 *mulam* (1.85mts). This is wrapped around the waist and tucked in the waistline, the rest is passed down and hanged until the level of ankle of feet. Men wears this garment when they visit Hindu temple for daily ritual purpose or festivals.

[60] *Saree* is a woman's garment, which can be made of cotton, silk and any other wearable cloth material. Its length can be 4.5 mts, which is wrapped around the body.

sisters asked me "did the devotees drink soda while processing with the *kāvati* devotional practice in the past?" My mother suddenly intervened to say, "have you not seen the young devotees who carry the idols of deities n *vākanam* (Skt. *vāhana*) *during* the temple festival procession drank soda? Now everything has changed, and all happens upside down. Who will listen or obey elder's words or advice?" While we were on the main road, Vaman (63 years old) came to our house and joined our conversation. He was one of my key informants and he came to accompany me to the temple for the *tēr* festival. He put forward a counterargument to my mother's comment that "change itself will not change; Inuvil has changed a lot and it is not like before." Vaman was born at Inuvil and moved to Colombo, India and Dubai during the war. His wife and daughter live in Canada and he has never joined his family in Canada, and finally moved back to his own village and became a freelance writer. He was listening to what my mother told us about the current situation in Inuvil village due to the tremendous changes which have occurred; changes which have questioned the conventional practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and other cultural values.

For Vaman, "change itself will not change" because society is always changing, so that this constant continuity of change will not stop or end, but people like my mother perceive change as a big hazard to their order of life and practice. However, Jaffna society has undergone tremendous changes due to colonialism and western cultural imperialism. Hence, globalization is not new to Jaffna society and people have already responded to it. Although Jaffna society has changed through colonial influences and modernity, people like Arumuka Navalar and his followers in the 19th century resisted western cultural imperialism and colonialism in colonial times. But in a larger context, people also accepted colonial changes (education, civil service, and employment), which persisted with constant changes, but the prolonged war period (thirty-year war) did not allow people in Jaffna to interact with global flows very fluently. Since the war ended and the LTTE control was removed from the Jaffna Peninsula, the globalization process was intensified in Jaffna when compared to the past. In addition, Tamil diaspora interactions and

184

transnational ties with the home country have brought changes in Jaffna, which people did not have before.

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindus use "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness" in the reconstruction of their villages. The previous chapter has been dedicated to describing "village consciousness," "village-temple consciousness," and *kaṭṭupāṭu*. There I have intensively discussed the role played by "village consciousness," "village-temple consciousness," and *kaṭṭupāṭu* in the post-war reconstruction of the two villages in the Jaffna Peninsula. How these two villages, Inuvil and Naguleswaram, have implemented their reconstruction projects by using "village consciousness" and "village-temple consciousness," and how they have adjusted to post-war circumstances are reveled in this and the following chapter.

So, this chapter will look particularly at how Inuvil village have been in a period of anxious transition because of what man of its people perceive as a loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu;* the 'social control,' that is, that people there are attempting to regain alongside their past through a reconstruction of village life. At the same time, people in Inuvil were facing challenges to regaining their imagined past life because the prolonged war, and the breaking of family ties, relative and friends' networks, and attitudinal changes. Gradually, they were acknowledging and reacting to the changes. But even as they did so, Inuvil people faced dilemmas and were full of uncertainty about those adjustments; for example, two old women from Inuvil told me that they would like wearing skirts and blouses when they were in Colombo for a visit because such dress was easy and more comfortable to wear than a saree (*cāree*)*.* However, they would never wear such cloths in Inuvil, feeling a hesitation (*tayakkam*) and shame (*veṭkam*) to do so when controlled by the cultural practices in Inuvil.

However, they liked the changes even as, at the same time, they were hesitant to change completely. Overall, the patriarchal structure of the region was an obstacle to change in Jaffna as the peninsula's recently formed feminist and woman associations have also concluded. Also,

185

Inuvil's women were socialized by a patriarchal structure and its associated values; values which they continue to hold. Hence conflicts tend to arise between Inuvil's younger and older generations regarding contemporary change. Why people worry and become anxious about changes because people feel that they could lead to losing ritual and moral orders. As discussed in chapter four, *kaṭṭupāṭu* is more about culturally constructed power and strictly adheres to ritual practices and daily lives. A Jaffna Tamil Hindu's everyday religious and social life is structured on cultural taboos and social norms, which I have termed as social control or *kaṭṭupāṭu*. Hence, understanding the changes of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, the Jaffna Tamil concerns of *māṉam* (honor/reputation), *mariyātai* (respect), *perumai* (greatness), *kovravam* (prestige), *tayakkam* (hesitation to act), *veṭkam* (shame), and *māṉakkēṭu* (dishonor) require paying special attention to this discussion as these are all terms that highlight characteristic feelings, practices, and beliefs important to people in Jaffna Tamil villages.

Further, *kaṭṭupāṭu* should be understood at two levels that one discusses about the religious and domestic rituals orders and the other about social norms and cultural taboos in daily lives. If both structures deteriorate, then people would be anxious or worry about the weakening of social control. When I discussed the ethnographic examples in this chapter, I used phrases such as "I was shocked" or "I was surprised;" which reflected my personal opinion because I am not only an ethnographer, but also an informant who had lived in that community for more than thirty five years and still maintains close interactions with the community even after leaving Jaffna. I was not either anxious or worried about the contemporary changes and breaking traditional customs and cultural taboos. Yet, my intention was to investigate how those cultural taboos and social norms were strictly sanctioned on us during my life in Jaffna, which have been either manipulated or weakened by now. Breaking the traditions and customs for liberative lifestyles in post-war Jaffna is where I wanted to investigate more on '*tuṉiccal*' (courage), which people have cultivated to alter their older practices and innovate new practices. The conventional notion of control is a kind of power/authority, which can be of many types including patriarchal ideology,

astrology, local values and beliefs. In addition, there are other types of controls such as state control, LTTE control, and high-caste control (Brahmins, Veḷḷaḷar, and Kōviyar castes in my case) which are also part of this discussion.

In the village, post-war changes and Inuvil's transition related to *bhakti* religious practices, changes of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* and imagination of Inuvil landscape in the diasporic context have been addressed through four different attitudes: (1) People being nervous to change because they are anxious about changes, so they are rejecting changes in terms of nostalgic *kaṭṭupāṭu*. (2) People accepting certain changes but being anxious about the change of ritual and moral orders (3) People accepting the changes and modernity; and (4) People weaponizing the reformed ritual order for Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism; they maintain nationalistic control with the selective acceptance or rejection of modernity. I will be discussing these attitudes through relevant ethnographic cases in this chapter or rather generational difference. I found that both older and younger people are in these four categories of attitudes related to changes and anxiety.

Why are people anxious about changes? This anxiousness is at two levels. First, when people deviate or give up social norms and cultural taboos, they lose their *kouvravam* (prestige), *māṉam* (honor/reputation), and *mariyātai* (respect). When they lose these attributes, they are identified as immoral persons in the society. Secondly, changing or deviating from Tamil *Caiva* (Saiva) ritual order, which Arumuka Navalar (1822-1879) aimed to preserve in Colonial Jaffna through the orthodox Saiva (*Caiva*) Siddhanta ritual practice. In Colonial Jaffna, Navalar reformed the ritual practice through print (text) media to make *Caiva* public in order to protect Tamil and *Caivacamyam* (Saivism religion) from Western imperialism and colonial modernity (Ambalavanar 2006; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1989). As Ambalavanar (2006) states, *Caiva* public was both resistant and hegemonic. Further, Navalar emphasized the fundamental importance of ritual practice in Tamil Hindu Saivite's life, which will merit *puṇṇiyam* (Skt. *punya*—divine immanence). When one earns *puṇṇiyam* through the Saiva Siddhanta ritual practice, he/she will attain *mukti* or *mōkṣa* (Skt. *moksha*—salvation). Navalar's *caiva* public shows how human

187

morality was structured through ritual order and *kaṭṭupāṭu.* In this chapter, most of the

ethnographic examples will discuss the relations between changes, anxiety, cosmic order,

religious order, ritual order, and morality.

As a result, people internalize the measure of morality through the practice of ritual order

and consequences due to the non-practice of ritual order. Ultimately, the morality of ritual order

structures a good person, at the same time, threatening for not changing the ritual practice.

However, I would argue that the ritual order has been changing for a long time and the whole

population did not listen to Navalar's morality of ritual order and *Caiva* public because

individuals and different castes have been associated with different ritual practices. Also, people

listen to priests (Brahmins) when constructing and altering their ritual and religious practices, but

they are, of course, anxious about changes and deterioration of ritual orders, which would affect

their everyday life, prosperity, wellbeing, wealth, and goodness. Hence, in addition to Navalar's

argument on *puṇṇiyam* and *mukti*, I would argue that people also worry and be anxious about

their everyday life, prosperity, wealth, and wellbeing when they intend to alter or modify

orthodox Saiva Siddhanta ritual order and practice.

Although I listed four distinct attitudes among the people of Inuvil, I more often found two

confronting attitudes about changes. Further, the changes which have occurred during and after

the war, pointing out that these changes are like "paḻaiya ṟōaṭṭil putu route" [new route in an old

road]. On the other hand, another group of elderly and younger people are against post-war

changes and worry about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*: they require a *yukam* ([epoch], Skt. *Yuga*) change

to bring back the old stage. Hence, Inuvil is in a greatest transition from pre-war order to post-war

reconstruction through globalized modernity. This does not mean that Jaffna villages never

experienced globalization and Jaffna villages were part of colonialism. Jaffna was already in the

global context and Tamils have already worked in British colonies. In addition, globalized

nationalism also brought substantial transformation to the villages of Jaffna. But I argue that the

thirty-year-old civil war, militarization and the closure of A-9 highway further delayed the

changes in Jaffna. Eventually, post-war modernity and globalization intensified the changes in Jaffna since the war ended in 2009.

Moreover, many informants in Inuvil were worried about the cultural changes due to the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* People generally claimed that the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and every other transformation that has taken place in contrast to usual practice (*vaḻmaikku māṟāka*) is because of the present epoch, the *kali yukam.* Here *kali* means sorrow/sad and *yukam* stands for the temporal period that has conquered the entire universe at this moment. According to Hindu philosophy, injustices, crimes, dishonest events, and non-obedient behaviors all tend to occur in a *kali yukam.* In this way of thinking, the Universe is organized through circular states of disorder as part of a larger cycle of four different kinds of periodic states, of which the *kali yukam* is one.

 In particular, informants further explained that in the *kali yukam*, humans could intentionally or unintentionally cause things to happen in an *adharma* (wrong action) way. *Adharma* is the antonym of *dharma. Dharma can have* multiple meanings in the various contexts of Indian Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, but here *dharma* means right action, morals, and conduct. In this larger cosmological context, then, people's overall claim was that during the *kali yukam* or *kali kālam* children and subordinate adults disobey parents, teachers, the old and those more highly ranked., This is the reason for all kinds of crime, robbery, and the increase of the use of alcohol and drugs by teenagers. The decline of *ātmīkam* (spirituality) and *bhakti* religiosity, which all are included under the term of *kalāccāra cīraḻivu* (cultural degradation), is also key here.

 In addition, global communication technologies, particularly mobile phones and internet, have made substantial changes in Inuvil people's daily lives. Due to the war and globalization, *kirāmiya* life (village life), people feel, was destroyed and lost its conventional practices in the daily lives in the villagers. However, one group of informants in Inuvil constructed their worldviews through *dharma* (*tarma,* Skt. *dharma*) and *adharma* (*atarma,* Skt. *adharma*) philosophies; they have looked at the war, displacement, sudden shifts from conventional practices, the rise of video culture, and other tremendous changes as all occurring because of the

189

present *kali yukam* or epoch. In contrast, another group of villagers *require* changes in conventional practices and superstitions; that is, they look at such changes as *munētram* (progress). Hence, the following sections will discuss relevant ethnographic examples to show how my informants tried to justify their argument on *kalāccāra cīraḻivu,* destruction of village life, and shift from *kaṭṭupāṭu* for changes.

5.2   The destruction of village life and reactions to the post-war changes

When I asked Vaman about the meaning of *tēr tiruviḻā* (the temple car festival) he explained that *tēr tiruviḻā* represents *aḻittal* (destruction) which is one of the fivefold functions that the lord Shiva performs for the universe (*pirapañca iyakkam*). This philosophical explanation, of course, is not new to Jaffna Tamil Hindus; but the war, destruction, and transitions of the post-conflict period are new to Tamils in Sri Lanka. While observing the temple car festival, Vaman pointed out that just as the temple car took several turns to move around the temple through the temple's outer circle road, in a similar way the village and village life have also taken different turns and transformations due to the war and global communication technologies. Thus, he explained that human life or village life cannot be pursued in one line; instead, it moves through different new turns and along multiple lines.

Obviously, the prolonged war and the influence of global capitalism have changed rural life in Jaffna because the Jaffna Peninsula was a war zone for 30 years and, thus, also not opened to the technological developments of global capitalism. Hence dramatic changes occurred in Jaffna's villages through commercialization and global capitalism after the reopening of the A-9 road (the main land route linking the Jaffna Peninsula with the rest of the country). In addition, removal of the banns on many goods, new communication technologies, postwar freedom of movement, and diaspora connectivity have enormously altered the landscape of village life in Jaffna. Inuvil village was not excepted from these dramatic events and has undergone tremendous changes. Hence, many men and women there mostly worried about the loss of the village life they

had in the past. Hence, just like the Lord Murukan went around the temple in his temple car to know what is happening among the devotees in the village, I also went around the village to see how recent events and post-war consequences have changed the village life. To display what I found, I will use relevant ethnographic experiences I had with family members and other informants during the village's temple festivals, and wedding, puberty, and housewarming ceremonies.

5.3   Case-1: *Katali* bananas and the coconut oil confusions in daily religious rituals

My sisters' families and my mother were preparing to go to the Kanthaswamil temple *tēr tiruviḻā* (temple car festival) and my mother was collecting *arccaṉai*[61] objects (a bunch of banana, coconuts, areca nuts, betel, flowers, incense sticks, and camphor tablets) and I saw she had bought a bunch of *itarai* bananas instead of *katali* bananas This was significant because I knew people usually offer *katali* banana when they do *arccaṉai.* So, I asked my mother about this sudden shift. She explained that when people even had access to different types of bananas, they picked *katali* for *arccaṉai* as they were prescribed as 'a must' in the *agama* (*ākama,* Skt. *agama*) text. But due to the short fall of *katali* bananas, which were very expensive during the war, people looked for an alternative, settled on *itarai* bananas, and started practicing using them instead. In addition, I noticed that people were buying vegetable oil for religious purposes (lightning temple lamp) instead of coconut oil at the Ganesh Stores in Inuvil during my fieldwork and asked the owner of the shop, Ajanthan- 32 years old, about this shift and when it happened. Jaffna Tamil Hindus were using coconut oil for oil lamps in temples and in the shrine room of the house. This was a long-time practice, and coconut oil was a religiously recognized oil for religious purposes according to Jaffna cultural practice, as one old woman told me. Hence, this use of vegetable oil instead was, according to Ajanthan, a very recent shift, which took place after 2006.

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61 *Arccaṉai* refers chanting and *puja* done by the temple priest, which he chants mantras including the person's name and star who purchase an *arccaṉai.*

191

Moreover, although these two examples of change seem simple, such shifts have profound reasoning behind them. This is because people are in a confusion about what can be used for *pūja* since, realistically, it really depends upon the availability of *katali* bananas and coconut oil. To support and justify their practice of substituting alternative bananas and oils, they would say "[it is] all for the almighty and he knows all and can understand our situation." My curiosity was to explore the feelings and views of Tamil Hindus in Inuvil who, in the past, strictly followed some of these religious practices, and strongly enforced *kaṭṭupāṭu* to maintain the order of things in ritual practice, but who have adjusted their practices postwar. I found many examples of this, but I have limited my discussion of them to only two here. Changes are inevitable, but Jaffna Tamil Hindus' certain practices were culture-bound, which is affirmed by their culturally constructed emotions and *kaṭṭupāṭu*.

Furthermore, people had religious explanations for both maintaining the order and for shifting or altering the order. Thus, their consciousness and attitudes change towards their practices due to multiple engagements in their daily lives. However, this transition did not affect the symbolic value of *katali* banana and coconut oil in the Saivite religious context of Jaffna, because the status of these objects was still maintained by their priority; hence people's attitudinal shifts here constitute an *anxious* transition, which some happily acknowledge while others resist and react against. Such an anxious transition created a *vittiyācamāṉa pātai* (different path) for the present generation to lead their lives down; a path where confrontation arose between four distinct attitudinal groups: those supporting such changes, and those resisting them. But I was surprised to see that these four groups did not necessarily break down conventionally into older and younger people; rather the old and young of Inuvil were often both divided on these groups. What was the different path that young people created? How was it connected to their religious and *kaṭṭupāṭu* practices?

5.4 Case-2: *Vittiyācamāṉa pātai* (a different path): "We do not have terms to label the newly created practices"

The devotees pulled the temple car from its destination towards the south-west side of the temple's outer circle road, and I followed Vaman who took me to meet Rahini, the director of a tuition center who lives in Inuvil. She was worried about the behavior of young children and told me about how teachers were unable to control their younger students. In particular, she claimed, belief in religious faith and spirituality were down among young people, and they were addicted to Facebook, WhatsApp, and cinema movies. According to current law, teachers must not hit children at schools and tuition centers in present-day Jaffna, which conflicts with the famous Jaffna Tamils proverb, "aṭiyāta māṭu paṭiyātu" [an unchastised bullock will not obey] that parents and teachers used to cite when they hit children. Unless a bullock was beaten, people would explain to me, it would not listen to do things, and in the similar way, parents or teachers must hit children when the need arises to guide them down the right way, otherwise they would not be corrected in terms of their moral behavior.

In contrast, Rahini said, current law in Jaffna forbids beating or hitting children. Rahini claimed, further, that this new rule is also another advantage to children who do not listen or are afraid of parents and teachers. She further argued that teachers are not strict with children unlike in the past; and that they are flexible with their students these days. She and her staff teachers (young boys) and students took a pilgrimage to the famous Lord Murukan temple, Kadaragama in August 2018. After the prayer (*pūja*) at the temple, they wanted to have their meals and went to the pilgrim guesthouse where they got very limited meals, which Rahini felt were not adequate for those young boys.

She told them that "you all go and have non-veg meals[62] like *kotturoṭṭi*.[63]" Although the young boys already ate string hoppers, they were not sufficient of them. There were sufficient string hoppers, but the young boys would be satisfied having non-veg meals. Non-veg food like *kotturoṭṭi* would be good enough for them and she did not care about the purity -pollution practices that Jaffna Tamil Hindus follow which mandate that people there generally do not eat non-veg meals when they are on religious pilgrimages, and also that Jaffna people do not take non-veg meals after worshiping deities in a temple.

Here they came for a pilgrimage, and even she did not eat non-veg meals, but she could not control her male staffs. Yet I knew she was a very strict woman with her staff and her students 25 years ago. I was surprised to see how much her attitude had changed. She justified this change by saying that "we were raised up through a particular way of life (form of life), and we are unable to get rid of those practices and customs, but we do not need to force these young people to keep them." Also, she thought that the amount of string hoppers available were not sufficient to feed her staff and students, and that non-veg *kotturotti* would be good for them as they are males; thus, she explained her shift in terms of gender -- claiming that young boys would need to eat more food. In addition, she pointed out that Sinhalese pilgrims ate (eat) non-veg meals after worshiping the Kadaragam deity and there were many non-vegetarian restaurants near the temple. She asked, finally, "did Sinhalese pilgrims die when they ate non-veg meals? Did the Lord Kadaragama deity punish Sinhalese pilgrims when they ate non-veg meals? They are even doing better in the country than Tamils." Similarly, I have found many cases of this kind of attitude change among older people during my fieldwork.

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[62] In Sri Lankan English "veg" and "non-veg" are used to make a distinction between vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals. In Tamil, people use the terms, *caivam* or *marakkaṟi cāppāṭu* for vegetarian meals and *acaiva* or *macca cāppāṭu* for non-vegetarian meals.

[63] *Kotturoṭṭi* is a Sri Lankan dish, which is very popularly known as a junk food among the young children and adults. It is made of wheat roti (roti is cut into small pieces) including, egg, vegetables, and chicken. This is also available in many forms that it can be mixed with vegetables or eggs or chicken or mutton or seafood.

The temple car had been moved to the north side of the temple's outer circle road and met there a big crowd of devotees from Inuvil, neighboring villages, and from the diaspora. There were four *taṇṇīr pantal,* temporary huts built by people where they offer free butter milk, water, different fruit drinks, and milk coffee to the devotees, and I saw people from different castes there using the same cups without any purity-impurity complexities arising, although separate cups would have been given to low-caste people in the past. This did not mean that all caste-based practices have diminished in Jaffna, but that people have given up certain caste-based practices in Inuvil. In one of those huts, I met Saratha and her husband who were from Switzerland and who were visiting their *ūr* after 30 years. They were both born in Inuvil and migrated to Switzerland during the war (at an early stage). They talked with me about their village's transformation, saying "we cannot understand what happens among youngsters in Jaffna as well as abroad, and do not see things happening now as they took place in our early days." According to them, they did not know what is happening now and have no terms to call these changes and new practices. Thus, they emphasized that the path of youngsters has become so different (*vittiyācamāṉa pātai*) from what they knew before that they faced a difficulty even categorizing or labeling them. Saratha's husband pointed out, further, that he was searching for a term and definition to address these new practices, which the younger generations are engaged in now, but could come up with nothing to fit them. The reason for his search for new terms and definitions, obviously, was an unsuccessful effort to fit these current practices within his prewar worldview, the only framework he had for understanding and meaning-making.

However, while he appreciated the younger generations among the Jaffna Tamil families in Switzerland and other European countries who tried to protect their Tamil Saivite cultural values and practices in diaspora, He thought the younger generations in Jaffna were giving up their cultural practices. Yet despite Saratha's husband's belief that young people in Jaffna were abandoning cultural practices and pre-war moral order I observed some young people engaged in reconstructing Tamil Saivite ideology among the people in Jaffna Peninsula.

5.5   Case-3: Regaining Tamil Saivite ideology project by youngsters

Although Saratha's husband made a serious claim, on the other hand, another group of youngsters are attempting to regain the past through creating an awareness of Tamil Saivite ideology among the people. This, of course, is just what Arumuga Navalar once did through the Saiva revival movement he started among the Tamil Saivites of Jaffna in the mid-19th century. I was surprised to see that some young boys (between 25-30 years) have become Saiva religious orators delivering religious speeches (*corpoḻivu*) during the temple festivals in Inuvil and other villages. I was surprised because, in the past, it was more mature and older males who used to deliver Tamil sermons (*piracaṅkam*), but after the war young boys have also become involved in Tamil sermon-delivering practices. These young boys were attracted by recent Tamil nationalism and religious awareness creation. However, these young boys were no longer using the term *piracaṅkam*, instead of *corpoḻivu* (a speech/talk).

In addition, as I already mentioned in chapter four, there is the example a new, youthful, Saivite nationalism provided by two young engineers, Nirosh (29 years old) and Sarun (28 years old), who work as part-time Tamil Saivite priests free of charge. They are attracted by Tamil Saivite ideology, which for them is a kind of ethno-religious mobilization created to protect Tamil Saivite identity, the Jaffna landscape, its villages, and Tamil cultural values from the Sinhalization of Tamil speaking areas/the Tamil homeland of the northern and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

Nirosh and Sarun were born in Inuvil and studied at the same school, Jaffna Hindu College. Both hold bachelor's degrees in engineering. Both associate with the Gnanalingeswarar temple (the Lord Shiva temple) where they got training on how to conduct *pūja* in Tamil instead of in Sanskrit from a guru, Sasikumar, who is the founder of this temple and a member of Saivanerikoodam in Switzerland and lives in Switzerland. This is an example of how, after the war, different diaspora connections have changed the *bhakti* religious practices of Inuvil village.

196

In Nirosh and Sarun's case, this Tamil mantra *pūja* training was provided by the Swiss diaspora and Saivanerikoodam.

This new religious innovation challenged the conventional Brahmanical or Sanskritized form of religiosity previously dominant in Jaffna. Nirosh and Sarun, for example, questioned Brahmanical Saivism in many ways. For example, the boys argued that Brahmin priests do not allow people to touch the idol of deities in temples, and that people are not allowed to go to the temple and touch the statues of deities during the pollution (*tuṭakku*) which is transmitted by one's death. In contrast, at this Lord Shiva temple. People were allowed to visit even though affected by death pollution or impurity. Further, they questioned why non-Brahmin castes must maintain thirty one days of death pollution period while Brahmins have the privilege of only an eleven days pollution period. Why this disparity, they asked. Did the Bhagavad Gita tell of such a disparity? Why do the Brahmin priests tell us this rule, they went on? Why do they control people, and why this manipulation? Does any text say that people should not worship in Tamil? Arguing for the antiquity of Tamil civilization, they pointed out that people proudly make the statement "Tamils appeared on the globe with a sword (i.e., indicating iron smelting) soon after the rocks emerged but before the formation of sand" (kal tōṉṟi maṇtōṉṟā kālattē vāḷōṭu muṉ tōṉṟiya mūtta kuṭi). In that ancient time, they demanded, did people worship the god in Sanskrit instead of Tamil?

Nirosh and Sarun claimed, further, that people, of course, should be able to use the Tamil language for worship because the Tamil language is the first and foremost language rather than Sanskrit, which came after the Tholkāppiyam.[64] Throughout India, they said, Brahmin domination and authority shapes religiosity. Then, revealing some anti-Muslim sources in his rhetoric, Sarun went on to tell me that he once read a newspaper story in which one Muslim person filed a case asking why women should be barred from attending the Sabari Malai Iyappan

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[64] Tholkāppiyam is an oldest Tamil grammar book was written in Tamil

temple in Kerala. But why, Sarun asked, did not any Hindu Ministry ask Muslim people why they do not allow Muslim women to go to Mosque? Hindu Ministry people, he believed, are afraid of asking about Muslim people.

Similarly, Tamil Hindus in Jaffna are afraid of challenging Brahmin priests about their Brahmanical benefits and existence. People do not ask critical questions about the authority of Brahmin priests and their control of ritual and religious practices. Nirosh said "no deity tells us we can't touch them." When the Brahmin priests do the *pūja* at the temple, they went on, people talk to each other because they cannot understand the language (the Sanskrit mantras) of the *pūja*. The boys also claimed that that since Tamil people fought for 30 years for the Tamil state and the Tamil language, then why should they not do the *pūja* in Tamil? Indeed, since people still fight for Tamils and the Tamil language, then why should the *pūja* be in Sanskrit?

Since Nirosh and Sarun joined this Tamil Saivite movement and its temple activities, some of their family members objected. However, objections and protests came not just from their families, but as a collective force, from the Sri Pararaja Sekera Pillaiyar temple's younger devotees who, according to Nirosh and Sarun, fabricated falsehoods about the devotees who associated with the new Lord Shiva temple, saying "the boys who associate with the Siva temple, they would become a *siddhar* (*cittar*) or *ñāṉi* (a Saint)." The Brahmin priests of other temples in Inuvil were trying to control and brainwash the village boys, they claimed, to convince them not to associate with the new Lord Shiva temple, because the priests are against these young boys who associate with the new Shiva temple. The main reason for this, they believed, was that since the new Shiva temple does not get *tacciṉai* (a fee offered to the priest) from devotees, the priests of other temples in Inuvil are against the new Shiva temple because its example would threaten their income. Although Nirosh and Sarun are also religious professionals, they do the priesthood, they claimed, for their own satisfaction and to give training to those in the current generation who are interested in learning the Tamil *pūja* method.

However, the chief priest (Brahmin priest) of the Sri Parajasekera Pillaiyar temple in Inuvil, when I talked to him, criticized the new Lord Shiva temple and its Tamil *pūja* method. He pointed out that its practices are not new. People had already been practicing in those ways for many years in Inuvil. He was referring, here, to the non-*ākama* temples where some people practice in a completely non-*ākama* form while other people practice in a semi-*ākama* form. Here semi-*ākama* means that a Brahmin priest conducts *pūja* at special festival times while the non-Brahmin priests continue doing *pūja* the rest of the time. However, my informants argued that the recent Tamil *pūja* method is completely different from both the *ākama* and non-*ākama* forms of the past, and this new method is more professionalized than the practices found in villages in the past. Also, this new Tamil *pūja* method uses the Tamil language as a medium of instruction, which includes Tamil Saiva hymns particularly composed by Nayanmars (Tamil Saivite saints).

In addition, this system allows people to get much closer to the deity and touch the idol of the deity and worship, which is impossible at other forms of religious and ritual contexts. The involvement of the young in religious revivalism is not only about protecting Tamil Saiva identity and Tamil cultural values, but also about guiding the future generations towards a spiritual path in order to preserve the Tamil Saivite religion and Tamil identity in post-war Jaffna. Such a planned spiritual development project has been implemented through the Tamil diaspora network, and I was surprised to see the role of the new Lord Shiva temple and Saiva Manavar Sabai ([*caiva māṇvar capai*] Saivite Students Association) in creating such awareness among young children to prepare them for their future endeavors. Otherwise, young children are trapped in a bad path and involved in cultural degeneration (*kalāccāra cīraḻivu*), which Arjun, my informant who lives in Australia, argued. The following ethnographic example is based an interview I conducted with Arjun who argued that if spiritual development increased, then cultural degeneration would be controlled.

5.6 Case-4: Encouraging spiritual development and stopping cultural degeneration (*kalāccāra cīraḻivu*)

As I discussed throughout the dissertation, many Inuvil people are worried about a loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and an increase in cultural degeneration (*kalāccāra cīraḻivu*). To react to post-war consequences and challenge recent changes, people like Arjun encouraged spiritual development among young children to protect the future generation. Here I will explain Arjun's reactions to current changes. Arjun (45 years old) is an engineer, originally from Jaffna, who studied at the Jaffna Hindu College (JHC) and currently lives in Australia. He and his friends, who were old students of JHC, formed the Saiva Maṇavar Sabai, which promotes religious leadership among the younger people in Jaffna. This organization particularly targeted the JHC because more than 2000 students were currently in the JHC. Arjun claimed that their generation had been destroyed by the war, hence the need to create a new generation sustainable for another 20 years.

To do this, Arjun told me, their current society needs good leadership, and therefore, Arjun and his followers worried about the previous leadership of the LTTE who conquered the Jaffna Peninsula and destroyed in the youth during the war their earlier adherence to Tamil Saivite religious faith and Tamil cultural values. That LTTE's leadership only focused on war, tax collection, and recruiting soldiers, he believed, and this damaged Tamil Saivite ideology and Tamil cultural values. The new leadership Arjun envisioned would be created through religion and spirituality (*ātmīkam*). But this was difficult to do, Arjun argued, given the distractions of postwar life. For example, many people complained about the use of drugs among school children. The use of drugs, pornography, and alcohol were known in Jaffna as *kavaṉakalaipāṉkaḷ* (things that can distract the concentration).

Furthermore, Arjun also shared a narrative, which is widely spoken among the people of Jaffna, claiming that the increased use of drugs among the young children after the war was purposefully done by outside forces (the Sri Lankan government) to abolish Tamil culture and destroy the future generation of the Tamil community. To overcome this Arjun believed, Jaffna

200

society needed a fresh generation with moral leadership which should emerge through religious order and which can control the children. For example, Arjun believed that young children were involved in many different criminal activities, and teachers no longer had the power to control the children because the young children would attack them. Also, some young people were part of the so-called sward gang (*vāḷ veṭṭu group).* A young teacher (27 years old) from a low-caste background wrote poetry about the current situation, which is given below. I found it on his Facebook page and got permission from him to use his poem in my dissertation. This poem was in Tamil and has been translated into English by Dr. David C. Buck.[65]

Teachers!

This society will ask questions only of you.

A student will show stubbornness, so just curl up and leave!!
The student will attack you.
Take the hits.
He'll call you by a slangy nickname.
Just wait with a smile.
He'll come wearing tight clothes, don't even look.
He'll cut his hair unfashionably, don't let him make up stories.
He'll chew betelnut, don't let him turn into an enemy
He'll crash into you.
Don't listen to his tapping.
He won't come to class, keep your mouth shut.
Even if he were to come, he'd just tease you.
Don't growl, just wait.
If you go to say something good, he'll say, "Who are you to say that?"! (So) don't say it

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Ācriyarkaḷē!!

Inta camutāyam uṅkaḷait tāṉ kēḷvi kēṭkum.

Māṉvaṉ caṇṭittaṉam kāṭṭuvāṉ aṭaṅki pōṅkaḷ!!
Māṉvaṉ uṅkaḷait tākkuvāṉ
aṭi vāṅkuṅkaḷ.
Paṭṭapeyar colli aḻaippāṉ

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puṉṉakaiyuṭaṉ kaṭantruṅkaḷ.
Āṭaikaḷai iṟuka uṭuttuk koṇṭu varuvāṉ kaṇṭukātīrkaḷ.
Talaimuṭikaḷai anākarikamāka kattarippāṉ kataittuviṭātīrkaḷ.
Pākku cāppiṭuvāṉ pakaittuviṭātīrkaḷ.
Taṅkaḷukkuḷ mōtik koḷvāṉ
taṭṭik kēṭkkātīrkaḷ.
Vakuppukku varamāṭṭāṉ vāi mūṭiyiruṅkaḷ.
Vantālum uṅkaḷai cīṇṭuvāṉ
cīrāmal iruṅkaḷ.
Nallatai collap pōṉāl nī yār atai colvatarku eṉpāṉ!
collātīrkaḷ.

Whatever of these things happens don't get mad.
Because you are the teachers!!
This society will ask questions only of you.
If you get ready to punish him, you get the punishment.
If you get ready to criticize him, there will be an investigation.
Even so, society will ask questions only of you.
Because you are the teachers.

Ivaikaḷil etu naṭantālum kōpappaṭātīrkaḷ
ēṉeṉil nīṅkaḷ ācriyarkaḷ!!
Inta camutāyam uṅkaḷaittāṉ kēḷvi kēṭkum.
Taṇṭikka veḷikkiṭāl taṇṭaṉai.
Kaṇṭikka veḷikkiṭāl vicāraṇai.
Iruntum camutāyam uṅkaḷaittāṉ kēḷvi kēṭkum.
Ēṉeṉil nīṅkaḷ ācriyarkaḷ.

Without researching and learning the ways of western countries, they're all fluttering to follow them!!!
I have something to say to everybody who flutters around in an effort to create uncontrolled generation:

Mother's scolding,
Father's beating, and
Teacher's criticism
Are never intended to destroy!!
They are strong enough to nurture children's well-being!!
If possible!!
Teach children to respect teachers.
Make arrangements to learn directly about the teachers who teach in the classroom
When children tell stories attacking teachers show them properly that they should not tell stories like that.
Teach them that if they do something wrong there is criticism.
Explain that people who are teachers are not able to create things, nor are they able to destroy.
Someday even if there are students to learn there won't be any good teachers.
If not!!!!!!!!!!!!

Mēlaittēca muṟaimaikaḷai āiyntaṟiyāmal piṉparrattuṭikkum!!!
Taṟikeṭṭa talaimuṟaiyai uruvākkat tuṭikkum ellōrukkum oṉṟu
colkiṟēṉ.

202

Ammāviṉ ēccum
appāvin aṭiyum
āciriyariṉ kaṇṭippum
orupōtum aḻivai nōkkākak koṇṭatalla!! Avai piḷḷaikaḷiṉ
uḷanalattai pēṉa vallavaiyē!!
muṭintāl!!
piḷḷaikaḷ āciriyarkaḷai mattikka kaṟṟukoṭuṅkaḷ.
Pāṭacālaiyil kaṟpikkum āciriyarkaḷ paṟṟi nērmaṉappāṅkai
ēṟpaṭutuṅkaḷ.
Piḷḷaikaḷ āciriyarkaḷai paṟṟi tarakkuṟaivākak kataikkum pōtu
Pakkuvamākavē avvāṟu kataikkak kūṭāteṉpatai eṭuttuc
colluṅkaḷ. Tappuc ceitāl kaṇṭippu uṇṭeṉa collik koṭuṅkaḷ.
Āciriyarkaḷ eṉpōr ākkak kūṭiyavarkaḷē aṉṟi aḻikkak kūṭiyavarkaḷalla
eṉpatai eṭuttuc colluṅkaḷ.
Illaiyēl!!!
Eṉṟāvatu our nāḷ kaṟpataṟku māṇvarkaḷ iruntālum nal āciriyarkaḷ
irukkamāṭṭārkaḷ.

Thus, according to this view, Jaffna culture has become much worse because while once Jaffna was considered a Capital City of Tamil culture (*paṇpāṭiṉ talainakaram*) that image has been destroyed by these distractions. Therefore, Arjun and his colleagues decided to train school children through *ātmīkam* (spirituality). They targeted students who are in grade five and six (11- and 12-years-old children), which the saw as the perfect age group. If this age group of students could be trained for three years, they reasoned, then there should be little chance or possibility of them deviating from their morality. Even if they went into a different path (*vittiyācamāṉa pātai*)*,* Arjun's group believed, there still would be a possibility of bringing them to back to their old path (*paḻaiya pātai*) through religious and spiritual engagements. For this purpose, Arjun and his colleagues introduced a Shiva Lingam concept (an iconic representation of the Lord Shiva, which is made of stone), which is implemented by the Saiva Manavar Sabai (the Saiva Students Association, which Jaffna Hindu college old students have formed in Australia to create religious awareness among young children in northern and eastern Sri Lanka). The philosophy of their association is to show the difference between the existing *kōvil* (temple) concept and their Shiva Lingam concept.

According to them, the old *kōvil* concept still maintains a distance between the *kaṭavuḷ* (deity) and the people; people always worship the deity and look at the religious prayers performed by the priest from about 30 feet away. By contrast the Saiva Student's Association believed that people get nothing through religious prayer without a physical attachment to the deity in the temple. Furthermore, they felt the *kōvil* concept did not pursue the notion of God in the hearts and minds of the people; as a result, the notion of deity was diminishing among the people. To reform this situation, the association suggested that people should promote *kulateiyvam*[66] worship where people have more involvement with their deities than with a priest's authority over the deities. His inspiration for this was derived from a pilgrimage that Arjun took throughout north India where the Shiva Lingam concept is very popular, and where people frequently experience a proximity interaction with the Shiva Lingam.

Those north Indian Hindu temples did not restrict devotees' movements and involvements in the temple premises in terms of caste differences. For example, without caste differences, any devotee can give a bathing —*abhisheka* (*apiṣēkam,* Skt. *abhisheka*) *to* the Shiva Lingam (*civaliṅkam*), which enables them to socialize religiously. In order to introduce this practice in Jaffna, the Saivite Students Association composed the *Sentamiḻākama pūja*[67] method. This association also contacted the Inuvil Gnanaligeswarar temple because they had already started to use this method to practice puja. Indeed, Nirosh and Sarun are practicing it there.

On October 22, 2018, the first Shiva Lingam was placed in the JHC[68]. Arjun told me that the Saivite religion was diminishing in Jaffna because previously all leadership was drawn from the Veḷḷaḷar hegemony. People lost their rights because they were divided in terms of caste, which

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[66] *Kulateiyvam* refers to family, clan, caste-deity or even village guardian deity also can be a *kulateiyvam* for some people.

[67] This includes Thēvāram, Thiruvācakam, Periyapurānam, Thirumantram, Saiva Sidhandam and other Saivite religious poetic hymns written in Tamil, which would be chanted for performing *pūja.*

[68] This costed 2.3 million Sri Lankan rupees, which was contributed by the 15-20 Tamil diaspora members who are old boys of JHC. His friends are in Canada, London, and Australia.

should change. There is a difference, he claimed, between the South Indian way of approaching the God and the North Indian way of approaching the God. In the Hindu temples of South India and Sri Lanka, according to Arjun, the temple had been structured in terms of different halls (*maṇṭapam*) and had restricted people's movement in those halls; in particular, nobody was allowed to go up to the main sanctorum of the temple and nobody was permitted to have a personal engagement with the deity.

In contrast, in north India, particularly at the Jothi Lingams temples (there are 12 such temples throughout India), where people are not discriminated against in terms of caste, gender, and ethnicity, this paved the way for people to express their *bhakti* religiosity. Arjun even criticized the term 'Hindu,' which he claimed was a diluted concept and an *Ārya* word that destroyed pure Tamil Saiva religiosity. He further explained that during the Sri Lanka civil war, young children's minds were forced by the LTTE to think in their particular way rather than to think in terms of Tamil Saiva religion and Tamil culture, because the LTTE needed more soldiers for their militant force and targeted young boys in Jaffna for that purpose. To get more soldiers, they had to brainwash young boys to distract from their ordinary life.

To commemorate his mother's recent death, Arjun published a manual guidebook on how to conduct *pūja* according to the *Sentamiḻākama pūja* method, which was freely distributed to anyone who was interested to learn. This association extended their service to Batticaloa as well and founded the Saiva Panpattu Naduvam ([*paṇpāṭṭu naṭuvam*] Saiva Cultural Center) at Palaacholai in Kaluvankeni in Batticaloa.[69] The aims of this association are to accomplish various activities in this center; for example, this place is used for *aṟaneṟi* (moral) school, as a tuition center, and as a medical camp. Thus, Arjun and his colleagues aim to encourage spiritual and moral education among the young children to prevent their involvement in criminal activities.

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[69] There is a Nāgadambirān (Cobra) temple and the owner of the temple donated a land to establish this organization.

I would argue that at the end of the war, religious tension Jaffna has been increased more than ethnic tension. The religious landscapes of Tamil Sri Lanka have been widened and strengthened in the northern and eastern provinces in Sri Lanka, because many new Hindu temples are built in both provinces of Sri Lanka, as I observed while working on another project with my advisor and other colleague in the summer of 2018. The temple car has reached its original destination and the day festival of the temple car festival came to an end. But many village devotees and diaspora members were worried about how much the atmosphere of the temple festival has changed. I will move to another ethnographic example to clarify this issue.

5.7 Case-5: Global communication technology and a media boom: Alterations of village life, festivals, and cultural practices

One day when I was standing on the temple's outer circle road (*veḷi vīti*) observing the temple car festival, one elderly person told me that nowadays the number of village people who visit the temple festival has declined. Many people in Inuvil were worried about the number of devotees who were coming to the temples compared to the past. I also noticed that most village people only visited the temples only on the most special of the 25 days of the annual festival at the Kanthaswamil temple. At the temple car festival, I met a few of my village friends; some of my other, older friends had moved to Colombo or abroad after the massive displacement of Jaffna people that took place in 1995. Hence, for me as for many other people in Inuvil, war and out migration have broken the village's social friends' networks.

Another informant told me that some housewives are more interested in watching tele serials than in attending the night festivals.[70] That is, he claimed, some visit during the daytime but do not come for the night festival as they wish to stay at home to watch tele serials. However, this fascination with TV was a very recent change, certainly coming after the war, because Jaffna was cut off from the electricity for 8 years (1990-1998) during the war, and people did not have access

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[70] In Jaffna, most Hindu temple festivals fall into two parts: a day festival and a night festival.

to television serials and cable connections. Though electricity was supplied to Jaffna Peninsula in 1998, cable television connections were not established then. However, after the electricity was restored in Jaffna, people had free access to South Indian Tamil movies through DVD players. There was a huge transformation in temple activity due to this resumption of electricity and the end of the LTTE's control over Jaffna, this last because the LTTE (during the LTTE state period 1990-1995) banned watching South Indian Tamil movies and porn movies, and temple musicians were not allowed to play Tamil cinema songs at temples instead of *bhakti* songs or the LTTE's Tamil Eelam heroic songs.

Thus, entertainment was controlled and limited during the war and LTTE period. Removal of the LTTE from the Jaffna Peninsula did not mean only the LTTE, but also their rules and regulations. The electricity supply, telephone connections, cable television, the internet, and social media immensely changed the rural life of the people in Jaffna villages. These kinds of changes have been well documented in many other societies, but Jaffna was out of touch from these global flows and new opportunities for 30 years and, then, was suddenly flooded with them within a short period. As the famous, Jaffna, feminist activist Rajani Chandrasekeram has said, Jaffna did not face development and change step by step [but all at once]; therefore, its sudden contact with the global flows, global capitalism, and diaspora remittances deeply challenged the village life, youth behavior, and cultural practices.

After the war, the increase of technology and global media influences have engaged with temples and temple festivals. One of my older friends, Gnanesh, who lives in France, came for the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple's annual festival. He felt that when a temple festival is presented through technology-based video images, this created an ambiguity about whether it was temple landscape or carnival. This was particularly the case at the temple festival where I met up with him, because, as he pointed out, the videographer was using a drone video camera to record the festival. An elderly informant told me that this temple at least has the *mañcam* (a temple car)

to express the history and ancientness/authenticity of the temple because the *mañcam* has been preserved for more than a century (107 years old).

Even though Gnanesh's entire family is in France, he wanted to show his village to his son and to accomplish vows at his *ūr kōvils*. Also, he wanted to meet his village people because, as he told me, one had the feeling of *ūr* by meeting one's village people and experiencing the physical surroundings of one's own village. But, looking around, Ganesh told me that the number of people gathering at the temple had declined and that there were too few people at the temple during the festival. Also, he noticed that people did not stay for long in the temple; some went early, and some stayed until the temple festival finished. People did not even spend much time to talking, and he expected that people would spend much time to talk and interact with each other like how it was during his time (1990s), but it is not like before. Gnanesh, like many other diaspora members, felt that people's lifestyle in Jaffna had become like how people experience a "machine life" in foreign countries.

However, Gnanesh argued about how much they maintain people's relations and *ūr paṟṟu* (love for village) in France. Furthermore, he pointed out that everyone in Inuvil is more concerned about their work, family life, and their own routine of work than ever before. People are busier with their work than with helping others. He stated, "muntiṉa mātiri illai, ippō caṉaṅkaḷ nalla māṟṟam" [it is not like before and people have now changed]. He was surprised to see how the much the village lifestyle had been transformed by global communication technology; for instance, now every arrangement for a ceremonial occasion at home is done through telephone calls. In earlier days, people had to manage both their daily routine of work and event arrangements themselves. Gnanesh own experience was that now there were lots of changes in terms of welcoming practices among Jaffna Tamil people; for example, in Inuvil, people before never asked guests if they had already had their meals when they were invited for a wedding and other party events. It was not considered polite; instead the host would tell them to "please have meals", and smile and be polite when addressed. If guests were seated, then the host would go up

to people and touch or hold their hands and invite them to eat. Even when guests are already at the wedding and other cultural events, elderly people expect hosts to invite them to have their meal; otherwise, they would not go to the place where the meals are served. This was a usual custom in Inuvil village, but it has now slowly changed.

During my stay in Inuvil for my fieldwork, I found that when people were invited to events, they did not wait until the host had called them to have a meal, but simply went to have the meal in a self-service sort of system. This astonished me, because when our aunt's family introduced this self-service system at her own daughter's puberty ceremony in 1995 during the war time in order to manage the guests at their home in Inuvil, people in the village objected and criticized her arrangement saying that they could not have their meal properly because many were reluctant to go to the self-service table to take meals due to hesitation and shame (*veṭkam*). In Inuvil and other villages, meals were served to the guests when they were seated on the floor and the meals were served on a banana leaf instead of a plate. This custom has gone away at home once the self-service system was adopted by the people in Inuvil and people prefer to have the new system instead of the previous practice.

Though I felt that many aspects of temple and village life have changed, I was confused about whether I would consider them as changes or, as Gnanesh (a diaspora person) thought, a change in comparison with their past experience. I wished to know whether people perceive them as changes or not, so I had many casual conversations regarding this matter at temples, road junctions, shops, and houses. As a result, I found many people who told me, "everything was not like before." So, then I asked them what they meant by this statement, and they compared many things with their past experiences. For instance, Gnanesh, my informant, pointed out that in Inuvil, a wedding ceremony was organized through a collective effort in the past; village women collectively made *palakāram* (different snacks including sweet and spicy snacks), and also, they cut vegetables for the wedding feast.

Gnanesh pointed out that village women sometimes took part in cooking as well when there was no specific cook hired. In the past, cooking also took place in the house; people collectively shared the work to organize a wedding. As I lived in Inuvil, I also observed how peoples' commitments and dedication played a vital role in organizing a wedding. Gnanesh pointed out that young boys and adults helped in cleaning and decorating the house. Thus, he says there was a *orrumai* (unity) among the members of the community and wedding works were collectively shared. However, this has changed now that most of these arrangements are done through event management. He says that there are many reasons behind this change because members of the community are scattered due to the war, displacement and migration. Also, many close relatives and friends' networks had broken and there was a lack of labor to attend to all kinds of work in a conventional manner. Gnanesh was not worried about the change because now most of the wedding arrangements are sophisticatedly done through event management and as a result, people hardly have any work to do. Yet, he pointed out that there was no *happiness*. By happiness he meant a collective shared work and involvement that resulted in happiness and unity among members. Further, he pointed out that community bond and attachment have diminished due to individualism that each family is busy concentrating on its progress than on others. Based on his interview, I interpret that in the past, people maintained the collective consciousness through collective participation in rituals. So, the rituals and ceremonies maintained the community bond and communal life.

Although changes are inevitable in societies, people would argue that many things were not changed during their period, and that they had preserved such constants for a long time. That is, they would say that even though there were changes in terms of fashion, dress codes, and so forth in the past, human relations and interactions were maintained cordially and emotionally. Overall, the issue of such human relations is widely discussed in postwar Inuvil, which is in an anxious transition from pre-war cultural practices to modernity due to the fact that their lifestyle has been changed. After having discussed changes that have occurred in village life, temple festivals, and

other cultural arenas and practices with informants I met at the temple car festival, Vaman and I turned back to home where we had lunch with our family members. Thereafter I started investigating the recent changes in Inuvil that occurred after the war and, even before that, after the reopening of A-9 road. Vaman suddenly remembered a recent the puberty ceremony held in Inuvil. In the following section, I will move to cover a conversation Vaman had with his family about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and a puberty ceremony.

5.8   Case-6: Loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and an anxious transition

There was a serious debate between Vaman and my mother about Masoda's daughter's puberty ceremony, which was celebrated in a grand style in August 2018. As a member of the Naḷavar caste (a low caste), Masoda was seen by most Veḷḷaḷar in Inuvil as belonging to a low caste background; and it was Mosado who performed the ritual, innovatively, in a way different from conventional puberty ceremony practices. Masoda's daughter's puberty ritual was held in a grand style. Masoda's daughter was decorated like a bride and brought in a horse cart from Jaffna town to her house in Inuvil where her family had organized the ceremony. The whole Inuvil community was surprised to see the grandness of this procession because nobody from other castes in the village before had celebrated like this.

Vaman and my mother, like me members of the village's majority Veḷḷaḷar caste population of the village, had contradictory views about the ceremony. Vaman commented that everything is happening beyond the limit and *kaṭṭupāṭu,* whereas my mother used a very simple logic to argue that Masoda's husband earned a good income and wished to spend it for his daughter's puberty ceremony. Hence, from her point of view, a third person had no right to comment on this innovative ritual performance. She also argued that many people were performing rituals innovatively these days.

However, Vaman worried about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* of which he saw this as an example. My mother also worried about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in Inuvil among young children in relation to

their moral behavior, but not with regard to Masoda's daughter's puberty ceremony. Similarly, many people in Inuvil worry about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* which of course conveys the feeling of being in an anxious transition from conventional ritual practices to modified ritual practices that Inuvil people experienced during and after the war. The reason for this anxiety among people in Inuvil is because of the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in those conventional practices. Many Inuvil people reason that if people lose the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* then this will also change how Jaffna Tamils regard *māṉam* (reputation), *mariyātai* (respect/honor), *kouvravam* (prestige), *veṭkam* (shame), and *māṉakkēṭu* (dishonor).

    This set of practices, all part of *kaṭṭupāṭu*, are now being redefined though new explanations, and young people place them with new interpretations to justify their reasonings. For instance, love marriage was not much accepted in the past, because older people were more concerned on maintaining their family greatness (*kuṭumpa perumai*), family reputation and *kouvravam*. However, Venthan, my informant, explained to me that he would gain *kouvravam* through receiving a huge dowry from his wife's family though he had a love marriage. In another context, Vani, a young girl (25 years old) from Inuvil argued that in the past, parents and elders in the community expected girls to maintain *aṭakkam* (modesty), which would uphold their *kouvaravam*. If they did not maintain modesty, then it would be dishonor and shame. Yet, young girls like Vani argued that modesty is important to humanity, but not so for males. She mentioned that "this society is *āṉātikka camūkam* (male dominated society)," and these cultural expectations are made by males. Thus, she constructed her own views on those cultural practices.

    These terms reflect to one's self how one is placed in postwar Jaffna. Whenever people keep *kaṭṭupāṭu* they are afraid of their self, and whether their self would be analyzed negatively in those terms listed above. For instance, when high caste people talk about own selves, they always compare themselves with low-caste people. The high caste people often use the insult phrase "naḷam paḷḷukaḷai pōla" (Like Nalavar and Pallar castes), which means that high caste people conceptualize their own selves through their superiority complex, and that they view the selves of

212

low caste people in derogatory way. Veḷḷaḷar hegemony over cultural practices still continues as in Vaman's argument, but at the same time, women like my mother are competing with this Veḷḷaḷar power and patriarchal structure to create a new space for acknowledging changes.

Vaman claimed that he criticized the puberty ceremony he had recently seen because it was innovative, fanciful, and was performed differently than what he called "conventional practice". Here, as a fellow villager, I found myself at odds with Vaman. I had a problem with phrase "conventional practice" as Vaman was using it for I knew that it actually represented here the hegemonic Veḷḷaḷar conception of puberty rituals. Although high-caste people innovated certain practices but criticized when low-caste people performed their puberty rituals innovatively. I could see an example of this in the case of ritual organized by a woman named Mosada.

Masoda's mother, Rani, and her mother, Valli, had worked continuously as laborers (housemaids) in Inuvil for many years. Valli had died some years ago, but Rani still lived with her daughter, who had stopped her mother from working as a laborer in order to lift up their status. Masoda, herself, eloped with her husband 19 years ago; eloped, that is, because her marriage was against her mother's and grandmother's wishes. Masoda 's father separated from her mother when she was a small girl. Hence, these three women struggled a lot for their livelihood in the past. When Masoda did not obey her mother and grandmother' control, they excommunicated her for a few years; but then she soon thereafter rejoined them. By 2018, they were financially well-established and had built a two-story house. And it was this same kind of ostentatious display of wealth in the puberty ceremony that aroused high caste criticism. Many Veḷḷaḷar people were shocked by their puberty ceremony because no Veḷḷaḷar family in Inuvil had ever celebrated in this very grand style. However, when other Veḷḷaḷar people commented with jealousy and envy about this celebration, my mother commented, "her husband earned that money; it is their money; they spend for their daughter;, it is for their wish and pleasure, [so] why other people should get involved?" I was surprised to see my mother's transition towards acknowledging the changes happening in Inuvil after the war.

However, I would not claim that my mother is not a typical Jaffna woman bound by cultural practices, for she of course practiced them when she was in Jaffna until 2009. She escaped, then, from the final Sri Lankan civil war and moved to Colombo by air in 2009 as the land route was blocked by the Sri Lanka Military Force. I was able to see her transition from opposing to accepting change with anxiety because of her widowhood. That is, she moved to Colombo shortly after my father's death and was away from village cultural practices. But, once in Colombo, even she did not want to go back to Inuvil because there she would be recognized as a widow by the village community, and would then have had to follow certain expected cultural practices in Inuvil. For instance, first, a widow cannot dress how she did when her husband was alive. Second, widow's presence and movements are limited in cultural events like weddings and puberty ceremonies. Third, widows are not allowed to perform certain rites at weddings. There are many similar practices in Jaffna villages.

Colombo, on the other hand, was an urban context where no one knew that she is a widow. There she was able to have her freedom. For example, my mother never wore a skirt and blouse rather than a sari in her life in Inuvil because her parents did not allow her to. But she now wears both skirt and blouse in Colombo. She also broke with certain other cultural practices that youngsters also fought. Yet my mother still acts in accordance with many Inuvil cultural practices even as she maintains a certain flexibility, however anxious, about others. In this way she too was, and is, in a state of anxious transition.

Typically, widows were encouraged to not perform some ritual duties at weddings and puberty rituals, and widows were prohibited from being present at auspicious events for the Tamil Hindu pantheon in Jaffna. This is because widows were always recognized as *amaṅkali* (inauspicious), but lately this customary prohibitory feeling against widows has slowly eroded at least to some extent. For instance, I observed on many occasions, that while widows were hesitant to be at the forefront when participating in certain ritual obligations, people in the present generation rather encourages them to participate. This shift does not mean, however, that the

214

status of widowhood has increased because widows are still excluded from other cultural and ritual contexts. Nonetheless, the Saiva religious notion of widowhood is slowly shifting, and different explanations are being constructed by different genders for this shift, which does not claim that women are treated equally (gender equality) with men in post-war Jaffna.

Hence, in Inuvil, many changes have taken place during and after the war. All societies, of course, change. In Inuvil, though, in response to change, *kaṭṭupāṭu* tightened its cultural practices to some extent, yet sometimes allowed *kaṭṭupāṭu* to became flexible when the need arose. Such manipulation of social control is possible in the context of present-day Inuvil [out of necessity]. Thus, people in Inuvil sometimes changed their practices for convenience's sake, while, at the same time, they strictly followed *kaṭṭupāṭu* for certain other practices. I will explain this last point through another ethnographic example.

5.9   Case-7: Removal of *kaṭṭupāṭu* for Vevy's convenience

Vevy and her husband Shanmugam invited me to attend their housewarming ceremony in Inuvil, which was on January 28, 2018. Both were originally from Inuvil and married in 1994 during the war. They had three children and struggled without a house for many years. By 2018, however, they had bought land and built a new house in north Inuvil. I had attended many housewarming ceremonies in Inuvil in the past, up until 2003. After that, I had not gotten a chance to attend a housewarming ceremony in Inuvil and so was surprised to see the many changes revealed in this post-war housewarming ceremony. In the past, the *shanti* ([*cānti*, Skt. *śāntih*] a kind of remedy)[71] ritual was performed a day prior to the housewarming ceremony, and people still follow this custom. So, I was surprised to hear from Vevy that they had their *shanti* ritual three days prior to the housewarming ceremony.

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[71] *Shānti* or *vāstu* shanti ritual is performed before beginning to dwell in a newly built house in order to avoid adverse effects by nature and environment.

Shanti is obligatory for a new house before one starts to dwell in it. When I asked people the reason for this ritual, some told that it is a kind of purification that is done before dwelling in a newly built house or building, and some described it as about chasing out dangerous spirits from a newly built house. When I asked the reason for changing the usual practice, Vevy said she did this because she wanted to move things from her previous house to the new house. People do not bring their cloths and other belongings to a new house until they have performed the *shanti*. She wanted to arrange the new house, particularly the living room with new furniture and decorations, to display their family wealth to the guests. To make these prearrangements, she needed a few days in advance of the ceremony, and therefore performed the ritual three days in advance instead of the night before the housewarming ceremony.

At the ceremony, I did not see any elderly people around to guide and lead the function, which Jaffna Tamils often say is *muṟai* (practicing or doing method); but, interestingly, many others, who did not know much about *muṟai*, guided the ceremony instead. *Muṟai* refers to a conventional order, which people practiced in rituals. This looked somewhat like a theory of ritual practice, which was locally constructed by people. However, even so, Vevy and Shanmugam were not taking the ritual as seriously as many would have in the past. The ease they felt about changing this event showed me that in Jaffna, some people alter their practices easily, and do not worry about the implications of such changes, because they are attracted by fashion, technology, media, and modernity. That is, trapped by these modern values, their house and belongings had to be on display before the public in the ceremony. But such display invited dangerous envy, so they wanted to protect their house from evil eye and evil mouth dangerous spirits. So she decided to organize a special puja with *poṅkal* (milk rice) at the Vairavar (village guardian deity) temple, which is located nearby their house, and also to offer a *macca maṭai* (a non-veg meal) to the Goddess Pathirakāli shrine in Inuvil. They were determined to make these vows in order to accomplish their housewarming ceremony without any trouble. Further, as they successfully accomplished this event, they wanted to do these special *pūjas* to safe-guard future

endeavors because the guests who came to the ceremony had looked at their house and talked about their success. As the guests talked about their success and looked at their house, Vevy was afraid that the evil eye (*kaṇṇūṟu*) and evil month (*vāiyūṟu*), of envious guests would be harmful to their life. So even though Vevy had given up certain practices for her convenience, she had not given up the practice protecting her family and home from the evil eye and evil mouth. That is, while Vevy changed some cultural practices for her family's convenience, she still practiced others – here, the practice of using transactional vows with local, protective deities to shield home and family from the evil eye and evil mouth -- to protect a modern lifestyle from dangerous spirits.

I would like to summarize Vevy's concerns towards changes. The reader may wonder whether it makes a difference in having the *shanti* ritual a day or three days before the housewarming ceremony. My surprise was not about Vevy's concern on removing *kaṭṭupāṭu* for her convenience but, how in the past, people paid greater attention to the morality of ritual order than their convenience for constructing self-projection in terms of *kouvravam*. Thus, in the past, their first priority was to maintain the ritual order in fulfilling the purpose of the housewarming ceremony for long-term prosperity and wellbeing. I wondered how the attitudinal shift from the strict ritual practice to a manipulated one was made. Further, I wondered why this ritual manipulation was not allowed in the past in which the *kaṭṭupāṭu* was strong enough in maintaining the ritual moral order. Yet, as Manikam, an old informant commenting on Vevy's ritual manipulation says, people now simply change for their convenience. Also, Manikam further illustrated the importance of *shanti* ritual stating that it should take place a day before the housewarming ceremony and that there is a "ritual continuity" from *shanti* ritual to other ritual processes taking place on the housewarming day.

Although the war ended and modern technology changed village's life and practices, some Inuvil people argued that the normal life people experienced at night before and during the war had not returned to their *ūr* at the end of the war. In particular, people pointed to, and argued

217

about, the *nimmati* (peace) and *cutantiram* (freedom), which people freely enjoyed and experienced during the LTTE period (1990-1995). However, this experience was not quite shared by all during this period because, some informants claimed, many Inuvil people were unhappy with the LTTE's law and order regime during the LTTE state period (between 1990-1995 in the Jaffna Peninsula).

After the Sri Lanka military force's reoccupation of the Jaffna Peninsula from 1996 onwards, fear and a loss of felt freedom emerged, which disturbed people's daily life. For example, the Sri Lanka military passed curfew rules that strictly controlled movement during the night when they re-established control over Jaffna in 1996. People's movements became gradually more controlled and limited. Although the war ended, and many military camps were removed from Inuvil and many other villages by 2018, Jaffna people's night life had not returned to pre-war normal because of their long-term adaptation to the way of life during the war. This kept them moving according war-time rules. Also, people's movements at night were further restricted due to a continued fear of the Sri Lanka military and recent attacks by robber-gangs and "rowdies". This was another failure of the attempted reconstruction of Tamil village communities and life in post-war Jaffna. Most recently, by 2018, more fear and restrictions on movement at night emerged due to activities of the infamous *Āva* group, a Tamil gang of young rowdies prone to daytime robberies in highly public places. Therefore, on the whole, people remained reluctant to be out at night for long when attending cultural events. I found this out as I gathered information while I attended a wedding reception in Inuvil in January 2018.

5.10   Case-8: Why the guests did not stay to listen to the flute concert until the end?

On Sunday January 28th, 2018 at 7:00 PM, I was at a wedding reception. I was invited by the groom's mother, Kamalam, who is from a Veḷḷāḷar caste background in Inuvil. Kamalam had arranged a marriage proposal for her son, and he was married that day at the age of 40 years old. His wedding, in fact, was on Saturday January 27th, 2018, and the wedding reception was on the following day at the groom's house (i.e., Kamalam's house). During the war, particularly after the Sri Lanka army captured Jaffna, people attended wedding receptions like this before the curfew time, for people's movements were too limited for night events. From my point of view, although there was no curfew or military camps in Inuvil now, people still were not ready to spend much time at the reception.

In the reception, Kamalam's son organized a flute *kaccēri* (flute concert) instead of a *nāthaswara* concert (temple music or, in other words, auspicious music—*maṅkala icai* in Tamil). In the past, people organized the *nātaswara* concert or musical orchestra at wedding receptions and people used to stay until the end, often quite late into the night. Thus, this was not a new practice and people did it earlier as well, but during the war, people did not want to do such concerts because they were afraid of staying out too late at night. In Inuvil, of course, before the war and during the LTTE state period, wedding receptions normally started in the evening and lasted till late in the night. There was no punctual time for beginning or ending them. But this had been changing, and so now they were trying to reverse back to the earlier practice.

Yet it was impossible to bring back certain practices of the past due to generational differences. In this reception, for example, I met Raji *acca* (Raji older sister), who was born in Inuvil and migrated to London before the war started. She was excited to be at this grand wedding reception because she had never seen one like this reception among the Jaffna Tamils of London. I asked her what made her so excited, and she answered that she liked the wedding decorations, the flute *kaccēri*, the people's dresses, the jewels, the wedding snacks, and all the colorful lights. All this she missed from her own *ūr* wedding as she lives in London.

In the past, if a music concert were organized at a wedding reception, then the village people would talk proudly about it in terms of the quality of the music and musicians, but I observed that all the guests at Kamalam's wedding did not remain at the wedding reception until the end of the concert. Also, they did not comment on the concert. All the guests I could see were not interested in listening to the flute concert; instead, I saw older people gossiping about various matters with their village colleagues while young children were talking to their friends to update themselves about each other's progress. In general, people just attended the event and had snacks served by the host. Afterwards, they congratulated the couple by giving them gifts, and then left the place. Meanwhile I was being briefed by people at the wedding about night receptions in Inuvil. I was told that people were now very busy with their family commitments, and, unlike in the past, this was even more so because, in most families now, both husbands and wives tended to be employed.

Likewise, one informant, Gnanesh, who had recently had a similar experience attending three weddings and a puberty ceremony during his stay in Inuvil in 2017, told me he was very concerned about how much things had changed. He stated that, unlike in the past, people no longer maintain their human relations properly, and that their focus is on money. People, he asserted, think individually about the improvement of their own family rather than about the collective solidarity of village life. Gnanesh said he missed the village solidarity (*kirāmiya orumaippāṭu*) *that* he had in his village before he migrated to France. Here, in Ganesh's worries, multilevel engagements are found involved in his attempts at remaking the prewar *ūr* he was remembering in the post-war Inuvil he was now experiencing.

Consider Kamalam's situation. She wanted to arrange a marriage proposal by following the conventional requirements of matching of the caste backgrounds of the groom and bride, negotiating a dowry, matching the groom and bride's horoscopes, and, finally, also matching their family backgrounds (class and status). To satisfy all of these requirements, however, was difficult, so Kamalam's son's marriage was delayed, and this was why she only finally married

220

her son to a bride at the age of 40. But this left her son unhappy about having had his marriage arranged by his parents because the marriage was so delayed, all due to fulfilling all those requirements. Even so, unhappy as he was, he was still unable to disobey his parents' words to meet his own wishes.

However, when his cousin Mahul, who is 30 years old, fell in love with a nurse from a low-caste background (Nalavar caste), he insisted that his parents agree their love match. This was astonishing news in Inuvil because people there were against inter-caste marriages. Indeed, Inuvil, as a Veḷḷaḷar dominated village, was against all inter-caste marriage. However, about this too, the village is in an anxious transition where people sometimes agree to such unions even as they worry about the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*. More importantly, this anxiety was quite evident in this case, for Mahul's father was a strong believer in casteism and against low-caste people in Inuvil. Yet his son consistently insisted that his father to accept the son's love affair with the low-caste girl. Finally, his parents agreed and organized the wedding engagement (the registering of the marriage) ceremony in 2017. But I observed that Veḷḷaḷar guests physically isolated themselves to avoid interacting and mingling with the low-caste members of the girl's family (or "side") who attended the wedding engagement ceremony. After the wedding, however, Mahul's father remained agitated by the situation and could not tolerate his son's decision because he felt that his *kouvravam* (prestige) had gone down in his village. Finally, he died in January 2018 due to an illness. Many people pointed out that his illness was linked to his loss of *kouvravam* and the loss of trust from his son.

Though interactions between different castes in Inuvil had improved by 2018 from the way they were before the war, people were still not very prepared for inter-caste marriages. In the past, the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar children limited their relations with their low-caste friends, but by 2018 I found that many Veḷḷāḷar young boys played cricket with low-caste boys, and that they went to the movie theatre together. Also, I found that many people in the younger generation had "friended" people from low-caste backgrounds on their Facebook accounts.

However, not everyone in the younger generation felt s this way. Some also opposed inter-caste marriages and inter-caste relations. For example, one day while I was talking to a Veḷḷāḷar woman, Luxmi, in her home in Inuvil, there was a clash between her two sons. Her older son was criticizing his younger brother for playing with low-caste friends in the playground. The younger brother questioned his brother's critique. "What is the problem in playing with those low-caste boys? Why should I not play with them? They are my friends, and this is just playing in a ground!" So, his younger brother replied. His older brother replied by saying, "do you know who they are? Did we ever do such things like you have done now? And we keep the distance with them."

Clearly, this incident shows that the younger generations do not all feel the same way. For example, Valasi, a 34 years old teacher from Saiva Veḷḷaḷar family (pure vegetarian) and her parents, strongly believed in casteism and Saivism. Yet Valasi eloped with a low caste, Paḷḷar caste boy from another village four years ago. Her mother was physically paralyzed for a few months due to her daughter's decision and cried in front of her relatives while sharing her daughter's love marriage. However, her father did not accept her marriage and stopped talking to her. Thus, as village life has changed, people are handling these changes differently; some have positive reactions, and some are resistant.

For Raji acca, visiting from London the Inuvil she fled years ago, there was nostalgia. She had missed her village life and remembered her past through Kamalam's son's wedding in her own village. Remembering and rebuilding their consciousness of their prewar *ūr* was more complicated for people like Raji acca and Gnanesh, who still had the image of their *ūr,* which they had at the time of their departure. Even Raji acca, however, who was from a Veḷḷaḷar family and who married to a Veḷḷaḷar man in an arranged marriage proposed by her father, displayed this contradiction between a desire to preserve prewar *ūr* practices and a need to change them. Hence, Raji acca was divorced from her Vellalar husband after moving to London, and there got married to a man from the Ambattar (barber) caste (a caste also regarded as low by Jaffa Vellalar).

222

Therefore, changes have occurred not only in Jaffna, but also in the diaspora. Due to these massive changes in terms of caste and other cultural practices, many informants, both young and old, often talked about how "villageness" (*kirāmiyam*) had diminished in post-war Inuvil. People argued that villageness (*kirāmiyam/ūrness*) has been deconstructed (*cīrkulaivu*). But what is *kirāmiyam*? And how has *kirāmiyam* has become deconstructed?

5.11   Case-9: Why has *kirāmiyam* been deconstructed in Inuvil?

Sivathasan is a 55 years old man from Veḷḷāḷar caste background who started his career as a schoolteacher, and then became a director of teacher training center, which is part of the Education Department of the Jaffna Peninsula. His parents are from Inuvil, and I have known him for many years because we are both from the same village. He married a girl from Inuvil and settled there. He has two sons, and the younger son, 21 years old, is a student at the College of Education and also partly serves as a priest (a Tamil Saivite priest) at the new lord Shiva temple, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Sivathasan was also a director of many stage dramas when I was an actor in Inuvil until 2003. When I spoke with him, he was at first surprised to hear that I was pursuing a Ph.D. degree at the University of Kentucky in the USA, because most people in Inuvil have preferred to stay in the village while doing a job there. I also had the same idea of staying close to the village when I was an undergraduate student at Jaffna university, but then, I changed my plans due to my job in Colombo.

Our conversation helped me realize that many in the present generation would like to migrate to foreign countries as they are attracted by foreign lifestyles, which the diaspora members are currently enjoying. People in Inuvil recognize diversity abroad or lump everything outside Inuvil in onto one conceptual bag labeled "foreign". On the other hand, people of the older generation and middle-aged people worry that they have lost the prewar rural life they remember because of the war and displacement, which were the main causes of radical changes. For instance, Sivathasan firstly pointed out that the diminishing *vēli* or *kadiyāl* (cadjan fences).

223

These fences are generally made of natural materials, such as coconut leaves, palmyra leaves, and other available natural materials, and used to line the roads and separate all the household compounds one from another in Inuvil.

Kirāmiyam (villageness) is destroyed and altered by multiple interactions. In the past, such live fences symbolically expressed, and physically outlined, the village people's friend and kin relations, which were strengthened for such a strong bonded-relations. By strong bonded-relations, he further explained that people maintained cordial relations among them by exchanging food, labor, gifts, and money. As live fences were boundaries for many houses, people constantly visited their neighbors (mostly they were kindred either patrilateral or matrilateral). Such constant visits enabled them to know the "matters (*viṣayaṅkaḷ*)," which were happening in every person's life in the village. Though houses were separated by such fences, every fenced compound had a way to go through to another house if necessary.

But now that houses are separated by concrete walls instead of naturally made fences such easy paths have been cut off. People used to use those small paths between the live fences to go to temple and to the village shops instead of using the proper road and lane. Thus, people were interconnected in the past, flowing between and through each other's house compounds. But now most of houses maintain their privacy by impermeable walls. Sivathasan argued that now people do not even know who resides in their neighborhood in present-day Inuvil. Indeed, he claimed, individuality has been much more highly developed since the war than before. Once, people were happy to see their relatives pass though their backyards and front parts of their houses. Such passing and interacting, he said, were ways people were interconnected, and this meant togetherness for his *ūr* in the past.

Sivathasan particularly mentioned two villages, Ilavalai and Vadaliyadaippu, in Jaffna, as places where people still maintain their *ūr pārampariyam* (village tradition) in the form of keeping live fences. He listed three major causes of the destruction of prewar village life in Inuvil: (1) the prolonged civil war, (2) disrespect and nonobedience to elders and (3) internet and

224

communication technologies. Due to the prolonged civil war, he felt, people lost village practices and the cultural values of the Jaffna Tamil community. For him, the emergence of a Tamil separatist movement in Jaffna and the establishment of the LTTE state from 1990 to 1995 was a dark period in Jaffna Peninsula. But the LTTE was linked also, for Sivathasan, to the second main cause of village dismemberment: disrespect and nonobedience to elders in the village. Young children, he believed, respected older people in the past, but in the present generation most did not respect their siblings, parents, and older people of the community. This, he believed, as simply because the LTTE during its time did not respect or listen to the elders of the community.

Thus, the conventional order of *kaṭṭupāṭu* practices were interfered with by the LTTE. As a result, elders were treated as abandoned objects (*vēṇṭāpporuḷ*), and it became the practice among teenagers and young children (unmarried boys and girls) to no longer listen to parents' advice. Independent of factors one and two, for him, was the third factor: information technology. In particular, Sivathasan said he believed the "internet plays as a huge sky-cloud, which has conquered the Jaffna villages." He went on to explain further that the internet exports and imports many items into the village landscape. Young children, he thought, misused the internet by watching porn movies and wasting their time on social media. However, members of the younger generations had different opinions and explanations to justify the effects of the internet when he argued with them.

Consequently, for people like Sivathasan, *kirāmiyam* was being diminished due to the three causes. Respect and obedience to elders were both part of Tamil culture and Tamil village life in Jaffna before the war, such people believed, and now conventional practice was being destroyed due to the war and global capitalism. Indeed, Sivathasan loved his *ūr* and would like to be an *Inuvilan* (Inuvil villager), which he described as bodily experienced through his village cultural values, temples, tobacco industry, farming, kinship, relatives, festivals, *poṅkal* (milk rice) and *pūja* (Hindu temple prayer). By his bodily experiences, he meant that he experienced the things he listed above throughout his life in Inuvil in the past. But he felt that all that was eroding.

225

Hence, he stated "*ūr urukulaiñcu pōccu,*" that is, "an image of the village is being deconstructed".

Hence, people had a form of consciousness about their *ūr* through bodily-experienced

embodiments, which some felt was being deconstructed by different causes.

Sivathasan further complained about the weakening of *kaṭṭupāṭu* practice among the

younger generation. As he saw it, they were always comparing themselves with others and

arguing why they should not achieve things as their friends have; this is a big challenge to

kaṭṭupāṭu practices. For example, at one puberty ceremony I attended, the girl wanted to wear a

new style of dress (a north Indian style) instead of following the conventional Jaffna-style dress

code for the ritual because she had learned of the new style from her friends who had followed it

for their own puberty ceremonies. Thus, the youngsters had their own explanations for altering

conventional practices. But these attitude changes were found not only among youngsters but also

among older people as well; for example, in Inuvil many elderly people have created Facebook

accounts with the support of young children and gained their knowledge of social media and the

internet from them. Those elderly people used Facebook, WhatsApp, and Viber to talk to their

children in diaspora on a daily base. Thus, they updated family members who live in diaspora

about their daily lives, which was how they maintained transnational family and kinship ties.

Such connections through communication technology continued to make members of the

diaspora feel like they were part of their *ūr* even though they were physically not in the village.

Thus, people were both acknowledging and resisting change in post-war Inuvil.

5.12   Analysis and Conclusion

The overarching argument of this dissertation is that post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindus -- as I

saw them during fieldwork in 2018 -- were using "village consciousness" and "village-temple

consciousness" in the reconstruction of their post-war villages. The major focus of this chapter

was to describe how Tamil Hindus in Inuvil were adjusting to post-war circumstances by using

their nostalgia for their prewar village life. In adjusting to post-war challenges and interacting

with the global flows, Inuvil people were anxiously transforming from pre to post-war life because of a perceived loss/changes of *kaṭṭupāṭu*. To explain further about this anxious transition in Inuvil, this chapter discussed nine ethnographic case studies which, I believe, provide evidence for my overarching argument about post-war Jaffna village communities facing tremendous changes in such fields of Tamil culture, and Jaffna rural life as *bhakti* religiosity and *kaṭṭupāṭu*. Here I used the word culture as people have used the two equivalent Tamil words, *paṇpāṭu* and *kalāccāram* to address culture. In Tamil, people interchangeably use these two words to address culture; these two words are indicatives of their identity as Tamils, but at the same time, these words denote Tamils' way of life.

Based on the ethnographic cases discussed in this chapter, the consequences of prolonged civil war, global communication technology, global capitalism, and Tamil diaspora connectivity have obviously greatly influenced village life. People in Inuvil are, indeed, shifting from a remembered time of prewar and wartime isolation to a current state where global flows wash through people's daily lives easily, if often anxiously. But the reason why I call this shift toward an acceptance of global modernity an anxious transition is because so many people in Inuvil who perceive this shift feel anxious about it. Nor is this anxiety merely confined to the older generation whose memories directly link them to the war-time and prewar past; many younger people feel this anxiety as well. What this mixed groups share is the perceptions that the rapid changes happening to Inuvil amount to an anxious transition because they are transforming the prewar order and structure due to the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu*.

Due to massive natural and made-made disasters, any society can be transformed tremendously. So, why should we pay special attention to a Jaffna Tamil village? The major reason is that there people worry about the loss of a perceived *kaṭṭupāṭu*. As a result, the prewar order and structure are changing now, yet the people search for the prewar form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in their post-war reconstruction of Inuvil. Are the transition or changes hard only for older and middle age people who lived in prewar time and during the war? I am also part of this community

227

and experienced the war and displacements until I left Jaffna. I have also felt the transition and

changes that are occurring in Jaffna compared to the past I remember. Obviously, older and

middle age people like me talk about changes in Inuvil because they lived during the war and had

the experience of living for a long-period in their village. But I was surprised to see that the

younger generations sometimes also talked anxiously about the changes and transitions of Inuvil

village and of the overall image of Jaffna Peninsula, though they themselves never experienced

the war and its displacement. How and why should young people be concerned?

In the following sections I will explain the reasons why the younger generation discusses

such changes. Among the younger generation I found diverse understandings of change. One

group of younger people perceived changes as being opposed to the prewar practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu*

and worried – as older people did -- about such rapid changes weaken the prewar order, structure,

and cultural practices. In contrast, another group of younger people felt that post-war changes had

uplifted the village from *paḻamai* (old) to *putumai* (new). Some of the village practices, they felt,

related to an old superstitious worldview, and was a barrier to *muṉṉētram* (progress). Therefore,

changes are mandatory for the reformation of the society. However, this group of younger people

have never given up their faith in god and in religious practices even though they have had radical

ideas.

Moreover, the younger people I talked to were motived by three ideas: villageness,

Tamilness, and *bhakti* religiosity. Villageness included the history, oldness and ancientness

(*pazhamai*), customs, cultural values, and practices (*naṭamurai*) of the village. Tamilness, for

them, refered to Tamil nationalism, Tamil culture, the history of Tamil region (Jaffna Peninsula)

and Tamil identity (*tamiḻar aṭaiyāḷam*). *Bhakti* religiosity denoted religious pluralism within the

Hindu pantheon in the village, but also the Tamil Saivite ideology as reconstructed through old

and new forms to create awareness, especially among the young children, of the need to protect

the Tamil region from the Sinhalese Buddhist majority. Specifically, while the old form of Tamil

Saivite ideology reinforced Arumuka Navalar's Tamil Saivite ideology, a new form of Tamil

Saivite ideology has emerged by reforming Arumuka Navalar ideology or Saiva (*caiva*) public (Ambalavanar 2006)

As I already discussed in this chapter, a generationally mixed group worry about changes in village life and religious practice, and they believe that these changes have been orchestrated by external forces (specifically, the government of Sri Lanka) to destroy "the Jaffna Tamil culture." A "Jaffna Tamil Culture" and people, that is, that was ethnically segregated without a *kalappu* (blending or mixing) during the LTTE state and the war. As I found, ethnographically, doing research, many people, young and old, argued that the tremendous changes afflicting Jaffna Tamils were planned and brought to the Tamil region by the government of Sri Lanka through militarization and massive commercialization.

There were many instances of change identified by people to justify their sense that such tremendous changes were deliberately planned by the external forces. Specifically, people felt that important things such as pornographic movies, drugs (*pōtai vastu*), *kañca* and *kuṭu* (a kind of cannabis or heroin), which were strictly banned during the LTTE period, were now made freely available in post-war Jaffna to divert younger people and damage the future generation of the Tamil community. More importantly, there are two different views held about the issues of drug and alcohol addiction among the young people: (1) some argue that alcoholism is already in Jaffna, but the media and politicians exaggerate it importance for their own benefits; whereas (2) women, parents, and elders in Inuvil argue that alcoholism and drug usage have actually increased among the younger generations in contemporary Jaffna.

To investigate this issue more fully, I interviewed Gnanamurthy who works at the Psychosocial division of the Base Hospital Thellipalai in Jaffna and is also part of a local NGO organization, Kuruntham: A Heaven for Recovery; Regional Addiction Rehabilitation Center, Base Hospital Chavakachechri. These organizations do counseling for people who have been addicted to alcohol and drugs. In the past, they received people who were between 23-40 years old, but they now receive more people who are below 23 years old and even school children or

school leavers. Also, the psychosocial workers found drug dealers who were mostly residing closer to popular schools in Jaffna. Hence, Gnanamurthy and others pointed out to me that the government has deliberately allowed drugs to be available in Jaffna.

Thus, people claim that this increase in drug use was a planned change to destroy Tamil culture and weaken the Tamil community. Some young boys in the village further explained to me that Jaffna was the capital city of Tamil culture (*paṇpāṭiṉ talainakaram*), so it made seems to them that the Sinhalese government targeted the Jaffna to destroy its cultural continuity through domination, political insurgency, tourism, militarization, and massive commercialization since the government captured the Peninsula in 1996. The above statement that "Jaffna was the capital city of Tamil culture" represents Veḷḷāḷar ideology, which homogenizes Jaffna Tamil culture as the only form of Tamil culture in Sri Lanka. On the other hand, the Tamil scholar, Professor Sivathamby (2005, 2000), argued that Tamil culture is actually heterogenous in Sri Lanka given the cultural diversity of Batticaloa Tamil culture, Up-Country Tamil culture, Colombo-Tamil culture, and so on. Additionally, the Jaffna feminist activist, Rajani Chandrasekaram, critiques the notion of Tamil culture by questioning whether Tamil culture refers to a patriarchal ideology, faith in God, and obedience to men or honesty and truth? Thus, woman like Rajani Chandrasekaram hold critical views about Tamil culture and practice which challenge the Veḷḷāḷar hegemonized form of Tamil culture in post-war Jaffna.

With regard to younger people's behavior and their reactions to recent changes, recent studies (Antony 2019, Somasundaram 2015, 2014) on youth behavior reveal things similar to what I also found among my informants' experiences of Tamil youth behavior in Jaffna. Rather than generalizing about youth behavior, however, I would prefer to say how young people engaged in different *ūr* projections in post-war Inuvil. As I already mentioned, one mixed generational group have established a strong Jaffna Tamil identity, and are politically motivated by Tamil politics and Tamil nationalism to keep alive Tamil consciousness and Tamil nation-state consciousness among the present generation. For instance, the existence of an *Eluga Thamil* (Let

230

Tamil Rise) political movement in Jaffna shows how people's intrigue towards Tamil politics and the celebration of *Māvīrar nāḷ* (LTTE Heroes' Day); and indicates a continued Tamil nationalism (Antony 2019).

Ethnographically speaking, in Inuvil, Malathi, a middle-aged woman, said to me that "if *avaṅkaḷ* (they) were in this land, the culprit who raped the young girl in Jaffna would have been hanged up on a public place for public viewing." Here *avaṅkaḷ* is a symbolic pronoun that refers to the LTTE. Likewise, when speaking publicly, people still use the words *iyakkam* (movement) and *aṇṇamār* (brothers) to refer to the LTTE rather than directly addressing them as the LTTE in their conversations among themselves. Likewise, young people are inspired by various political, ethnic, and religious lines. Moreover, the major focus of this chapter has been on the destruction of village life and cultural degradation due to the multiple causes of tremendous changes in post-war Inuvil. I agree with my informants' views on tremendous changes occurred in post-war Inuvil.

The destruction of village life and cultural degradation are concerns claimed by a group that included both older and younger people in Inuvil. In order to overcome this situation, the young boys and diaspora members of Inuvil have attempted to reconstruct a form of consciousness about prewar *ūr,* Tamil culture, Tamil identity, village life, awareness of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* village history, Tamils' history, Tamil separatist movement (LTTE), village folk arts, and Tamil Saiva consciousness among the present generation through music albums and short films in Inuvil. For example, *Vīra Iḷantāri* is a short film, which was written and directed by Sabesan Shanmuganathan, who lives in London, but who visited his *ūr,* Inuvil, recently for making this short film, and it has been published for public viewing on YouTube in 2018. This short film used the village's religious folk tale about the *Iḷantāri* deity, which is titled as *Vīra Iḷantāri*; *vīra* means valor and Ilanthāri is the name of the village guardian deity in Inuvil. The name means "young person" (or youth) in Tamil.

The *Iḷantāri* history will be more extensively discussed in chapter eight. Empirically, though, I was intrigued to explore why *Ilanthāri* folk tale was selected for this short film and what about this was relevant to the re-making *ūr* project in post-war Inuvil. I have never heard that people used the term, *Vīra Iḷantāri*, but the writer of the film has named the deity as *Vīra Iḷantāri* to revitalize village folk religious dance, Tamil identity, and village tradition in post-war Inuvil. Tamils in India and Sri Lanka always claim that *vīram* (valor) is Tamils' identity, which people link to *purathinai* (war) poetry in Sangam literature (*Caṅka ilakkiyam*). Such ethno-religious transformation is reconstructing Tamil identity (*thamilanin adaiyālam)* through reformulating the religious folk tale, which is necessitated by the remaking of post-war Inuvil.

More specifically, this film contains two purposes; the one is to reinforce Tamil consciousness and *ūr paṟṟu* (love one's village) among the people of Jaffna and the second is to communicate the importance of the preservation of *kirāmiya kalai* (village folk dances). To accomplish these purposes, Sabesan used the village religious folk tale, which was reformed through the intersections of Tamil Nationalism, Tamil identity, and village consciousness. In the film, a villager who was a friend of Sabesan explained to Sabesan that one ethnic group preserves their history, language, and culture to transfer to the next generation. *Kirāmiya kalai* (village folk arts) is a tool (*karuvi*) for preserving such an ethnic history.

The *Iḷantāri Vīti Ūla* (The Iḷantāri walks through the village in a procession) was a folk dance performed during prewar times and it was stopped due to the war and displacement in Inuvil. The villager encouraged Sabesan to continue the folk dance which his father, also did, but that dance form is not practiced now. Sabesan wondered who would continue this folk dance as people are busy all the time entertaining themselves on the internet with YouTube, WhatsApp, Viber, and Facebook. The villager argued that even though people have such social entertainments, nobody has given up visiting the small shrines and big temples in their everyday lives in Inuvil. Such cultural practices are no longer in the village due to the loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* which circumstance makes people feel that "Inuvil is not like before," and to feel that Inuvil is in

an anxious transition. Hence, this group of people propose remaking *ūr* projects, which call for such prewar practices to return to their village landscape.

When discussing the life experience of this short film maker, one cannot ignore the link to his *ūr* project. Sabesan was born in Inuvil and migrated to London during the war. His father, Shanmuganathan, was a police officer with the Sri Lanka Police and also a drama performer in Inuvil in the 1960s. There was another police officer with the same name in Inuvil. Both police officers named Shanmuganathan were shot to death on the same day by the LTTE in Inuvil in 1977. They were shot because of their CID (Criminal Investigation Department) service, wherein they investigated crimes committed by the LTTE. Since childhood, Sabesan experienced violence rather than a separate event and lost his father. He then migrated to London in 1989, during the IPKF time in Jaffna.

Now, he wanted to do something to reconstruct his *ūr* after the war. As a result, he recently produced a short film using his own expenses. In this film, Sabesan was encouraged by an elderly person of his village to continue the *kirāmiya kalai* (village folk dance), particularly about *Iḷantāri* folk tale. Iḷantāri was a ruler of Inuvil during the Jaffna Kingdom (13th century A.D.), and became a village guardian deity after his salvation. This short film also explains that although people migrated to foreign countries, they do still have the *ūr* consciousness, an 'imagined village' held at a distance, somewhat similar to Anderson's notion of the role 'imagined communities' play in "long distance nationalism"(Anderson 1983). Sabesan's major purpose in his short film was to create awareness about the village, village cultural practices, and village history among the present generation, and to preserve them through documentation. As a result, he received a letter of appreciation for his short film from the Ministry of Tourism in Sri Lanka. The Tourism Department has now declared Iḷantāri temple as one of its official tourist spots in Sri Lanka. Thus, both diaspora and village members argue that most of the village's cultural practices, like the *Iḷantāri* folk religious dance, are no longer active in post-war circumstance, and they want to reactivate them through reformation and innovation. To create awareness about their

ūr and Tamil culture, the village people still generate staged dramas, short stories, poems, and village folk tales, which attempt to reconstruct the prewar Tamil consciousness, Tamil valor, village consciousness, and Tamil identity.

However, making short films is a new mode of documenting of people's lives and histories. The influence of the South Indian Tamil cinema among the young boys in Inuvil has inspired them to produce short films to address local problems, such as smoking, drug addiction, alcoholism, and violence, and to create an awareness of Tamil nationalism, Tamil war history, Tamil regional history (i.e., of the Jaffna Peninsula), and Tamil culture among their own generation. For instance, I interviewed Sayan, who was a 34-year-old from Inuvil who had produced the short film, Cinta<u>n</u>aiceiy (Think about it), which was intended to teach about the consequences of smoking among young children. Sayan was the writer and director of this short film. Also, he and his village friends have acted in some short films, which are produced by his colleagues in Inuvil.

These short films were also concerned with the social problems of post-war healing. Sayan worried that t young children in Inuvil do not know about the social and religious history of their village, Tamil war history, and about the LTTE movement. He was surprised that the present generation was not aware of the important leaders who died for the Tamil homeland struggle. He further pointed out that the young children are very busy with social media and their mobile phones. Also, South Indian Tamil cinema and Tamil serials have changed the lifestyle of the young in Inuvil and the Jaffna Peninsula. Because of these changes, he worries that young children are losing the authenticity of village culture, religion and Tamil culture of the Jaffna Peninsula. Finally, he argued that producing short films has two purposes: first, a group of young men in the village hope that the documentation about the reconstruction of the post-war Inuvil. secondly, the short film makers hope to lift up their *kouvravam* (prestige) by collecting rewarding praise (*puka<u>l</u>*) for their innovative production.

On the other hand, another group of people in Inuvil, also made up of both older and younger people, told me that they appreciated and acknowledged post-war changes. Particularly, this group of people was glad that Jaffna had now 'caught' up with 'modern society' in social, technical, and economic ways. This group criticized the past, pointing out that once Jaffna villages were far behind the rest of the world in terms of economic and technological changes and new opportunities. They claimed that the LTTE state period and the prolonged civil war were the main causes of a delay in the transformation of Jaffna villages. In terms of politics, the above group were anti-LTTE and often engaged in pro-government activities. Among them were some young people who associated with non-LTTE militant political parties.

Overall, the above group people did not have the spirit of Tamil nationalism consciousness and preferred to have Tamil identity constructed through Tamil language history and culture. But they separated the LTTE and Tamil nationalism into two different domains to create their own view of post-war life in Inuvil. To adjust to post-war life and interact with its multiple global flows in the village, they also wished to change older practices and acknowledge modernization through educational and employment opportunities. Thus, they looked for changes and sometimes ignored traditional practices. For instance, Nilan (20 years old), who is an undergraduate student at Jaffna University from Inuvil, told me that he made a choice not to go to temple festivals but to go instead to cricket practice. Nilan said that he had not given up the idea of believing in God, but he could not sacrifice his cricket practice for temple festivals.

Another similar example found in my research is that of Arivu (29 years old) from Inuvil. Arivu migrated to the USA two years ago and he did not follow village practices in the USA. For instance, according to Inuvil practice people must avoid non-veg meals during their village's temple festival. But for Arivu, this practice was too difficult because, as he told me, he cannot avoid eating non-veg meals during the entire festival time as the temple festival period is 25 days. Eating beef is taboo for Hindus in Inuvil, of course, but Arivu did not differentiate between beef and Tofu in his daily dietary practice in the US, because, he argued, the USA was not his *ūr* and

235

235

doing so would require him to continue villages practices in a foreign country. As seen above, some young boys and girls were waiting for changes in the village through altering the traditional practices; specifically, some would like to cross the *ūr* boundary to escape from cultural practices, however some hope for change even while staying within the *ūr* boundary.

Above I have extensively discussed my ethnographic findings with reference to younger people's ideas and contributions to remaking post-war Inuvil. I have also paid attention to the prewar practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and its transformation in different periods of time. As a result of how differently transformations are received by various groups within the village, I would argue that multiple-*ūr* projects were occurring in this single village through this period of anxious transition. That contradictions were found here in post-war *ūr* reconstruction was due to generational and gender differences.

Indeed, multiple-*ūr* projections were cultivated through reemerging casteism, Veḷḷāḷar hegemony, patriarchal ideology, Tamil nationalism, Tamil Saivite ideology, Tamil diaspora, and transnationalism. For instance, the Ilanthondar Sabai ([or *Iḷantoṇṭar Capai*] the young devotees association) is an independent organization started in 1976; it is closely associated with the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple. During the prewar and war period, this association was the only organization that handled religious services for the temple and aesthetic services (conducting classes for performing arts) for the community. After the war, this association was split into three different groups with different administrations due to a lack of unity, different ideas and generational differences among the members.

Also, strict *kaṭṭupāṭu* practice was not successful in this case because this association had been split into three different divisions. The first of these, the Ilanthondar Sabai, still continued with the same name with the members who still maintained their membership. The main reason for this fracture was that a group of young boys did not want to be controlled by the older people of the association in relation to their wishes and decision-making processes. The second faction, Annadhana Sabai ([*aṉṉatāṉa capai*] the association for offering free food) was started by young

236

men, who had a conflict with the Ilanthondar Sabai and engaged in religious and social activities separately. The third group is led by Muthu, who was one of the pioneer members of the Ilanthodar Sabai, and who left the Ilanthondar Sabai and renders religious and social services himself. At the same time, village disputes in Inuvil also increased due to different development projects set up through diaspora funding. People argued to me that village disputes and fragmentation were due to the loss of collectivism and solidarity, and this led Inuvil into an anxious transition. However, I also found that Veḷḷaḷār domination and patriarchal ideology still persisted in post-war reconstruction in Inuvil, and that low-caste people and women were excluded from remaking-*ūr* projects in Inuvil.

This chapter has illustrated the destruction of prewar village life through nine distinct ethnographic cases studies. People like Sivathasan used the term *kirāmiyam* (villageness or ruralness) to articulate people's experiences through culturally-constructed emotions and memories, which ultimately represent their *ūr* belonginess to their attached places. Furthermore, *kirāmiyam* (villageness/ruralness) can be also explained through the major focus of this dissertation – that is, in terms of "village consciousness", which people perceived through cultural practices and shared historical narratives of lived locales (villages).

More specifically, this chapter has focused on the destruction of village life, in which the cultural and religious practices are transforming in ways that resemble, at least to people I Inuvil, the Universe function (*pirapañca iyakkam*) in Hindu cosmology[72]. I would argue, based on my fieldwork, that little change took place in Inuvil during the war, and that since then the village has slowly undergone changes within the capacity of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* Also, people were aware of those changes and adopted them for the functioning of the village, but that they found recent rapid changes to far out of control, and challenging to their cultural and religious practices. To assess overall changes, this chapter concentrated on the Tamil conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu* -how it is

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[72] According to Hindu cosmology, the universe is cyclically created and destroyed

differently addressed through nine ethnographic cases in terms of gender, time, and caste differences.

The first ethnographic case of "banana and coconut oil" in the Jaffna Hindu ritual context has shown the alteration of cultural practices. I posed that how the conventional religious order, *kaṭṭupāṭu*, and authenticity, are maintained through the alteration of cultural practices. However, authenticity is a highly complicated concept, because Veḷḷaḷaraized and Brahminized practices and Saiva Siddhanta philosophy-based Saivite religious practices have been perceived as authentic rather than diverse nature of conceptions of authenticity. For instance, people, who follow non-*ākama* religious practices, will claim them as authentic. However, high-caste and non-high caste practices are altered, and new meanings have been implemented to justify the changes. Interaction with global flows within Jaffna local cultural practices led to glocalization/indigenization. Furthermore, starting at the end of the war, religious tension increased from before the war because the sacred landscapes (temple landscapes) were further widened, strengthened, and securitized to protect the sacred landscape of northern Sri Lanka. For instance, many village and urban Hindu temples put fences around their temples to prohibit tourist vehicles from parking on temple premises. They believed that the scared landscape, particularly immediate temple premises, were polluted by tourists who threw away the leftovers of their non-veg meals. Eating and bringing non-veg meals on to the temple premises is a cultural taboo for Jaffna Tamil Hindus, except at a few non-*ākama* temples in Jaffna where Tamil Hindus offer non-veg meals to some specific Hindu deities.[73]

Inuvil's anxious transition from war-time cultural isolation to (or toward) global modernity was not only made anxious due to changes of cultural practices, but also because conventional Hindu religious pluralism in the village was disturbed by the emergence of mutually divisive

[73] Jaffna Tamil Hindus offer non-vegetarian meals to deities of Vairavar, Pattirakāḷi, and Kaṇṇaki Ammon on the special festival time or even people make vows as offering non-vegetarian meals.

Saiva and Vaishnava religious ideologies in post-war Inuvil. Such Saiva and Vaishnava divisions were more active in South India than in Sri Lanka, but in 2018 I found that some old and middle-aged men, and also some young men, resisted the establishment of the Vaishnava religion in Inuvil. There were no Vishnu temples or Anchaneya (*āñcanēya*) temples in Inuvil before the war, but then two Vishnu temples and one Aanchaneya temple (both sorts of temple belonging to the Vaishnava religious tradition) were built in Inuvil after the war. But Inuvil did not resist such Hindu religious pluralism in the past, so I was surprised at how politically motivated people were to carry on such an ideology of Saiva and Vaishnava division rather than the village's former religious pluralism.

The majority of people, however, try to encompass an existing Hindu religious pluralism under the Saivism (*Caivism*) religious division in village. As a result, the Tamil Saivite project is widely reinforced throughout the Jaffna Peninsula. Also, this recent emphasis on Tamil Saivite ideology and Tamil Saivite ritualscape creation have challenged existing *ākama*-based/Brahminized ritual spaces. The absence of the Tamil language in Sanskrit ritualscapes and Brahmin domination of the scared landscape have encouraged people to develop a Tamil Saivite ideology in post-war Inuvil. However, I do not mean to imply here that this transformation is general to the entire population of the Jaffna Peninsula. Rather, I am arguing the conventional ritual and *bhakti* religious practices were altered by the new intersections of a re-emergent Tamil Saivite ideology and new religious movements. Although Arumuga Navalar already revitalized the Tamil Saivite ideology among people in Jaffna, Tamil and Saivite religious awareness was created more among the Veḷḷāḷar caste people than people of other castes. Unlike Arumuga Navalar's Tamil Saivite public, however, the Tamil Saivite ideology I saw emerging in 2018 was not considering caste identity; rather it had reformed Tamil Saivite ideology to encourages people of all castes and genders to participate in the Tamil Saivite *bhakti* religious practices.

These new religious practices/movements that I saw operating in Jaffna (and Inuvil) were of two kinds: one involved belief in "human Gods" such as Shirdi Sai Baba, Sathya Sai Baba, and

239

Amma Bhagavan; while the second included schools of spiritual development (meditation centers and yoga centers) such Arivuthirukōvil, Art of Living, and Brahma Kumaris Meditation. Although these new religious practices were syncretized with Inuvil village's religious pantheon, this shift did not mean that people had given up their traditional village deities.

In a syncritic way, people maintained traditional deities and human Gods equally, as options in one continuum. But people tended to be more involve in worshiping human Gods and engaging in meditational practices only sometimes – mostly when they were having to tackle current economic, social, and political problems (Whitaker and Sanmugeswaran 2015). I found in my research that some people often used the popular phrase *kulateiyva kuṟaipāṭu* to describe this need; explaining thus that people receive *kurai* (something lacking) when they fail to maintain their worship of *kulateiyvam* (that is, their caste deities or lineage deities). Therefore, such people adopted both human Gods and *kulateiyvam* worship into their day-to-day religious life. For instance, people approach the human Gods to obtain *shakti* (Godly power) in quickly (*fāstāka*) when they need to get a job or a visa or a promotion. An example was provided by the cases of two women I have already discussed: Kamalam and Vevy, in this chapter. Both women made vows to their own *kulateiyvam* to protect their lives from the dangerous evil eye and evil mouth. Thus, for them, *kulateiyvam* still occupied a significant position in the village's religious pantheon and village life.

With regard to these religious, social, and cultural changes, then, the people of Inuvil reacted to them with either a form of resistance or a form of acceptance. However, these different reactions did not affect the reality that people experienced in their everyday lives. A further explanation of people's resistance or acceptance is needed to link what people have argued about authenticity and modernity consciousnesses. However, authenticity and modernity are conventionally placed by people in Inuvil in opposite positions.

In this vein, some people supported authenticity while others wished for modernity, but by 2018 emerging intersections of authenticity and modernity were also found in people's present-

day cultural practices. For instance, some informants frequently told me that they wished to have *paḻamayil putmai* (new *in* old— modernity *in* authenticity). People were anxious about practicing or experiencing modernity completely without authenticity because they looked for their 'existence' (*iruppunilai*) in society. For instance, while Jaffna Tamil Saivite society had obviously changed tremendously, some people were reluctant to say that Tamil culture and Saivite religious practices had changed too because if someone claimed that *they* had changed, then this would be like saying that the older forms of Tamil culture and great traditional practices were no longer in existence. Thus, people who were arguing for authenticity were unhappy to lose older forms of religious and cultural practices because they felt that to do so would be to lose what their own being is found within. This claim further clarifies why people in Inuvil worried about their existence when their society was in a great transformation.

Since the war ended, human life and the village structure have been changing. These changes have been occurring rapidly in Jaffna, particularly from 2010 to present. Further, Jaffna local academics have claimed that such radical changes have made people think that their villages are in an anxious transition because people have not gradually experienced global flows. Jaffna society, of course, is culturally dynamic, and I have seen that people prefer modernity in their lives; but the Jaffna was closed to the global flows (modern communication technology, electricity, freely available material life, employment opportunities, etc.) during the LTTE state period and the war. A good example of this closure was that whenever the people of Jaffna travelled to Colombo during the war, they used to buy many basic materials such as potato, orange, apple, ginger, soda, battery, etc. in Colombo to bring to their families in Jaffna because those materials were either unavailable or very expensive in Jaffna because the government of Sri Lanka banned many items (nearly sixty goods) from being brought to Jaffna.

There was also no communication technology or electricity in Jaffna from 1990 to 1998. This situation all changed after 1996, and then materials were available in Jaffna at similar prices to those found other districts of Sri Lanka, and this was another opportunity for changing people's

lifestyle because until then materials were only available at black market price between 1990 and 1996. Henceforward, these material flows and the increase in available information technology have begun to influence Jaffna people's social and religious lives.

With regard to the nightscape of post-war Inuvil, I have described through some of my ethnographic cases how people rarely participated in them during most days of such multiple day annual festivals (I am referring here to night festivals), waiting instead for temple *tēr* (temple car) and *tīrttam* (water-cutting festival), which occur only on the last day of such temple rituals. Gradually, their prioritizing of other things in their lives had increased. There was a common narrative I got from people (including men and women) that claimed women's attendance at night festivals has decreased because there has been an increase in watching television serials programs at home, and that women do not want to discontinue of watching those television serials. However, this was a patriarchal perspective about this issue, and women argued that they would participate in the temple festival according to their own convenient time. In particular, women were committed to engage not only in domestic work and childcare, but also, increasingly, employment obligations. Unlike earlier generations, the present generation of Inuvil's women are mostly job holders.

In addition, I found another reason for people's reluctance to travel to festival's at night. Although the government has removed curfew and allowed people to move freely, people have continued their previous adaptive (during the war) practice, when they were reluctant to move freely during the night. While presence of Sri Lankan military forces was no longer a reason for people to limit their movement at night in 2018, the more recent fear of robbery, specifically, by robbers who attack people (especially women who wear gold jewels as they do when they go to temple and wedding ceremonies). In Inuvil, Tamil women never covered their right shoulder when they wore a *saree*, but now when they returned from temple events and wedding ceremonies held at night, they covered the right shoulder with the *saree* to hide their jewels in order to not to display them to robbers. This was the way their nightscape and life were

constructed in post-war Inuvil. With regard to robbery and the organized-crime group *āva,* I encountered two different types of narratives in Jaffna; the first argument was that there was no such an organized-crime group like *āva,* but rather that it was all a rumor and illusion created by the current security (police and military forces) to help continue their military control over the Jaffna Peninsula. The second narrative people told me, however, conflicted with the first view and argued, instead, that these groups actually do exist as could be seen through the evidence of attacked cases by robbers and *āva* group.

Moreover, these nine ethnographic cases reveal that different forms of life exist in post-war Inuvil. These different forms of life demonstrate the post-war reconstructions of Inuvil. The war was not the only reason for these changes in Jaffna, other reasons include globalization and the influence of the Tamil diaspora. In particular, the Tamil cultural practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is in an anxious transition, and has been manipulated according to people's convenience to acknowledge the changes. Inuvil, an old Tamil village, has undergone tremendous transformation – including economically -- for once it was a tobacco village before its tobacco farming and tobacco cigar industries were disrupted by the war and political instability. More than ten tobacco cigar home industries were shut down due to the war and the closure of the A-9 highway. The war and outward migration caused the agrarian village structure and economy to collapse. Additionally, two rice mills, three weaving mills (electricity-based handloom) six weaving mills (manpower-based handloom), and one coconut oil mill were completely shut down in Inuvil due to the war and the cut off of electricity. As a result, Inuvil's local economy was weakened and many Veḷḷāḷar members of the community moved to Colombo and to foreign countries. In this way, the image of Inuvil village begun to change through its multiple connection to the diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization. For instance, with respect to village reconstruction, new temple construction, and temple renovations, all were largely implemented through diaspora funding. In this way diaspora and transnational connections and interactions immensely changed village structure.

At the same time, Inuvil village reconstruction was more greatly influenced by diaspora compared to my other ethnographic location, Naguleswaram. Naguleswaram was a former high security zone of the Sri Lanka security forces and had a different project of village community reconstruction. Community rebuilding and reconstructions of temples and houses were still being done in 2018 after beginning in 2011. Once people lived in Keerimalai and Karukampanai, sub-villages of Naguleswaram, and were uprooted from those villages for more than two decades. Returning to the *ūr* was their dream, but their hopes and dreams were long delayed from coming true. However, people were completely disappointed after finally returning back to their *ūr* and, ultimately, felt an impossible nostalgia for their homes and villages as they used to be before the war. In 2018 people were struggling to rebuild postwar life in Naguleswaram. In their different context, I need to answer how Nguleswaram's people dealt with the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in community rebuilding, how their village-temple consciousness played a pivotal role in reconstructing their newly opened sacred and village landscapes, and how their daily survival was structured in post-war Naguleswaram. In the following chapter, I will discuss these questions through relevant ethnographic case studies.

CHAPTER 6. NAGULESWARAM: BETWEEN IMPOSSIBLE NOSTALGIA AND DAILY SURVIVAL

6.1   Introduction

On Thursday August 31st, 2017, I was standing in front of my house on the KKS Road[74] in Inuvil for a bus to go to Naguleswaram. I assumed that there would be a bus, which would directly take me to my destination. My village relative, Selvam, saw me while I was standing there and inquired where I was going. When I mentioned my intention, he advised me to take a different bus route which was longer since there was no regular bus service to Naguleswaram through KKS Road. He further recalled how the prolonged war disrupted people's daily activities and their local pilgrimage practices in contrast to the frequent bus services from Jaffna to the Sivan (*Civan*) Temple, Naguleswaram through KKS Road before the war. The purpose of narrating my personal travel experience here is to point out that though the war had ended, and the projects of reconstruction and developments were flourishing in post-war Jaffna, people have been unable to attain their pre-war life; a life which was well-formed in which people enjoyed local pilgrimages through available bus services in Jaffna. Such a life became only an impossible nostalgia for them.

Finally, I decided to take the long route which took more than an hour to reach my destination. I was in Naguleswaram after two decades. The landscape had changed tremendously in terms of physical appearance. Therefore, I could not recollect the image of pre-war Naguleswaram which existed twenty years ago. The thirty years of civil war and militarization had not only altered Naguleswaram but also affected sixteen villages which were under the control of the Sri Lankan military as a part of its High Security Zone (HSZ) until their release in 2010.

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[74] K.K.S. Road refers to Kankesanthurai veethy, which is the main road between the Jaffna Fort and Kankesanthurai town.

While I was in the bus, I noticed that many houses and public buildings were razed to the ground. There were houses with no roofs on both sides of Maviddapuram Road. Maviddapuram was quite famous for aluminum and aluminum bucket factories which were now in a dilapidated condition. While I was there, I came across a model village called Nallinakkapuram built in 2016. It had been built by the Sri Lankan Government for people who had lost their houses and lands due to the war (Tamil Information Center, 2017). The internally displaced and landless people had been resettled in the newly established model village belonging to the Maviddapuram Grama Niladhari Division. Some families had started farming on their little piece of land which revealed their new hope for survival in post-war Naguleswaram. When I reached the Keerimalai bus service station, I was amazed by its new development. There still was the small, old, bus service station beside the new building which jogged my memory of Keerimalail. Now, many Sinhalese tourists, local pilgrims, and foreign tourists visit the Keerimalai beach and the Naguleswaram Shiva temple without any fear of war, violence or the LTTE.

I have heard from many older people that in pre-war Jaffna, people identified the Keerimalai beach as an important tourist location. I have a memory of my first visit to Keerimalai in 1988 with my relatives to attend a funeral is quite jarred. I did not know then anything about the post-funerary ritual called *antiyesti* which took place at the Keerimalai *antiyesti maṭam*[75] and was performed by a priest. Further, I was not allowed to witness the ritual as I was too small, and I was so keen to know why I was denied entrance. When I asked Supiah, an old man from our village why this was so, he affirmed that if small children watched the particular ritual, there might be a possibility of a ghost possessing them. As soon as I heard this I fled away saying, "piccai vēṇṭām nāyai piṭi" [I do not want your charity, just hold your dog at bay] as I was anyway scared of ghosts. But I thoroughly enjoyed the rest of this visit with village friends with whom I took sea baths.

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[75] *Antiyesti* refers to post-funerary ritual and *maṭam* has another meaning, but here it denotes the place where this ritual takes place.

In 2017, as an anthropologist, I revisited Keerimalai *antiyesti maṭam* to observe and study about the ritual, and fortunately, this time, Supiah was not around to relate any ghost stories. When the LTTE started the war against the military in Naguleswaram in 1990, people were displaced to other villages. The military captured these villages and controlled them for more than two decades and people were not allowed to resettle in their villages until November 2010. Prior to my fieldwork between 2017 and 2018, I had visited Naguleswaram in February 2006 with special permission from the military to perform the post-funerary ritual for my father who passed away in January 2006. During the ceasefire in 2002 – 2006, the Sri Lankan military allowed people to perform the ritual by getting special permission from them.

On this trip, our movements were restricted by the military and I could not further explore the place because of the prevailing rules and the military sentry points posted all over. I just raised my head in front of the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple of whose doors were closed and there were no people around the temple premises. There was military permission for travel there only for pilgrim purposes and not for people's resettlement. This was a permission has been granted to people since the ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 and till then, people were not allowed to attend their ritual pilgrimages. However, this permission to conduct a ritual pilgrimage was withdrawn again due to the failure of the ceasefire agreement in August 2006. As a result, the Sri Lanka military did not allow pilgrims to visit the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple and the Keerimalai beach from August 2006 onwards.

There is a long history connected to the Keerimalai sacred spring pond (Keerimalai *teerta kēni*) which adjoins the Keerimalai beach. As mentioned previously, the Jaffna Tamil Hindus perform post funerary rituals for their dead family members in Keerimalai. In particular, Jaffna Tamil Hindus feel obligated to visit Keerimalai for stirring the human body ashes in the sea at Keerimalai, a mandatory part of the funeral ritual. I have heard from one of my informants, that a portion of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were also stirred into the sea at Keerimalai (Holmes 1997[1980]). However, since 1990, the Keerimalai beach and the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple

were under the control of the Sri Lankan military who did not allow people to enter these areas once the Government declared them as part of its HSZ. As a result, during the war, people opted to perform these rituals at Viloondi beach. This dispossession and displacement caused people to question their boundary of belonging. It is extremely relevant to state here how people were affected physically and psychologically as they were cut off from their own homes. In this context, I would like to bring in Sivathamby's (2005) statement about the significance of Keerimalai and other "disturbed" ritual centers in Jaffna Tamil Hindus' daily lives.

> One should not underestimate the importance of religion in any traditional society, especially so in a developing society where religion and language become identifying symbols. Since the early 1980s, the number of temples and cults that have been destroyed or made inaccessible are numerous. Even after eight months of the Ceasefire Agreement the average Jaffna person cannot go to the Keerimalai temple or the tank unescorted by army personnel. It is important to highlight that when people started moving out from their villages in the north and east, they also took with them surrogate temples/cult centers from their areas of origin to the places which they had started occupying, so much so that in the mid-1990s, many temples were celebrating festivals of temples abandoned in the north and east…………in this matter, there is no question of big temples and small temples. The question is whether your place of worship has been disturbed or not. There is a famous Tamil saying, "Do not live in the place where there are no temples." It has been the unfortunate record of successive governments, to repudiate the sense of belonging the Tamil people had to Sri Lanka by bombing and damaging their temples and cult centers as well as making them camps for the security forces……………… (Sivathamby 2005: 69-70)."

Unlike my past visits, this time, I spent a year in Naguleswaram to learn ethnographically about the post-war reconstruction of *ūr* through a discovery of memory of places. Since November 2010, people have been permitted to resettle in their villages. First, the Government completed de-mining in these villages of the mines planted by both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military during the war. Though these villages were released for people's resettlement in 2010, until recently the basic infrastructure was not quite restored. For instance, there was no hospital (except an *ayurvedic* medical center), pharmacy or photocopy shop in Naguleswaram.

However, previously inhabited places and religious sites are now slowly returning to normalcy, and the people are moving out and about irrespective of the time of the day. Yet, at the same time, certain people argue, and I too have experienced this during my stay, that the

Keerimalai beach and the Naguleswaram Temple have become busy places flooded with tourists and pilgrims only during daytime. Even the villagers were not hanging around much at night. During pre-war times and before displacement, a majority of people would freely enjoy the festivals, and even watered their farms, at night; and this pre-war life, according to my informants, have not returned till now. Occasionally, a few young boys are visible riding bicycles and motor bikes at night but not a single woman or young girl can be seen alone on the road. Parents are more concerned about their children since they are afraid of the Sri Lankan military and navy because their camps are still located in their villages. Thus, many informants recall their past as involving different style of life and lovelier landscapes, things which are an almost impossible to experience in the post-war period because the war and militarization have changed their places and lives. Hence, their everyday life and survival are shaped by their past memories and current economic and political conditions.

6.2 Everyday life and survival in Naguleswaram: General observations from my fieldwork

Anthropologists are interested in studying everyday life in various cultures; in particular, they focus on how people consider their everyday life culturally. More specifically, they identify the 'functioning of culture' in everyday life through their engagements in economy, kinship, religion, ritual, politics, etc. This ethnographic style of learning has always paid attention to the forms and practices of everyday life, but anthropologists have not been as successful in grasping the core aspect of everyday life. Anthropologists who rely on descriptions of theories learn from a particular culture and postulate this in delineating different human cultures. I argue that anthropologists may have to devote their attention to people's lives to study how culture alters and progresses in times rather than by looking at culture as a 'frozen form.'

Naguleswaram was deteriorated by war and its people were dispossessed. Since November 2010, people have been rebuilding their *ūr* by using their pre-war recollections and nostalgia.

249

They have to do this because Naguleswaram, Keerimalai, and Karukampanai have changed so tremendously over the years. Based on my observations and conversations with other villagers, I have learnt that people have not returned to their normal life after returning to Naguleswaram. Without any exaggeration, apart from the soothing sounds of waves crashing on the beach, I felt *nicapṭam* (very silent) after 7:30pm during my stay. However, despite a shared fear of the *Āva* group, this night silence is not the case in other villages and in Jaffna city. In Naguleswaram, I have not seen people freely moving about after 8:00pm and only four small shops (two small grocery stores and two food stalls) were opened until 8:30pm. There are small shops which are opened during the day; two of them sell roasted peanuts and local fruits such as mangoes, grapes, and wood apple. In addition, there are two more small shops run by two Sinhalese men from Rathnapura and they sell *kithul* jaggary, *dodol, aluva, penivalalu,* and *boondhi* (snack-like sweetmeat belonging to Sinhalese food culture). Though people have returned to their *ūr* with the sentimental value, which is *conta iṭam,* their village landscape is still partially controlled by the Sri Lankan military and navy as their camps are located close to their settlements. As a result, people are especially concerned about their girl children and the security of the resettled villages. They remembered the human rights violations of their recent past.

Unlike other villages in Jaffna, the nightscape in Naguleswaram is quite unusual. For instance, in Inuvil, people slowly rebuilt their trust in life through enormous effort since the army took over Jaffna in 1996. Even I lost hope when I returned to Inuvil after I was displaced from my *ūr* for six months and asked my father whether we could either move to Colombo or migrate to India. My father reprimanded me and vehemently denied my request stating that my suggestion of voluntary migration was equivalent to displacement. Likewise, people are slowly re-building their trust on their life in Naguleswaram. Although Naguleswaram has been released from the HSZ status, Naguleswaram, Keerimalai, and Karukampanai are still under the observation of Sri Lankan military, navy and police because of the large Palali military base closer to these villages.

During the day, Sinhalese and foreign tourists as well as local pilgrims visit the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple and the natural spring, Keerimalai pond, which are popular sacred spots not only for people in Jaffna but in the whole country. In this aspect, different kinds of people visit these places. For instance, Jaffna locals visit them for worshiping Lord Shiva and tourists come for entertainment like bathing at the Keerimalai beach and sacred pond. Many people also visit these sites to perform post-funerary rituals for their dead family members. Diaspora Tamils visit these places and take photographs there to share among their family members and friends to update memories. Thus, these places and people's movements involve multidimensional activities. Naguleswaram villagers have told me that many families from Keerimalai and Karukampanai have still not returned to their villages. Some of them have migrated abroad while some have opted to live with their relatives or friends in different villages in Jaffna. This situation is visible through the numerous abandoned and damaged houses left unattended.

This displacement was an ongoing process which lasted for quite a long period and people were not allowed to visit their villages for almost twenty-one years. As a result, many bought lands and established themselves in relocated villages during this period. They did so assuming that they would never return to their villages. However, many families did not lose hope and survived with their nostalgia over their *ūr* and now they have started recovering not only their villages, but also their former way of living. One old woman told me that the renovation of the Naguleswaram Temple was a huge motivation for people to come back to their villages after official permission was granted by the Sri Lankan Government. Many argue that most of the overhauls are a money making as well as *pukaḻ* (popularity) making processes. The temple reconstructions and renovation have the same motives too. For instance, many informants affirm that the Pradesha Sabai (Divisional Secretary's Division) is also trying to develop space for money making rather than for bringing back pre-war life in Naguleswaram. However, some insist that these are definitely carried out with the good intention of developing the area, and they are

happy being in their own land again. Furthermore, I have heard many phrases from people such as, "can any place be equivalent to your *conta iṭam*?" and "our own land can only offer pleasure and peace for us" which exhibit their approval and satisfaction over how everything has turned out. Such emotional expressions also reveal attachment to one's *conta kāni* (own land) and c*onta ūr*. Despite the Divisional Secretary's intention, most people are not interested in making unfair money through this process.

6.3   Impossible nostalgia and daily survival

For more details about impossible nostalgia and daily survival, this chapter begins with two different ethnographic stories of Lingam and Arulamma.[76] These two informants spoke about their *ūr* in terms of livelihood, war, memory, religious practices and scared landscapes. In particular, the informants used stories to describe certain places and to explain how their places are attached to their daily lives and *ūr*. Lingam's claim was an impossible nostalgia about Naguleswaram, Karukampanai and Keerimalai, while Arulamma's story demonstrated her daily survival and challenges after the replacement in her *ūr*.

Post-war returnees' individual and collective memories of lived places provoked me. Their stories provoked me to contemplate, through their minds, the language of nostalgia and its role in post-war reconstruction. Is nostalgia a powerful energy? Yes, of course, it is an extremely powerful energy and feeling, which can lift people up or put them down. There is nostalgia for things and events that are no longer with the returnees and for loved ones or known people/members who are no longer with them. Hence, there are many things, events, and people that are out of their places – and not only out of their places but also out of their time. People like Lingam argue that people generally have a chance to see the places that they have lived in the past. But for him, many returnees' dwellings, some temples, shops, festivals, and events are out

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[76] Lingam and Arulamma are pseudonyms. I have used pseudonyms for all human subjects in this chapter.

of their places because they were destroyed during the war and discontinued without practice and interaction for more than two decades. So, Lingam could not have them again after he returned to his *ūr.* Further, he mentioned that he could not see the nostalgic places, things, and events ever again. He could not feel the important places, dwellings, and temples exactly as he felt them during the pre-war time. Although he had nostalgia about them, those nostalgic delicacies did not come through as an "impossible nostalgia" as he terms it. Nostalgia is just simply not about the past, but it reconstitutes or restores imagined pre-war and pre-exile lives and experiences.

Both Lingam and Arulamma articulated those stories in relation to their world experiences and the projections of themselves. They both used a story-telling method which Basso (1996) has termed oral narrative (native model). For Basso (1996) story-telling and oral narratives form an enduring bond between people and their places, and this is the case with Lingam and Arulamma. Moreover, this chapter explicates how this native model of story-telling shapes people's conception of the post-war landscape as well as their sense of self. As Boyarin (1994) argues, memory is a narrative construction about the past recalled in the present. In a similar vein, Lingam and Arulamma depicted their places through narratives formed from their memories. Thus, people are empowering their places through their own conceptual knowledge of place in post-war Naguleswaram, which can be understood through the lenses of 'multilocality' and 'multivocality,' constituting a 'complex social construction of spatial meaning' (Rodman, 2010: 640).

These stories of place-remembering have always had connections with environmental and cultural knowledge of the natives (Basso, 1996). When it comes to remembrances, state narratives are always considered by historians as a memory of the past at the macro level, while the non-state micro level, memories of the past among lay people are too often neglected. For instance, personal or individual war stories are not considered as a part of the Sri Lanka state memory, even if the state memory includes individual memories, since they would be manipulated. Also, class, caste, religion, politics, and gender can be the dominant factor in producing those

memories. In general, one might wonder where one could go to collect memories of war because populist memoryscapes are always dominant, powerful and agency driven. In addition, western conventional approaches seek externalized materials such as monuments, museums and memorials to study war experiences. But these object-based investigations are insufficient in understanding the individual experiences gained through war and post-war reconstructions in Jaffna. Therefore, there, anthropologists must approach people who have lived during the war and who are also survivors. Surviving war memory cannot be driven from people who had such experiences simply by destroying monuments. For example, though the Government of Sri Lanka entirely demolished the LTTE warriors' graveyard (memorials), parents have not got rid of the memory of their grievances and the loss of their children. To understand this, anthropologists should rely on people like Lingam and Arulamma who are war survivors and who have witnessed the war through direct experiences of displacement and reconstruction.

To study the remembrance involved in long-term displacement and nostalgia of their *ūr*, this chapter focuses on individual experiences because state narratives are selective and portray only a particular version of the war narrative. For instance, though the Sri Lankan Government and non-governmental organizations describe the war and its consequences, these descriptions are presented more in terms of technical writings which may hide certain details and even fabricate reality. As a result, such writings of nostalgia are bound to be politicized descriptions rather than individual experiences of war. They display how the politics of power play a major role in 'rhetorics of memory' (Boyarin, 1994). In addition, the experiences of war and displacement of high caste Veḷḷāḷars have been presented in the public forums, but researchers have never failed to touch upon the hearts and minds of the non-high caste people who were also part of the war. Hence, this chapter uses ethnographic cases collected through 'story telling' as a lucrative method of investigation of memories. Consequently, the stories of war give rise to 'object-centered geography of remembrance' which conveys embodied words and actions of surviving war civilians (Muzaini, 2012).

Thus, this chapter further clarifies how post-war Jaffna Tamil Hindu people in Sri Lanka are using 'village consciousness' and 'village-temple consciousness' to adjust to post-war circumstances. In other words, 'village-temple consciousness' or the memory or nostalgia for *ūr* (village) consciousness as it existed in the recent pre-war past, is being used in the reconstruction of communities affected or destroyed by the war. It argues that 'village-consciousness' or 'village-temple consciousness' is likely part of the reconstruction process in any post-conflict society. It is also likely that destroyed or damaged communities undergoing reconstruction are using suitably modified pre-war place-making practices as *models of* or *for* their efforts at rebuilding (Kingsolver, 2011; Feld and Basso, 1996; Geertz 1973). The findings about 'village consciousness' and 'village-temple consciousness' in Naguleswaram addresses a general anthropological problem, the reinvention of destroyed hometowns and associated senses of place in post-conflict societies.

Furthermore, I argue that understanding the conjoined village-temple sense of place that underlies social life and its reconstruction in Jaffna requires recognizing the conjunction of the physical and the sacred implied by this compound term. The previous chapter pointed out that Inuvil has more interactions with the diaspora and transnationalism. Yet, Naguleswaram and Keerimalai have less diaspora connections and influences. Thus, the people of Naguleswaram are slowly rebuilding their villages and temples while struggling with livelihood developments and facing multiple challenges of daily survival. In order to tackle their daily survival of social, economic, and cultural life, people are trying to bring back their past in the present forms of life which are drown from collective and individual memories, and shape the current consciousness of Naguleswaram in post-war Jaffna. More specifically, this chapter phenomenologically focuses on how Tamils' (from various castes and genders) experiences are interconnected with an orientation towards a home place (*ūr*). Thus, the phenomenological ethnography of Jaffna Tamil village reconstruction is considered as an ongoing process.

In this context, an existential analysis of how *ūr* nostalgia is engaged with everyday life and the reconstruction process of post-war Jaffna villages are dealt through spatial, sensual, temporal, discursive and moral dimensions. Hence, the following sections concentrate on two relevant ethnographic cases to justify the overall argument of this chapter.

6.4   Case 1: Lingam's impossible nostalgisa

I met Lingam, a 65-year-old man from a Kōviyar caste background, while having lunch with other devotees visiting the Sivapoomi *maṭam*[77] during my stay in 2018. This pilgrim guest house offers free lunch (*aṉṉatāṉam*)[78] to the pilgrims, tourists and locals on Saturdays and on full moon days of each month. It is also offered to people who visit the Sivapoomi *maṭam* every day but only a few people come on daily basis. While I was staying at Sivapoomi *maṭam*, I took part in social and religious services with other colleagues who regularly work there; I took part in singing *tēvāram*[79] and serving foods to the people. I was off from conducting fieldwork during the lunch time to render my services for this religious organization. This was also a great opportunity of interacting with pilgrims in a *maṭam* to do an ethnography of Sivapoomi *maṭam* and daily survival in the post-war Naguleswaram. In particular, the guesthouse was a meeting place where people visited from around the world. For instance, I met many locals and diaspora members who visited there during my stay. In terms of my service, I used to sweep the dining hall with my colleagues and serve food to the pilgrims. When Ruban, who daily sang a *tēvaram* was

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[77] In Tamil, *maṭam* theoretically refers to a hermitage; thus, it is a dwelling of a hermitage. However, this place is also used for various purposes in practice. For instance, *maṭam* can be a monastery where pilgrims and religious medicants are fed and are also provided accommodation for a short term until the end of their pilgrimage. These days, people call this as pilgrim guest or rest house. Sivapoomi *maṭam* works as a pilgrim guest or rest house where locals, devotees and pilgrims are fed.

[78] *Aṉṉatāṉam* means offering food; in Sanskrit and Tamil *aṉṉam* means food and *tāṉam* comes from the Sanskrit root *dhāna.* In India and Sri Lanka or even in subcontinent of India, religious festivals and domestic ceremonies will not be completed without *aṉṉatāṉam*.

[79] A collection of Saiva devotional poetry written by Nāyaṉmārs (Saivite religious saints).

absent in *maṭam,* I sang *tēvaram* which was part of the daily prayer in Sivapoomi *maṭam* before offering lunch.

Lingam was born in Karukampani, a sub-village in Naguleswaram, and worked at the Kankesan Cement Cooperation. He was displaced to Sankanai in 1990 and his *kulateiyvam*[80] was Kavunavathai Vairavar (Village Guardian Deity). He has had a disfigurement in one leg, but it had been cured by Lord Murukan's *cakti* (power) and *aruḷ* (grace). I asked, "Lingam! You are a devotee of Kavunavathai Vairavar! So, how did you become a devotee of Lord Murukan?" I was intrigued to discern how the displacement of deities occurred in his mind while he was being displaced. Lingam was eager to share details with me about a miracle that occurred in his life when he was displaced from his village. Once a upon a time, Lord Murukan had appeared in his dreams and had given him a camphor flame. Since he had seen Lord Murukan in his dream, he started to express his *bhakti* religious practices at the Selva Sannidhi (*celva canniti*) Murukan Temple[81] because he totally believed that Selva Sannidhi Murukan was the one who appeared in his dream. Then, he decided to visit the temple for ten Fridays to make vows. As a result, his leg problem was cured by Sannidhi Murukan's grace and power. He became a colleague of Mohan Swami who ran the Sannidhiyan Annadana Achiramam[82] (*cannitiyan aṉṉatāṉa ācciramam*) which offered free lunch for devotees who visited there daily. Mohan Swami gave Rs. 35000.00 to him to buy a motor bike to visit the temple as he had some problems with one of his legs. Later, he was appointed as an administrative in Mohan Swami's office and was occupied so for eight years.

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[80] *Kulateiyvam* refers to family, clan, caste-deity or even village guardian deity also can be a *kulateiyvam* for some people.

[81] Selva Sannidhi (Celva Canniti) Murukan Temple is located in Thondaimanaru in Jaffna.

[82] Cannitiyan Ācciramam, a pilgrim rest house, located very close to Selva Sanndhi Murukan in Thondaimanaru. Cannitiyan is the name of the Lord Murukan who abodes at the Selva Sannidhi Temple. *Ācciramam* comes from the Sanskrit root *ashram,* which literally stands for the dwelling of an ascetic. This temple's deity's (Lord Murukan) name is given to this *Ācciramam*, which offer and share foods for devotees, locals, pilgrims and whoever visit there. I have been to this temple and *Ācciramam* many times in my life.

As Lingam was displaced from his *ūr*, he was physically detached from his *kulateiyvam* Kavaunavathai Vairavar deity, who was the deity of a popular temple for *vēḷvi* (aniṭl sacrifice). He was so excited to speak about *vēḷvi* and according to his own word, "it cannot be imagined and described by words." He remembered his past life in his *ūr* through a *vēḷvi* in which about one thousand goats and one thousand chickens were sacrificed. After the animal sacrifice, the meat of goats and chickens were sold among the members of the village and throughout Jaffna and the price of one share (*paṅku*) of meat was about Rs.5000.00. However, the Jaffna High Courts banned animal sacrificing in 2016 due to the pressure of external forces (the Sri Lankan government bodies and local religious associations). However, these external bodies were not aware of strength of the Vairavar, who was a very powerful deity in the village. Lingam warned the people who were against the *vēḷvi* saying, "they cannot estimate Vairavar by law and order and do not know how much people have suffered as they have not performed *vēḷvi* regularly." While they were displaced in different locations throughout their displacement journey, they sometimes performed this ritual in a common place on behalf of the deity. Lingam further believed that as they have not performed animal sacrifice for the past few years, there were many frequent accidents and deaths occurring in Jaffna. For the past, the Vairavar protected the village when they regularly performed the sacrifice every year. *Vēḷvi* was not just a religious ritual but it was a festival for the entire village and people treated it as a great festival in the past. Hence, the animal sacrifice festival was performed in a grand scale before the war and this village was recognized through the Kavunavathai *vēḷvi*.

Lingam moved to talking about Keerimalai and how it was before the war, pointing out that there were many *matams* which were destroyed during the war. At that time, even though Keerimalai was a religiously important place, it was also an entertaining place for people. Whenever people had a cup of tea in the tea shop, they were also able to purchase liquor. Thus, Keerimalai was considered as a religious as well as a social place in pre-war Jaffna. There were many small tea shops around Keerimalai but all of them were destroyed and their past glory was

258

lost. Lingam argued that people could not continue their peaceful life as they were uprooted from these villages for more than two decades. Though people have returned to their villages, they could not bring back the old Keerimalai (*paḻaiya* Keerimalai). Previously, whenever tourists visited Keerimalai, they used to drink Koovil (a *kuṟicci* [sub-territory] of Ilavali village Grama Niladhari division(GN), but it is adjacent to Naguleswaram GN division and people in Koovil claimed their village identity as Naguleswaram and Keerimalai) *kaḷḷu* (toddy) and buy Koovil jaggery (made of palmyra fruit juice). There was a good business for local people who were engaged in producing jaggary and household items made of palmyra leaves. During the festival and special religious events, people from Keerimalai used to sell these locally produced goods. When people from other villages visit Naguleswaram and Keerimalai on those religious festival days, the local people would sell local food items such as *iṭiyappam* (string hoppers), *piṭṭu* (made of rice flour) and *appam* (milk hoppers). Further, there were floor mat shops, cosmetic shops and peanuts shops, all of which are no more. Lingam further pointed out that all of these features of Naguleswaram landscape have been distorted, but their memory is not lost, and he waited until they returned back to their villages to reconstruct life like it was in the past. However, this was an impossibility because people's lifestyles, expectations, needs and attitudes have now taken a different turn.

Lingam also believed that *bhakti* too has gone down among the people, especially young people. For example, young people are reluctant to sing *pañca purāṇam*[83] in temple, and only elderly people sing them. Children's *āṇmīkam* (spirituality) has become damp due to the excessive use of cellular phones and television. Parents are also worried that their children might commit suicide and that *kaṭṭupāṭu* also has changed. For instance, there were three young girls who committed suicide in Keerimalai due to conflicts between them and their parents. During the

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[83] *Pañcapurāṇam* refers to the five sacred books called Thēvāram, Tiruvāsagam, Thiruvisaippā, Tiruppallāndu and Periyapurāṇam which are composed by Saiva Nayanmars (Saiva Tamil Saints).

LTTE state, on the other hand, parents would worry about the possibility of their children joining the LTTE. Now, according to Lingam, the common belief is that tuition centers spoil children. This is, once children would not speak over the phone with their friends in front of their parents but only in privacy. As Lingam put it, "earlier, we couldn't go out without our National Identity Card (NIC) but children nowadays, won't not step out without their cellular phones." It is evident Lingam claimed that the use of mobile phones has increased among the young children, and also cinema have changed their lifestyle and behavior. In the past, people went to Jaffna town to buy a bottle of liquor, but now young children can get drugs, liquor, etc. from different places through their friends. People are also afraid of the young thug group (*vāḷ veṭṭu group*) which is increasing in numbers. If the LTTE had been in Jaffna, he asserted, all these criminal activities and mobs would have vanished because the LTTE punished the criminals immediately.

Thus, Lingam's nostalgia for his *ūr* has changed and he is worried about these changes because people like him do not consider them as a gradual coming back of his village due to the deep emotional attachment, he has with the *conta iṭam.* Evidently, there is a contradiction between his nostalgia for the village and its contemporary stage of reconstruction*.* In existential terms, multiple challenges are identified in reconstructing post-war Naguleswaram villages. The major obstacle is the livelihood problem, because people there have lost occupational opportunities and continuities due to the protracted displacement. This disruption of livelihood and social networks has enormously affected their daily survival. People who were born in Naguleswaram and also have gone through multiple displacements have more attachment to their *conta ūr* than the younger generations because the latter, who are below thirty years of age, are clueless about their villages. Yet, at the same time, they are sensibly motivated to construct an emotional attachment to their parents' *ūr* through story-telling done by their parents and other elders of the community. In addition to the influences of global communication technologies on peoples' lives, foreign remittances have also played a pivotal role in changing the lifestyle in post-war villages in Jaffna which Arulamma argued through her life story. In the following

section, I will discuss a woman's experiences of daily survival while balancing the pre-war remembrances and post-war resettlement challenges.

6.5   Case 2: Arulamma's daily survival between pre-war remembrances and post-war resettlement challenges

Arulamma, a 70-year-old woman from a Kōviyar caste background, was born in Keerimalai and returned to her own village four years ago after having undergone multiple displacements. She has many health issues such as blood sugar, cholesterol and asthma. She runs a small grocery shop for her entertainment and receives a sufficient income for her daily needs. She is also supported by her son who makes a living out of his lorry. Arulamma was into farming on a large scale with her husband before the war and currently does the same on a small scale due to her health condition and a lack of capital (*mūlattāṉam*) given what her family lost during the war and displacement. She feels that her *ūr* is slowly recovering from the disaster and improving a bit. Since November 2011, people have started to resettle in Naguleswaram villages.

The first challenge in this process was the identification of lands, which had to be sorted out through finding the *ellai* (boundary) of each family land. In addition, a land deed was a needed supporting document in figuring out the size and boundary of the land. Most of the houses were damaged, though, and the villages looked like a jungle because plants and bushes had covered them. Likewise, all returnees faced the common issue of identifying, which was their plot of land, but this was sorted out without much difficulty. Though some people have lost their land deeds while they were displaced, some remembered the reference numbers of their deeds since they had noted them down. Referring to this occurrence, Arulamma told me emotionally, "Tamils are intelligent (*putticālikaḷ*) and nobody can cheat them because they are more curious of remembering their land's *tōmpu* (legal document of a land's details) number." In particular, a land's floor plan is drawn in every deed. As a result, it was easy to figure out the land's size and measurement from the text. Thus, they used multiple methods to find out their lands correctly.

261

They also took into account the trees and wells nearby to find out each person's boundary line. During this process, temples, shrines, wells and trees were sometimes used as landmarks in identifying the lands.

The second challenge was the lack of water when people moved in to start their second lease on life. NGOs aided in repairing and cleaning the wells, but a majority of the people gave up the idea of cleaning the wells because doing so it was extremely costly. Therefore, many people dug new tube wells, which the cost between Rs.15000.00 – Rs.17000.00 ($90.00-&110.00) Arulamma goes to the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple and also worships at other temples located in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai. Evidently, there is no scarcity of temples in this area. Her family was displaced to Vadaliyadaippu and was thrilled to be back at her *conta iṭam*, but survival was highly challenging. She could not re-establish her large-scale farming as she did not possess enough capital to invest. Therefore, she sold 30 *pavuṉ* (240g gold) worth of her jewels for Rs.90000.00, and each *pavuṉ* (8g) was Rs.3000.00 in 1995 during displacement. This was a very low rate compared to the prevailing market, but she was left with no other option in managing her life when displaced to Thenmaradchy (one of the regional territorial divisions of the Jaffna Peninsula) in 1995. She had to sell her jewels to build a hut (wattle and daub a cajan) for which each stick cost Rs150.00 and a couple of *kiṭuku* (made of coconut palm leaves split down the middle and woven into cadjan) was Rs. 50.00. Fortunately, many Tamil families had invested their income in jewels, which were useful later when their children faced any financial hardships.

She received the housing fund settlement under the Indian Housing Scheme[84] and its actual amount was Rs. 850,000.00, but she actually received only Rs. 780,000.00. As many other returnees informed me, she too insisted that the money received from the housing scheme was not adequate to build a house. She has had two houses which were razed to ground level. Her previous house had four bedrooms, a kitchen and a living room and her husband had spent

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[84] The government of India launched the housing scheme project in Jaffna Peninsula to build houses for the people who have lost their houses during the war.

Rs.120,000.00 to build the house in 1981. The biggest room in her house was the storeroom, which was 12 feet in length and 12 feet in breadth purposely built for storing dry chili (pepper). Its floor had been made of cement because the normal earth temperature can preserve dry chili without getting it spoilt. During the Sirimavo Bandaranaike regime (the first women Prime Minister of Sri Lanka 1960-1965 and 1970-1977), her family made profits from local farming as the 'Sirima Government' encouraged local economy and the price of dry chili was as high as Rs. 75.00 per kg and people could buy land and build houses and also purchase jewels through the income received from farming.

At the end of the war, Arulamma felt that they had lost their past life and were facing multiple challenges to recovering the cost of their loss. Here, her *ūr* consciousness is revealed through her past remembrance about her comfortable life, farming, place, house, land, savings and achievements. She had been worried about the condition of their post-war life, which was more challenged by the changes in the Tamil cultural practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* In post-war Naguleswaram she felt, *kaṭṭupāṭu* is being destroyed due to *veḷināṭṭu mōkam* (foreign infatuation). Here, by foreign infatuation, she meant people being so excessively attracted towards foreign lifestyles that they change from the lifestyle of people in Jaffna. The Jaffna Tamil community has changed, she claimed, by imitating the attitudes of other people, particularly their neighbors. Money, she thought was one factor. Members of diaspora families who live in Jaffna simply spend Rs 500,000.00 for a wedding held at a luxurious reception hall (for the hall only). She argued further that diaspora members spend "white people's money"; that is, what they earn in foreign countries and the currency of European countries and Canada (where more Jaffna Tamils reside) are worth more in Sri Lanka, and the local people cannot afford to spend so much on a wedding in Jaffna.

Such situations lead to comparisons and competition between neighbors due to the inability of people who have no family members living abroad to spend so lavishly not only on recreational events but on religious festivals as well. Arulamma, defending the disadvantaged,

points out that as common people, everyone would prefer to follow others, but are compelled to invest their money on farming with the hope of increasing their production and also making some savings if possible. In fact, spending lavishly on recreational activities brings *kouvravam* (honor/prestige). This practice has been there in the past as well. Yet, there was a limit and boundary line for such expenses them because people earned from their land (farming/labor) and had a habit of *cikkaṉam* (saving money without spending unnecessarily) which trained people to live a simpler life. This was a positively encouraged among people in Jaffna, and that made them save money for their future needs. However, today, she claimed, foreign remittances have greatly influenced and changed people's lifestyles. As local money is earned through local wages, people are bound by *kaṭṭupāṭu* and are compelled to spend with limitations which pave the way for maintaining equality among members of their family and community. But foreign remittances are not earned or received locally (*ūr*) and therefore, have no value according to Arulamma. Foreign remittances and lifestyle changes influenced people to choose migration as a path to improve their lives. As a result, if one person migrated from a family in a particular neighborhood, the others also get tempted to follow suite. People of Keerimalai are mostly farmers and labors, she said, and therefore, they hardly have any family members in foreign countries. Arulamma finally mentioned in her story that some families have not returned to Keerimalai because some are settled abroad while some are scattered in the Jaffna Peninsula and other parts of the country due to employment and educational opportunities.

Arulamma's case indicates that her present life in post-war Naguleswaram is a reflection of her daily survival and remembrance of her past. At the same time, people have experienced war, violence and multiple displacements until they resettled in their villages. There is a close relationship between village reconstruction and remembrance of their past. Through such war and displacement stories I found that people believe in being protected from the war and violence because of the grace and *cakti* of their *kulateiyvam.* At the same time, individuals have different perceptions of *vēḷvi* practices in post-war Naguleswaram. To elucidate this case, the following

264

two ethnographic cases are presented on two women's experiences of war, remembrance, violence and survival in post-war Keerimalai and Karukampanai villages.

6.6   Case-3: Easvari's personal story of violence, reconstruction of post-war life and remembrance of *kulateiyvam*

Easvari, who is a 65-year-old woman from Koviyar caste background, was born in Keerimalai and had lost her husband during the war in 1987. Her husband Sandran had worked at the KKS Cement Cooperation. This particular incident had occurred when the IPKF was in Jaffna. One day, around 5:30am, a van had arrived at their house and a man who had got off from it had asked her husband to come with them to help in cooking at an engineer's wedding. As the engineer worked at the same factory, he went along with them. However, Easvari did not realize that this was an abduction unit, and he did not return home. The main cause for the abduction was a conflict between him and a neighbor. Before the Māvīrar Nāḷ (Great Heroes' Day)[85], the LTTE members had distributed flags among people to hang up on top of each lane in Keerimalai. Esvari's husband had hanged them on the palmyra tree which was on his land and their house was located at the corner of the lane. His neighbor was a supporter of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) and had quarreled with Sandran, forcing him to remove the flag to which he had paid no attention as it was an order from the LTTE.

Hence, she suspected that the neighbor was the culprit who reported this to the IPKF since the EPDP were supporting the IPKF in Jaffna at that time. Though she was directed by the IPKF to look for him in camps in Jaffna she did not know exactly in which camp he was kept. She moved from camp to camp looking for him. Finally, she approached the Chunnakam camp and explained her difficulty of running the family without her husband. While she was in the Chunnakam camp, the IPKF brought many young and old people from neighboring villages. They were half dressed, and were mostly poor farmers and innocent young boys. They were also

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[85]November 27 was a Māvīrar Nāḷ (Great Heroes' Day) chosen by the LTTE to remember the deaths of militants who fought for the LTTE

265

harshly beaten. Easvari had fainted for a while due to the unbearable situation in the camp.

Finally, when she conveyed that she needed to meet the Commander, she was informed that her

husband was being kept in the KKS Camp. When she reached there, she was guided to the Palali

Camp. However, once at a the Papali Camp, she was told to return alone after 10:00pm, which

she was hesitant to do as she was a woman. Then, she went to the Asoka hotel in the Jaffna town

where the EPDP members resided and explained to them that her husband had no connection with

LTTE, after which she was directed to go to the old Jaffna Courts. Eventually, her husband's

fellow factory workers advised her not to be disrespectful towards these members and also not to

use harsh language even though she had lost her husband. Finally, she had no choice but to accept

his death certificate without further investigation as she needed it to get his pension.

 Her family was displaced to Manipai in 1990 as the battle began between the LTTE and the

Sri Lanka military forces. Later, she moved to Kodikaamam and finally went to Vanni. She lost

her second son, who was in the LTTE, in the last part of the civil war in Vanni in 2009. Her eldest

son was living in Vanni and her daughter, who was married and had two kids, was separated from

her husband as he married another girl. Four years ago, Easvari built a new house on her mother's

land after returning to Keerimalai. She also received money from her husband's provident fund[86]

and used some of it to buy a three-wheeler to make a living selling fares and the rest was spent on

building the house.

Although she had gone through such horrifying experiences, she still believes that her

kulateiyva Kavunavathai Vairavar protected her life. In the past, her uncle used to slaughter

animals at the animal sacrifice (*vēḷvi*) ritual in the temple. She also visits the Naguleswaram Sivan

Temple but has more affection towards Vairvar. She narrated the story of how *vēḷvi* was started in

that temple. Once upon a time, *kumaṟ* girls (puberty attained girls) were sacrificed (humans

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[86] The employee's provident fund (EPF) is a social security scheme, which is operated by the
government of Sri Lanka under the control of Central Bank of Sri Lanka. A portion of salary will
be saved under the EPF, which will be returned to the employee at the time of his/her retirement.

sacrifice— *nara pali*) in this village. A Vairavar came from Vanni and he wanted *nara pali*. One day, a particular family had to send their daughter for sacrifice as it was their turn. A saint was walking on the road and he noticed that people were crying in a house in Keerimalai because they were preparing their daughter for sacrifice. He went inside the house and asked the parents whether they would offer their daughter in sacrifice. Afterwards, he went to the temple with the family and he asked them to bring a huge chicken. He killed the chicken in that temple instead of their daughter and stated that hereafter, there will be animal instead of human sacrifice. From that day onwards, animal *vēḷvi* had begun as a practice in this temple. There had been no robbery, murder, fight, sorrow, conflict, decease or death in the village or in the Jaffna Peninsula when they had *vēḷvi*, but she argued that all of these misfortunates have now risen because *vēḷvi* is not being performed since the Courts have forbid it.

As a result, she said many young people died, and unexpected accidents are reported quite often. Now, animal sacrifice is not a new practice in this region because it was already practiced at the Māri Āchi and Annamar temples in Keerimalai. Later on, though these two temples too gave it up. The Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple continued to practice it until it was banned in 2016. Thus, Kavunavathai Vairavar became popular among the people of Keerimalai; particularly among the people of Karukampanai who treat Vairavar as their *kulateiyvam*. Yet, at the same time, some families are against *vēḷvi* as they are pure vegetarians. For this, I will move on to discuss another ethnographic case, that of Mala and her husband Kumar, who also recalled their past and present lives.

6.7   Case 4: Mala's experiences of post-war reconstruction, animal sacrifice and vegetarianism

Mala, a 65-year-old woman from Veḷḷāḷar caste background, was born in Karukampanai and had worked as a nursery teacher for 15 years. She claimed that her *kulateiyvam* is Kavunavathai Vairavar. For her, the *teiyvam* (almighty) resided in one's *ūr,* that is their *kulateiyvam.* The Kavunavathai Vairavar (male deity) is a *pollāta teiyvam* (aggressive deity) and therefore, people are afraid of him. Here, she told me. people first and foremost engage themselves in religious observances before commencing any good work. In this village, a coconut is first offered to Vairvar and not to Lord Pillaiyar. Here, *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) is a very popular festival and she made reference to the Vedic period in which people offered a whole goat or horse to the fire as a sacrifice to a particular deity. Although animal sacrifice is made based on a religious reasoning, there was a *kouvravam* issue too for people were competing with each other in terms of the size of the offered goats. However, she herself has always been against animal sacrifice and is a pure vegetarian. Due to this reason, she was unhappy about her son-in-law and daughter-in-law being non-vegetarians. As a result, she was worried over being unable to continue vegetarianism related purity in her household.

In 1990, her family was displaced to several villages such as Ilavalai, Sankanai, Kopay, Maravanpulavu and Varani and then returned from Varani to Kopay and back again to Ilavalai. Finally, her family returned to their village Karukampanai in 2015. She is not against animal sacrifice but her family avoids visiting the temple during *vēḷvi* due to the temple being polluted by flesh and blood and also because they are *caivam* (here *caivam* refers to pure vegetarian people). She offers *poṅkal* (milk rice) a few weeks after *vēḷvi*. Her *poṅkal* is considered as a vegetarian meal offering, and substitutes for animal sacrifice as she is unable to participate in it. As a practice, she does not eat at any place or shop because she believes that she will be polluted since they prepare non-vegetarian meals. Her husband also was a pure vegetarian before the war and displacement, but he could not continue this cultural practice during the displacement, so he

slowly gave up and became a non-vegetarian eater, but her husband who previously used to be a vegetarian, is now a non-vegetarian after going through displacement. She is also a devotee of the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple where three pilgrim guesthouses (*maṭam*) were destroyed by a particular priest in the temple. She preferred not to discuss this issue as she did not want to be disrespectful towards a Brahmin, an act that is considered sinful. However, her husband Kumaran, who did not share the same sentiments as his wife, stated that he would come to no harm by discussing the act of such a Brahmin as he was severely affected by the war and multiple displacements.

The priest visited the temple on special religious festivals with permission from the Army. He demolished the *maṭam* which was beside the temple not for his personal benefit but for the purpose of expanding the temple's land and making the temple more visible to the public. In the temple, there are many types of devotees; some rich, some poor and some middle class and not everyone can afford Rs. 100.00 for an *arccanai*.[87] Yet, he would not perform *arccanai* when people have paid less than this amount, compelling the devotees to put more money into the temple *uṇṭiyal* (bill box). There were some court cases between the Naguleswaram Temple priest and his cousin brothers. His cousin brothers also have the right over the temple *pūja* but the current priest chased them out. It was very difficult to reconstruct the temple back to normal because it was destroyed by bombs and shells.

The priest destroyed the *aṭaiyāḷam* (identity) of the temple which was the Sirappar *maṭam*. Many pilgrims stayed in those guest houses. Kumaran stated further that due to the war and displacement, many rich people have lost their wealth and properties while some of the poor have now become newly-rich due to the opportunities created after the war. For instance, most of the people of Keerimalai did not have to build houses before the war and new houses were constructed through housing schemes after returning. Thus, Mala's story indicates how she

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87 *Arccaṉai* refers chanting and *puja* done by the temple priest, which he chants mantras including the person's name and star who purchase an *arccaṉai*.

reconstructed her life in post-war Karukampanai village through her localized practice of pure vegetarianism which she continues till date. However, her husband and in-laws, on the contrary, are non-vegetarians. Thus, she, as a vegetarian practitioner, has created her own religious boundary line, though the deity wishes for *vēḷvi*. She also constructs her own liminality of worldview and experience by secluding herself and her family during *vēḷvi*. On the other hand, Nandan's story reveals how he struggles to reconstruct his life in his own village after 25 years. The following ethnographic case discusses how he hopes to do so while recalling the lost past.

6.8   Case 5: Nandan's story of reconstruction between the remembrance of the past and present

Nandan is a 63 years old man who worked at the KKS Cement Cooperation before the war. Consequently, he went to Saudi Arabia for a contract job and returned to Keerimalai and opened a small grocery shop in 1986. During the IPKF in 1987, many people from Keerimalai left their villages. His family was also displaced from Keerimalai to Chunnakam in 1990. After that, he moved to Mirusuvil in 1995 during the massive displacement operation. Then, he came back to Chunnakam in 1996 where he lived until 2002. After that, he moved to Thellippalai and built a house there as he assumed that he would never get a chance to return to his *ūr*. When the Sri Lankan Government allowed people to return to their villages Keerimalai and Naguleswaram, he decided to visit Keerimalai as he had lands there. He also got the Housing Scheme to build a house in his land. However, he faced numerous challenges after returning. For instance, the priest of the Naguleswaran Sivan Temple refused to allow him to build a house in his land which was right in front of the Naguleswaram temple arguing that a portion of his land belongs to the temple.

Before Nandan's displacement from Keerimalai in 1990, his family had a house which was located on the Maviddapuram Road which had to be transferred to her sister as her dowry when she got married. Therefore, he needed to build a new house in this land which he bought in

270

Keerimalai before the war. Before the war, the Keerimalai was a happy place of having five different communities such as Brahmins, Kōviyar, Veḷḷaḷar, Saiva Kurrukkaḷ and Vīracaivar. But now, there were no such prominent communities as most have migrated and were scattered everywhere. He remembered his past life in which all communities lived together though they had differences in terms of their cultural practices. In addition, Keerimalai was a popular place for toddy and palmyra products and there even were stories and songs about these natural products which he had learnt during his childhood. He remembered Keerimalai through those stories and songs. There were many *maṭams* in Keerimalai; Sirappar *maṭam* was well-known among the people of Jaffna and it had many rooms where pilgrims stayed during the festival time and patients rested for breathing sea air to cure deceases. The management of this *maṭam* offered free butter milk for travelers whoever passed through it. There was a permanent caretaker family who was made to settle down in this village by the owner of the *maṭam.*

During the war, Nandan said Sri Lankan forces that were occupying these villages were destroying them and their public buildings but the Naguleswaram priest maintained a good relationship with them with the hopes of encroaching on the land surrounded by the temple so that it will be more visible to the public since the *maṭams* were hiding it. The priest was also under the impression that the owners of these *maṭams* would not return. In particular, when the Sirappar *maṭam* was destroyed by the war and abandoned, the priest demolished the rest of it, but later, the Sirapper owner's grand-daughter (Veḷḷāḷar) filed a case against the priest to reclaim the ownership of the *maṭam.* He was the only priest to continue visiting the temple on special religious festival, and making a strong contact with political forces, while the other Brahmin priests along with their families left the place during the war. At the end of the war, the priest continued his authority over the temple as well as the surrounding lands for his convenience. The Sirapper's owner's grand-daughter finally won the court case and donated the Sirapper *maṭam* to the Archeological Survey of Sri Lanka to protect the building. In addition, there were Krishna Pillai *maṭam* and Vaithiligam *maṭam* beside the temple, which were partly destroyed by the war,

and the rest was by the priest because whoever visited the Keerimalai beach could see it clearly as there were no other building in sight.

There were six Brahmin families attached to the Naguleswaram temple, Nandan claimed, but the current Chief Priest was in complete control and did not allow the other priests to serve the temple. Before the war, one of the priests detached himself from the temple and attended to the *antiyēṭi* ritual (post-funerary ritual) in Keerimalai *antiyēṭi maṭam.* Now, his grand-son continues this particular service. Other Brahmin families left during the war and there were two families fighting with the Chief Priest to get rights for the *pūja*. While recalling his past about Keerimalai, Nandan also spoke about the Kasi Visvanathar Temple which is now renovated with new religious practices.

The Kasi Vishvanthar Temple, according to Nandan, was in fact an old temple but the management has been handed over to a person (Veḷḷāḷar) who lives in Germany. In the past, a Brahmin priest, Sithandi Iya from Kashi (Banaras or Varanasi), after taking care of the temple for a long time, had handed it over to the Maviddapuram Temple Management. Before the war, it had been well maintained. There were many statues of Gods which were now missing except for the Siva Lingam which was erected at the main sanctum of the temple. After the war, the temple has been completely changed in terms of its structure and functions. For example, now there are 108 *Pāṇalṅkam* (Bana Lingam in Sanskrit)[88] lounged under the great advice of Nuwara Eliya Swami Murukesu, who spread the disciple of Gayathri (*kāyattri*) Pīṭam. However, Nandan was displeasured at these new changes because he felt bad that the older statues and the conventional methods of *puja* had been replaced. I also observed this temple during my yearlong stay and I saw only one or two devotees visiting the temple on a daily basis.

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[88] *Pāṇalṅkam* is an iconic and sacred symbol of worship of the Lord Shiva among the Saivites in India and Sri Lanka. This type of Lingams is made out of a special stone, which is found in Narmada River in Madya Pradesh of Northern India. These 108 *Pāṇalṅkam* were sent from India to Germany and then the patron of this temple brought them from Germany to Jaffna.

Paṇṭāram became the Saiva Kurukkal, Nandan claimed who also performed temple *pūja*, and there were 25 Pandaram families along the pond of Keerimalai, though most of them migrated during the war. Currently, there is only one house being rebuilt. There were four tea shops close to the Sivapoomi *maṭam* and the Keerimalai pond, but the priest did not allow the owner to rebuild the tea shop which was near of the pond. Furthermore, he mentioned that most of the richer people had vacated the place and mostly poor people and laborer families were now remaining in Keerimalai. Before the war, an aluminum factory, a glass factory and an aluminum bucket factory were situated in the vicinity and provided employment opportunities especially to people from Keerimalai. And now, local people are struggling to establish their life in post-war Naguleswaram. Yet, the priest has allowed the army and some Sinhalese people to open a few small shops for tourists who pay a rent to him as these shops are located on the temple premises. More temples, Nandan claimed, are being built and renovated for business purposes and not for *bhakti*.

Nandan looked critically at the new pilgrim guesthouse Sivapoomi *maṭam*. He said it offered *aṉṉatāṉam* (free lunch) on certain days and it was not clear whether those meals were purely provided for poor people because many foreigners who visit the *maṭam* were treated differently. Those foreigners and rich people were not seated with other pilgrims and locals on the floor, but they were given chairs to sit and some of them were accommodated in a separate room. Previously, such practices were not tolerated. In fact, earlier the Sirappar *maṭam* would treat everyone equally. Further, in the past, it was not compulsory for pilgrims to pay a rent when they occupied rooms at Sirapper *matam,* which was *taṟmam* (*dharma* in Sanskrit). *Tarmam* or *dharma* connotes multiple meanings in Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka, but here I refer to right social conduct, which people do without expecting benefits. Instead of paying rent, if people preferred, they could donate money to the helpers who maintained the *matam.* Thus, Nandan was uncertain if he approved of the changes, he was seeing in post-war Naguleswaram.

Like Nandan, many middle aged and older people have experienced war and displacement, and they have a deep knowledge of the place where they were born and first lived in. They have returned to their villages because of their love towards *conta iṭam* but they are unhappy about the recent changes. Yet regarding this situation, I gathered different opinions from younger people in Keerimalai and Karukampanai villages. Consider the following last two ethnographic cases.

6.9   Case 6: Young boys' and girls' reactions to post-war reconstructions in Keerimalai and Karukampanai

This section explains how young boys and girls who were not born in Keerimalai and Karukampanai villages of Naguleswaram reacted to the post-war reconstructions. They often had different perceptions of their villages and its ongoing life than their elders. First, I will pay attention to three boys who are from a Kōviyar caste background: Malan (18 years), Thanushan (19 years), and Sajanthan (19 years) I listened as they argued about *kaṭṭupāṭu*, where girls were controlled by the males in their families. Nowadays, they claimed, mothers control the children in certain families. Therefore, they claimed that they could not see any more the older form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* which was based on a patriarchal ideology. By contrast, three young girls, Tharshi (19 years), Mathuri (21 years) and Vathani (19 years), who I also talked to, had a different perception of the practice *kaṭṭupāṭu* as it shapes current cultural practices in post-war Naguleswaram. They argued that, unlike in urban areas, in their remote village, girls are more controlled than boys. For instance, teenage girls are not allowed to go out alone late in the evening due to the fear of losing their dignity (*māṉm*) and chastity (*kaṟpu*).

With regard to post-war village reconstructions, the three boys above said that village politics are mostly related to caste issues and to a lack of unity among people. Therefore, they felt, the host villages where they were born during the war were better than their *conta iṭam*, because there they had more facilities in them. All of those facilities they have lost after returning to their own village. Basically, while other villages were continuously occupied during the war,

274

Naguleswaram is only now slowly recovering from the destructions it faced due to the war and only lately improving in terms of its infrastructure facilities. Hence. these young boys and other children have to travel 8km to go for tuition classes in Chunnakam in Jaffna.

By *ūr*, the boys meant a *oṉṟiṉiṉta camūkam* (united society), but they found so many complications in their village due to caste politics, envy, competition and domestic politics prevented such unity. Therefore, they preferred their previous villages which did not have such problems. These three boys' parents returned to their home village in 2012 and started renovating their houses. Most of the houses, new public buildings, and a bus transit center were rebuilt four years ago. They had heard many stories about the importance of the Naguleswaram Temple and Keerimalai from their parents, and grand-parents but these three boys preferred to refer to them as tourist destinations rather than sacred landscapes because Jambukolapattinam is a famous tourist spot that attracts tourists nowadays. Jambukolapattinam (Jambukola Patuna or Dambakola Patuna in Sinhala) was an ancient port of Northern Sri Lanka, which is now called Kankesanthruai; Kankesan refers to Lord Murukan and thurai means port in Tamil. As the idol of Lord Murukan. from South India arrived through this port, Tamils named this port as Kankesanthurai. After the war, the Sri Lankan Government renamed some of the historical places in Jaffna, and Jambukola Patuna was one of them.

In addition, the Mahavamsa chronicle also mentions the significance of Jambukola Patuna which is the Buddhist nun Sanghamitta bringing the Bodhi sapling (Bo tree) to Sri Lanka through this port (Geiger 2000 [1912]). After the war, this place became very popular among the Sinhalese tourists. Thus, these young boys accommodate diversity in practice rather than following the Tamil nationalistic way of claiming a place through the Tamils' narratives. These boys are members of the Nagulakiri Ilainyar Manram (Nagulakiri Youth Association) which has 35 members from Kōviyar and Pallar castes. But the Karukampanai village has another separate youth association, which mostly has members from Veḷḷāḷar and Kōviyar castes. Thus, it is obvious that caste demarcation is remerging, and being restructured, in their village after the war.

275

However, three other young boys, Vimal (19 years), Ravi (19 years) and Nirosh (19 years) from the Veḷḷāḷar caste in Karukampanai had different perceptions of their *ūr* than the three boys above. Although these three Veḷḷāḷar boys were not born in Karukampanai and have recently returned to their village, they have more affection and *paṟṟu* (love) towards their *ūr.* They explained that their parents struggled to make a living on someone else's land when they were displaced, but now they have returned to their village and are trying to improve their old *ūr* using transnational network. Their target in their post-war reconstruction efforts is to arrive at a point where people in other villages will highly value their own village once again. For this purpose, they have established a youth club to render social services to their village. These boys were inspired by the South Indian Tamil cinema actor, Sivakarthikeyan, who acted in the movie *Varuthapadatha Valibar Sangam* (The Association of Carefree Youth), and they have named their association after this movie which inspired many activities to develop their *ūr.*

With regard to the priests' involvement in temples in post-war Naguleswaram, these boys cynically pointed out that whether it is the priest of the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple or the priest of the Māri Āchi temple, they know they were all money minded because the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple charges Rs.100.00 for *arccanai*, which is too expensive for an ordinary villager. Thus, they criticized the priest there who, according to them, prioritizes money by forcing people to raise funds to construct a temple tower. This priest, along with the Veḷḷāḷar, did not allow Kōviyar caste people to participate in the temple activities at the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple before the displacement in 1990. As a result, Kōviyar caste people started to engage in the Māri Āchi Temple because caste was a very powerful identity in the past. Furthermore, the priest of the Māri Āchi Temple did not pay attention to caste but to money. The young boys were surprised that the older people of their village still spoke about people in terms of their caste identity, which the Veḷḷāḷar caste youths hardly care about. This could be like "White privilege" in the U.S. In the U.S. Whites often say there do not "see race" or "racism." Blacks yet "see" and experience both. After the war, the caste demography of Naguleswaram has changed since many Veḷḷāḷar people

have migrated to foreign countries or settled in other villages in Jaffna. Now, mostly Kōviyar, Paḷḷar and Naḷavar caste people have remained in Naguleswaram and form the majority of the population of Keerimalai and Karukampanai villages within post-war Naguleswaram. So far, I have discussed the young girls' and boys' (all close to the same age group) village consciousness and *ūr* reconstruction in post-war Naguleswaram.

In terms of caste differences, there are of course different perceptions of *ūr* among the younger generation. The high-caste Veḷḷāḷar people are attempting to bring back their domination to the village and temple landscapes of Naguleswaram. For example, even though the majority of the population is formed by Kōviyar and other low caste people in Naguleswaram, the Veḷḷāḷar people have re-established their authority through their Brahmanical and political connections. For instance, though the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple is owned by a Brahmin family, its temple management and the activities are organized by Veḷḷāḷar and Kōviyar people.

In addition, the Kasi Vishvanathar Temple's administration was under the care of Maviddapuram Temple's priest's management before the war, but now the Maviddapuram Temple's priest has handed it over to a Veḷḷāḷar man who lives in Germany to administrate and develop. Thus, the younger generation of Veḷḷāḷars try to continue their castes hegemony over the village's development and reconstruction process though they preach that they would not discriminate against people in terms of caste differences. All this is evidenced by all the caste segregated young people's associations in Karukampanai which are dominated by Veḷḷāḷar people. On the other hand, Raveendran, who is 28 years old and is from the Kōviyar caste, not only criticizes the Veḷḷāḷar domination over the post-war Naguleswaram villages but, also the prevailing post-war changes and cultural practices. Raveendran told me of his own memory, and of stories he collected from the elderly people of his villages, to justify his argument.

6.10   Case 7: Raveendran's critical view on post-war reconstructions

Raveendran is a 28-year-old man born in Keerimalai who was displaced in 1990 when he was only one year of age. He had heard about his village, the Naguleswaram Shiva Temple, *vēḷvi,* the Keerimalai natural spring pond and many other interesting things related to his village from his parents, his grand-parents and village friends. He imagined-remembered his village through these shared narratives. He studied at the Jaffna Hindu College and went to Norway during the war. But he was eventually repatriated from Norway to Sri Lanka in 2018 and now lives in his own village. He was disappointed after his return because the life he experienced was in such contrast to what his parents had narrated about his village.

Before the displacement in 1990, he knew, many families survived through local business. For example, many people depended on their business on the *āṭi amāvācai day* (new moon day of the Tamil month of *āṭi* -July-). People who had lost their fathers visited Keerimalai on this special religious day to perform ritual observances for the dead. On this day, local products, particularly edible and non-edible items made from the palmyra tree, were sold in great amounts. But this socio-economic practice had been totally destroyed by the war and displacement. Many palmyra trees were destroyed from militarization and bombings. In addition to the man-made disasters, people also had lost their skills during displacement without their natural resources and had discontinued their businesses. He further argued that in the past, a widow could survive through home industrial activities but now people's resources have been limited by officials such as Public Health Inspectors (PHI); for example, people cannot sell food items openly.

Now, he claimed the Pradesha Sabai (Local Government Administrative Body) controls the public places to receive an income. In the past, Naguleswaram and Keerimalai were very famous for events such as *tiruviḻa* (festivals), pilgrims, farming and *vēḷvi* but all these things are non-existent. Outsiders are given opportunities to do business in Keerimalai while the locals are not encouraged enough to rebuild their locally-based income generating activities. Everybody talks about modernity he told me, but on the contrary, the people of Keerimalai say that their village

and Naguleswaram have literarily become a cemetery as they have lost the important features of their *ūr* and are left with the ruins of buildings and houses.

He critically questioned the religious and cultural practices which do not follow common patterns. For example, he pointed out that if one performed a post-funerary ritual, one should not be allowed to visit temples and meet the priest for one whole year. However, in Keerimalai, outsiders visit the Naguleswaram temple after performing the ritual that very day. In this context, he argued there is no *puṉitattaṉmai* (holiness or sacredness). Thus, he was surprised to see such sudden changes and told me that accepting Hinduism has become hard because the Nallur Kanthaswami Temple follows its own unique rules while other temples follow a different set of rules and therefore, there is no uniformity in their practices. In addition, he pointed out that when one village holds an annual temple festival, then villagers conventionally do not hold often functions, but the Nallur Kanthaswami Temple did *kumpāpiṣēkam* (consecration ceremony) even while the temple was having its annual festival.

Thus, for him former control over cultural practices and beliefs was slowly transforming into a different pattern of practices. Post-war reconstruction, he thought should be done after consulting the people of the land. Yet, Veḷḷāḷar domination is being reintroduced to post-war Naguleswaram. For example, there were many *maṭams* in Keerimalai and all of them were destroyed. But against the Veḷḷāḷar man who built the Sivapoomi *maṭam* Raveendran argued that it is not a *maṭam* because it looks like a lodge. Worse, for Raveendran, the Veḷḷāḷar man in question was not even from Keerimalai, and he should have consulted the locals to learn how the older *maṭams* looked like before distorting the model of the older *maṭams* with his lodge like creation.

Hence, Raveendran continued the reconstruction processes should always include consultations with the local community instead of allowing outside forces to implement them as was done in Keerimalai. At the local level, young boys and girls run youth associations but all are not active in terms of corporation and financial support. In contrast, he believed Karukampanai

village was a model example because the management of its community center and the young club were administrated very well and they were actively progressing in developing and reconstruing their village. For their active function, transnational networks and diaspora funding (the majority from Veḷḷāḷar who are from Karukampanai but live in foreign countries), have implement developmental work in that village. Veḷḷāḷar member who is from Karukampanai, currently living in a foreign country, has donated the land for building offices for the development and Grama Niladhari officers in Karukampanai, and this same person has also donated his land and house to construct a new building for the Ayurvedic hospital in Karukampanai. However, Raveendran claimed, this much support is not found in other sub-villages of Naguleswaram.

6.11   Analysis and Conclusion

This chapter has combined work on memory and geography by adopting in a multi-disciplinary fashion, engagements from anthropology, cultural geography, phenomenology and existential anthropology. First, I used Johnson and Pratt's (2009) works to explore more deeply the role of landscape, environments, objects and place in terms of memory, remembering, archives, commemoration and forgetting in post-war Naguleswaram. In this, relationality, mobility and process are fundamental, which count against settled notions of place and identity. With respect to existential anthropology, this chapter has focused more on individual, personal or private memories than cultural, collective, social or popular ones to study personal identity and memory in relation to space, affect, emotion (love/loss) materiality, embodiment, environment, war, displacement, violence, etc., which were thoroughly revealed through seven different ethnographic cases.

Ethnographically speaking, these individual experiences have clearly mapped out these individuals' daily survival and impossible nostalgia in post-war Naguleswaram. However, understanding that memory in this post-war landscape is not a static or fixed phenomenon but is,

rather, multi-directional, negotiable, cross referencing, and borrowing is important (Johnson and Pratt 2009). Theoretically speaking, this chapter was trying to explore local knowledge of post-war geographies of memories, and memories of the post-war geographies. As Johnson and Pratt (2009) mention, memory studies and geography should go together without ignoring the contexts of the history, economy, politics and policy (both personal and collective) that surround them. For instance, the collective and individual memory of Kavunavathai *vēlvi* (animal sacrifice) explains the current banning issue on animal sacrifice. This relates to how Bergson describes (2004, 86–87) 'habit memory' as "a practical mode of memory which utilizes the past for the sake of being oriented in the present" (Trigg 2012: 49). For instance, many young people in Karukampanai and Naguleswaram have not seen the older form of sacrifice and therefore, have only present memory and conversation to shape their consciousness of animal sacrifice, as this is a part of people's post-war reconstruction project. Thus, "space and place interact, coexist and contribute to the formation of individual memory and collective memory" (Trigg 2012:46).

Hence, memory could be studied through emotion; at the same time, cultural geography can also be explored through performative and embodied practices of everyday life. Also, engaging geography with memory now expands our focus to associate with other element of space and place along with personhood. However, everyday life is often missing in the representational approach of memory studies and geography. Within this more multi-disciplinary exploration, space-time compression (Kingsolver 2011, Harvey 1989) is another dimension that must be included in this analysis. For instance, these different ethnographic examples demonstrate how people constructed memories about the place in the past and present, and how representations of the past are restored to reconstructing the present. But effectively, high-caste hegemony and external forces also influence returnees' own projects of reconstruction. For example, many locals complain about the *maṭam* which was built by high caste outsiders and which, they believe, treats people differently depending on whether they are rich or poor. Further, people noted this *maṭam* was often reserved by the families of the army, police, navy, and by the rich members of the

diaspora for holidays rather than for local pilgrims. Yet remember that, in the past, the old *maṭams* (all now abolished) treated people equally. For another example, the *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) was banned by the external forces, including religious leaders from the Veḷḷāḷar caste. Thus, in the post-war reconstruction of village consciousness, the powers of dominant castes (Brahmins and Veḷḷāḷar) and external factors such as high caste peoples' interference, religious associations, and local governance disturbed people's own projects of reconstruction, which involved implementing their dead memories. Furthermore, a high-caste hegemony temporally lost during the war was being restored through the subtle domination in village reconstruction by high caste people who aim not only to re-establishing high-caste authority over the landscape's beautification but also at over constructing the village identity. In this way high caste people seek to keep the village within their control. Thus, restoration of high-castes domination (Brahmins and Veḷḷāḷar) in post-war Naguleswaram is quite visible even though the majority of high caste people have left Naguleswaram.

For example, Karukampanai is a sub-village of Naguleswaram which was highly populated by Veḷḷāḷar caste people before the war and the migration of Veḷḷāḷar families to Canada, Australia, France, Germany and England. I interviewed Param, a Veḷḷāḷar man from France who was visiting the village to monitor the construction of the Karukampanai Cultural Hall. When I asked him about his post-war *ūr*, he stated firmly that he hardly knew anything about his village as he left before the war, and that his team decided on *ūr* reconstruction or post-war development at a distance and without much knowledge of the recent past (war and displacement). Also, he was reluctant and apprehensive to speak out loud in front of his fellow villagers. Instead, he was quite willing to talk about their current project of building the Karukampanai Cultural Hall (Karukampanai Calāccāra Maṇṭapam). His follow team members, he told me, lived in Canada, Australia, France, Germany and England. This project had been a long-term dream that was germinating even before the war but could not be initiated them as members of the Karukampanai community were away from the village for the past 23 years.

For the purpose of speeding up the work, networking with team members, planning the work, and raising funds, they formed Viber and WhatsApp groups. First, they made a short documentary called 'Karukampanai Tamilmanram' about their village and uploaded it on YouTube for public viewing in order to raise funds, especially from diaspora members. The politicians Mavai Senathiraja and Siddharthan, personally known to Param beyond their political affiliations, had contributed a sum of Rs.2.5 million for the project at the latter's request. Other than these external funds, the team decided not to collect funds from outside the village of Karukampanai, a sub-village of Naguleswaram. As such, they collected funds from 30 Karukampanai village members of the diaspora in France but, could not collect much from the Canadian diaspora of the same village community though it has a population of 300-400 members. The purpose of constructing the hall was to provide a physical space for cultural events such as weddings, puberty ceremonies and birthday parties at a lower price but on the condition of not allowing non-veg meals and liquor inside the premises. Evidently, this was not purely a business venture but a social project as well. Param claimed that other villages in Valikamam North of the Jaffna Peninsula were having small community centers built but not cultural center of this nature. Their village has not been developed for the last 23 years not only because of the war but also because people were not allowed to live in their own villages. Therefore, they so wanted to create a new identity for Karukampanai through this new hall and other related activities that they had planned to build a market and *cavārittiṭal* (a playground for bullock cart race). Thus, they wanted to have a separate identity for Karukampanai.

The constructed of this cultural hall indicates how it is a specific, regionally driven project which still occupies the Veḷḷāḷar hegemony within the reconstruction of Karukampanai. Fundraising was limited among the members of Karukampanai territory only. This was a hidden/subtle form of caste domination for it involves making a boundary line to keep the ownership of the hall strictly within the Veḷḷāḷar domination, since they were afraid of other castes asking to take part in decision making if they were allowed to make financial contributions.

This is a common way of controlling ownership as I found out in other temples in Jaffna.

Likewise, diaspora connectivity and transnational networks effectively reshape post-war

reconstruction projects in war-affected villages. In addition, this ethnographic reality explains

cultural change in post-war Jaffna. The increasing number of wedding halls and cultural halls in

Jaffna indicates a shift of the location of the celebration of cultural events from house to hall.

That means, domestic rituals that were previously performed in houses are now being performed

at newly built halls. This is not merely a surface change but a change in the cultural values of

ritual performance which needs further ethnographic descriptions which will be supplied in the

next chapter. The emergence of cultural and wedding halls as places of celebration was a practice

are borrowed from other villages which eventually became necessary for their everyday ritual and

ceremonial practice.

In addition to diaspora and transnational influences on *ūr* reconstruction, people's daily

survival varies in terms of gender, caste, social, economic and political factors. In particular,

Easvari's life story mapped out her war memory and the loss of her capital which is reflected in

her present life of relative poverty. On the other hand, younger generations have a completely

different consciousnesses about their *ūr* and struggle with their socialization into the newly

created *ūr* (for young children), whereas for parents or elderly people, memories are bound to a

particular place, dwelling, house, pond, environment, farming or temple. More specifically,

Easvari's memory of war and violence can be a methodological tool to study place and sense of

place, which enable us to study lived experiences of war, violence and displacement (Riano-

Alcala 2002). In the context of the post-war reconstruction of Naguleswaram, practices of

memory and remembrances of the recent past restore a sense of place, experiences of

displacement, violence, war, discontinuity and continuity. Through the ethnographic cases of

Lingam, Arulamma, Easvari, Mala and Nandan, this chapter confirms that people encounter and

make their *ūr* by remembering and reconstructing them through storytelling. However, place

making is a cultural activity where places become physical, social and sensorial realms for people's actions.

In terms of place-memory compression, in Naguleswaram, people and their places are textured nexuses used for remembering of their past (Donohoe 2014) but people have lost most of these places because their villages and temples have been severely destroyed during the war. The community was also scattered during the war and many families are still not returned to Naguleswaram. Therefore, the present generations are not aware of the past memories. People who lived there prior to the war and displacement have the memories of their lived places. Those memories exist in Sri Lanka and the diaspora. When I asked an old priest, Sathasivam in Keerimalai what made him return to his village, though he built a new house in Kopay (another village) and established his life there after he was displaced from Keerimalai in 1990, he told me that he was recalling his village kinship how life was in Keerimalai. It was the first time I heard the term 'village kinship' which he used to map out his village structure and its relations to human life. His term, kinship did not stand for the Euro-American conception of kinship in anthropology but was 'village kinship' (*ūr uṟavumuṟai*) in terms of the Jaffna Tamil village culture. Based on this, he told me that an '*ūravan'* (villager) would ask us what happen to us since anything could happen to anyone.

Thus, everyone is a part of the village family and kinship, which maintains one's attachment with the community. However, village kinship does not mean what kinship system commonly talks about as inheritance, property rights, economic transactions, and marriage rules, which are 'essential' in defining the kinship in human societies. Instead, Sathasivam's explanation was about human mutual relations. Village membership and recognition were the main focus of the village kinship that Sathasivam was referring to. However, I would argue that one's caste identity is also part of constructing human relations in the village. Hence, I do not totalize the Brahmin priest's voice to understand the memory of pre-war life.

On the other hand, Rathinam, from a Naḷḷvar caste background in Koovil, a *kuīicci* is adjacent to Naguleswaram, claimed that Koovil *kaḷḷu* (palmyra toddy) is a unique identity for his village and that a different caste of people visited his village to have toddy before the war, but his children and his village people are not interested in toddy business anymore it symbolizes *kouvrava kuṟaiccal* (lacking of prestige). Although toddy tapping was considered as a low-grade occupation in the Jaffna society, older people in Naḷḷvar community claimed that the toddy from their territory has a special and unique taste than the ones available in the other villages of Jaffna. Thus, people intend to remember placed-based memoires, which are really worth discussing in post-war reconstruction. However, their places are not just contexts with a plethora of memories but the contents of those memories illuminating their suffering and survival throughout the war, displacement and resettlement journeys.

People at Naguleswaram had their own project of reconstructing of their *vīṭu* (house) and *ūr*, but these conflicted with the projects of reconstructing post-war villages being carried out by development agencies and the Sri Lankan Government. However, these latter entities have not consulted with locally shared narratives of the past and history of the Naguleswaram landscape before commencing their work. To justify the overarching argument of this chapter, I have discussed 7 different ethnographic cases. For Lingam, *bhakti* religiosity also shifted towards Sannidi Murukan while he was displaced to a different village. However, it does not mean that he gave up worshiping his *kulateiyvam* Kavunavathai Vairavar, but rather, that new places and opportunities were considered as remedies for healing his wounds from the war and displacement.

Throughout my fieldwork, many informants told me that their nostalgia for their *kulateiyvam* played a significant role in protecting them from the war, violence and multiple displacements. For Lingam, visiting different sacred landscapes and being engaged in spiritual development activities were successful in getting *cakti* and *aruḷ* (grace) from the Sannidi Murukan. I see their displacement journey as a pilgrimage during which people were uprooted from their villages and returned to their original habitats after a long period. The transition period

between going and returning was a *liminal* space in which Lingam was away from his *kulateiyvam*, but his nostalgia of his *ūr* landscape, his cultural practices and his orally-transmitted narratives made him survive in the relocated villages where he was in exile, and now in his reintegration with his lost community after returning from his long-term displacement. Yet, his nostalgia is lost in post-war Naguleswaram which has created a number of challenges in his everyday life.

Thus, all of the ethnographic cases reveal the social, economic, religious, cultural and historical importance of *conta iṭam* in post-war reconstruction. The stories of post-war returnees reveal that multiple sufferings and challenges were present throughout their war and displacement journey. For example, Arulamma's story explains her pre-war remembrances and post-war resettlement challenges. Her daily survival was not only filled with livelihood challenges but also with other forms of encounters in post-war Jaffna. Upgrading *kouvravam* (prestige/honor) through foreign remittances is a new phenomenon in post-war Jaffna. Likewise, Easvari's case also describes the multiple challenges facing her life, but also her strong belief that her *kula deivam* protected has children from the war and its violence, and that the *kula deivam*'s grace supported her efforts to reconstruct her life in her *conta iṭam*. Reconstruction of a *conta iṭam* revealed different forms of challenges in each ethnographic case; for instance, now a remerging caste factor has influenced the reconstruction of the village and scared landscapes of Naguleswaram. At some point, diaspora and transnational connections also changed the post-war reconstruction process. With regard to my research interest on the role of village consciousness on reconstruction in post-war Naguleswaram, the notion or practice of *conta iṭam* occupies a significant position discoverable through people's stories and remembrances. There, *conta iṭam* is expressed through emotional attachments to land, houses, wells, temples, schools, farming, festivals, kinship, neighborhoods and so on. Additionally, *conta iṭam* for people indicates a territory or place which is important to one's identity construction and belongingness.

Moreover, *conta iṭam* or territory denotes a 'localism' which is shaped within economic, environmental/ecological, political, cultural and moral dimensions. Furthermore, place is important to culture and identity constructions, and even though a 'delocalization of social life' took place through displacement, diaspora, migration and movement, 'embodiment and emplacement' still could not be denied (Escobar 2008). For example, embodiment and emplacement experiences of animal sacrifice, at least as remembered are interconnected with day-to-day life in post-war Naguleswaram.

Overall, the Tamils of Naguleswaram had to face a placed-based struggle to get back their *kāṉi* (land) from Sri Lankan military control. This placed-based struggle showed how a post-war community is being reconstructed through hopes, emotions, beliefs, memory and cultural practices which distinguish it from post-war village community reconstruction elsewhere because people pay great attention to a culturally-organized set of memories/village consciousness in making or remaking attachments to their natal/own village. For example, cultural knowledge and a belief in place and house play a main role in their reconstruction process. Hence, my informant Kamalam stated that she was unhappy dwelling in the house which she received through the Indian Housing Scheme because she claimed that it was inappropriate for her lifestyle in terms of prosperity, wealth and health compared to her pre-war house. She also judged her house and life in terms of an astrological sense when she stated that "this house is unsuitable for me because I have faced much disease and sorrow." Jaffna Tamil Hindus consult astrologers before beginning to build a house. However, I found in my fieldwork that some consulted an astrologer when they reconstructed their houses, and some did not. Some who first accepted their houses through the government of Indian housing scheme projects, modified them later according to astrological advice.

There is a close relationship between village reconstruction and the remembrance of their past. Recollection of the past generates many differences with representations. I note Yelvington's (2002) distinction between intra-subjective mental representations and inter-

288

subjective public representations. For Yelvington (2002), the epistemology of representations includes the involvements of both mental representations that may be modified to produce public representations. Hence, when physical environments are modified, this may influence the construction of mental representations. Overall, social, economic, and political environments influence modifications in the production of new forms of representations which can be stored and retrieved. Post-war Naguleswaram's history, in this case, is also experienced within the context of commodity fetishism and global capitalism's relations of production. Material objects are part of peoples' imagination; temple, *matams*, houses, community centers, playgrounds, freshwater springs, history and culture are items all dominated by high-caste people (Brahmins and Veḷḷāḷar) and their historical materialism. As Yelvington mentions, there is a historical process is on the one hand, and a representation of the past on the other. Interpretation of the past, or historical writing about the *ūr*, is a "certain form of credible heritage" (Yelvington 2002: 229 [Olwig 1999: 370]) conceptualizing the *ūr* and its historical past through power and authority (Yelvington 2002). Unlike Levi-Strauss's claim that myth and history are two ends of a continuum, Yelvington (2002) argues that both can be seen in one package, although history is composed of evidenced-based writings while a myth contains narrations as well as sacred and symbolic expressions. In any case, like Yelvington I think peoples' modifications of their places and their memories of them are completely intertwined.

There are also interconnections between memories and history. In my earlier theoretical discussions, I have thoroughly discussed the role of "village" or "village-temple consciousness" in post-war *ūr* reconstruction, and further explained that culturally-organized and place-based memories are what enable Tamil people to understand their "village" or "village-temple consciousness." Culturally-organized and place-based memories need a sensuous scholarship which focuses on the body and its ability to perceive smells, tastes, textures and sensation (Stoller 1997: xv). For just as, memory is an embodied phenomenon, so history is also; that is, an embodied phenomenon rather than the Eurocentric textual view of history used by scholars and

development agencies. In Jaffna, history is not only from a text but can also be found in objects, movements, and bodies. The body can be an archive recording how sensuously localized epistemology shapes cultural practices, like the theory of *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control) is shaped and shaping the Jaffna Tamil community; and how local epistemologies are constructed and reconstructed through culturally-organized memories. Thus, bodily experienced or sensuous modalities provoke memories, but they are not in histories. Therefore, both text and body (memory) must be combined in any analysis of the reconstructing of post-war Tamil *ūr,* for in that way the "elicitation and presentation of embodied cultural memories fleshes out the story of a people." Their "multifaceted textures of memory" can enhance our understanding of the reconstruction of their past (Stroller 1997:47).

As I have already discussed in Chapter 1, domestic and temple rituals in post-war reconstruction is part of "village" or "village-temple consciousness," which cannot be understood without discussing rituals, innovations, changes and continuity because they are so much a part of people's everyday life. Also, these rituals are occurring in places and in the interconnections between places and rituals that need anthropological investigation. As an anthropologist, I feel the need to investigate what happened to the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in the context of the ritualscape of post-war Jaffna in relation to its changes and continuities. The next chapter will answer this question by examining relevant ethnographic cases from Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

CHAPTER 7.   INNOVATIONS, CHANGES, AND CONTINUITY IN EVERYDAY RITUALS

7.1   Introduction

The Venkateshwara[89] bus did not stop at the Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār (the Lord Ganesh—elephant head deity) Shrine[90] when I travelled from Colombo to Jaffna and back to Colombo during my fieldwork between 2017 and 2018. This shrine is located on the A-9, Jaffna-Kandy highway after passing Kilinochchi. The A-9 highway is the only land-route that links Jaffna Peninsula with the rest of the country. I heard several orally-transmitted stories about the religious and ritual significance of this shrine from my grandmother and village people. In addition, I travelled a lot through this route by different buses, which stopped at this shrine for worship.

Raja, a passenger, was seated next to me on the bus and was surprised by this sudden change. He was personally agitated by this change for two reasons: first, he was afraid to continue traveling without blessings from Lord Piḷḷaiyār; and, second, he could not buy Murikandy *kaccāṉ* (peanuts), a famous treat which his family members would expect from him when he returned from this trip. Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār temple was popular among the people of northern Sri Lanka, and Murikandy peanuts were also popular because people considered them the best. I observed that some vehicles stopped for the blessings from Lord Piḷḷaiyār while some did not. However, a couple of years ago, and even before the war, all the vehicles would have been stopping at this shrine for worship and refreshments.

Why was Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār so important among the Tamils of northern Sri Lanka and what was the reason behind this sudden shift to a letter attendiveness? In the past, my grandmother and my village people told me many stories of their trips from Jaffna to Colombo in

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[89] The Venkadeshwaram is the name of the bus service, which is operated between Colombo and Jaffna.

[90] Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār shrine is located on the A-9, Jaffna-Kandy highway in the Kilinochchi District of northern Sri Lanka.

which Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār occupied a significant position. If we take the proper noun Murikandy apart, we see that Muri means 'break' and Kandy refers to the 'city'. That is to say, the Lord Piḷḷaiyār who breaks or removes obstacles. Hence, Tamil Hindu people are advised to stop at this shrine to invoke Piḷḷaiyār's blessings and so remove all obstacles during their traveling. For this purpose, people simply stopped their vehicles and prayed to Lord Piḷḷaiyār, some by breaking coconuts and lighting camphor pills as a way of invoking his blessings. This was a pre-war practice and it became a 'must'/mandatory for people. In the past, Jaffna merchants would stop their lorries at this shrine to pray for the protection of their business activities from any kind of danger. People were afraid of elephants, which are plentiful in the Vanni forest area and Habarana, and so the merchants would continue traveling without the elephants attacking them. Also, Tamils were afraid of *kāṭaiyar*[91] (Sinhalese thugs) who attacked Tamil passengers while they traveled through this route.

However, the Piḷḷaiyār was popular not only among daily travelers, but also among local Sri Lankan pilgrims because Piḷḷaiyār removes obstacles not only in traveling, but also with respect to people's economic, social, and political problems in daily life. I have heard many stories of people who have made trips to this shrine to accomplish their vows. At the end of the war, tourists, particularly Sinhalese people from southern Sri Lanka, stopped at the shrine to worship their *Gana deviyo* (Piḷḷaiyār) while heading to Jaffna. However, Murikandy has become a more multi-interactive center than it was before the war ended because, during the war, foreigners and Sinhalese tourists did not visit there. Since the war ended in 2009, however, foreign tourists have also been stopping at Murikandy and learning about the religious significance of the place, which was under the control of the LTTE until they were defeated by the Government of Sri Lanka. In addition, this place became a center for the local economy, since people could come there to engage in the peanut business and the selling of locally produced foods.

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[91] Tamils in Sri Lanka use the word *kāṭaiyar* to denote Sinhala thugs and it is a Sinhala word, but Sinhalese pronounce as *kāḍ'ayö*

Also, my seat mate, Raja, mentioned that Murikandy is a relaxing place where drivers can stop for both worshipping and refreshments. Yet I noticed, in 2017-18, when returning to Colombo from Jaffna, the Venkateshwara and other buses did not any longer stop at the shrine. Instead, they stopped for refreshments at the Taste of Vanni Restaurant[92] in Mankulam. Most passengers did not question the driver about why he did not stop at the shrine, but I noticed the passengers discussing this matter among themselves. When I had a chat with the driver regarding this, he mentioned that he did not want to stop at the shrine because the bus would be delayed in reaching Colombo or Jaffna. Basically, he was concerned about punctuality and convenience rather than about stopping for worship. Also, I heard from him that drivers could get free food and good hospitality wherever they stop their buses for refreshments. Thus, they first prioritized their personal convenience over worshiping Piḷḷaiyār. Raja told me that people never question the drivers. Instead, they accept and get adjusted to their decisions because they are used to being adjusted to war, displacement, and political instability without questioning their right. In other words, the Tamils of northern Sri Lanka, or, rather of war-zone areas, have learned to lead life without questioning sudden changes because they have already accommodated themselves to so many alterations during the war. Other people noticed this and commented to me about this as well. For instance, a local religious orator, Aru Thirumurukan, once posted a comment on his Facebook Page stating that the many accidents were occurring lately on the A-9 highway at night were simply because of this avoidance of worshipping Lord Piḷḷaiyār during travel. He further argued that drivers could go to Murikandy and take a break, or relax, while their passengers are worshipping at the shrine. By doing so, Lord Pilliyar would removes obstacles and allow them to avoid accidents.

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[92] It was created and run by Vanni Resource Self Development Organization established by the Mankulam Women's Rural Development Society after the war.

However, my query was why the pre-war religious significance of Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār was changing among travelers in post-war Sri Lanka. It did not seem to me that this new reticence to visit the shrine did not mean that they have no religious faith, but, rather, they could not resist the change even though they were unhappy about it. But, beyond this, as an anthropologist, I was looking at the religious significance of the change of Murikandy Shrine in a diachronic context. In the past, people were afraid of traveling through this route due to the many reasons I have discussed above. For example, Mankalam, an older lady among the travelers, told me that people stop by this shrine for blessings not only to protect themselves *during* the rest of their trip, but also to succeed in the *purpose* of their trip. This, she told me, is because Lord Piḷḷaiyār is also *Siti Vinayagar;* and. Siti Vinayagar is another name of Lord Piḷḷaiyār -- as he who graces *kāriyaciti* (the success of a particular aim). However, even though Mankalam was regretful about this change, she felt, being a woman, that she was not in a position to question the change. Similarly, another traveler told me that some Sinhalese drivers do not stop by the temple because they are not aware of the significance of this shrine, and that Piḷḷaiyār is *putumaiyāṉavar* (The Rejuvenated). He told me, further, that though many Sinhalese people visited this temple for blessings, some drivers did not stop by as it would further delay their journey.

At the end of the day, people also prioritized their purpose for traveling rather than the worship, which is equivalent to the drivers putting their punctuality above the ritual benefits of the site. This reminded me of Weber's (1958) thesis about "protestant ethics" and the spirit of capitalism; specifically, that sometimes and an adherence to western modernity, even when clothed in a veneer of respect for religious activity, involves rejecting "enchanting" traditionalism. In a similar vein, Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) argued that "millennial capitalism" and the new world order was established through the emergence of the international conquest of capitalism at the turn of the 21st century; a conquest often reflected in religious change. Thus, many innovations, changes, discontinuities, and continuities have been incorporated into the everyday life of post-war Jaffna people. Therefore, this chapter will

ethnographically demonstrate the gathered information from Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages of the Jaffna Peninsula.

One of the main focuses of this research was to explore whether or not traditional village consciousness changed due to the war and globalization. To explain consciousness and change, Peacock (1975) looked at consciousness as a system, which included a structural symbolic form that he referred to as a "logico-meaningful integration". This he distinguished from the "casual-functional integration of the techno-social system", which was his way of showing the distinction between culture and social system (Geertz 1973). However, this was once a popular view; these days it is somewhat less so, particularly since Foucault (1979) influenced theorists tend to see the "form" of human interaction and the "meaning" (or knowledge about) those interactions as united in constructing modern power (hence his notion of Power/knowledge). Also, I must say, for my part, although not a strict Foucauldian, that I have never felt that the social and the cultural could be so neatly separated. My Wittgenstein (1974) influenced view of meaning as emerging from enacted "forms of life" would make that impossible. For example, if the "meaning" of a cricket bat is impossible to disentangle from the "form" of life of playing cricket, having cricket teams, and so forth. Under this circumstance, I will show how conventional domestic ritual practices have been changed and multiple meanings are generated through the new ritual engagements, which explicated Wittgenstein's forms of life in post-war domestic ritual-scape of Jaffna. To show this, I have selected four domestic rituals to be discussed in this chapter.

Furthermore, one of the main focuses of this chapter is to show how older village consciousness in the ritual context has changed due the war and globalization. In the classical anthropological literature, Peacock (1975) and Durkheim (1995 [1912]) had a similar idea of consciousness in "traditional" societies, which was composed of the symbolic forms of rites, myths, and totems. Seen altogether, Durkheim argued that this "collective consciousness is the highest form of psychic life" (1995:445) and was justified through religion. On this basis, religion and ritual were understood as collective consciousness or collective representations. Such an

explanation however is limited when it comes to the study of individual practices, (Bourdieu 1990) or to how individual religiosity shapes individual human consciousness, which is the major focus of this chapter. In a similar vein, there are different forms of practices associated with the Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār shrine are diminishing, but different forms of human conditions are cultivated for their conveniences and sophistications in post-war religious and ritualscapes of everyday life.

Hence, studying these changes would enable me to understand "village" and "village-temple consciousness" in post-war Jaffna; in particular, I concentrated on domestic and temple rituals because they are the rituals performed in locations where people are bonded to their places through bodily experiences. Post-war changes are important to for us to understand to understand, in turn, the changing landscape and people's lives.

Of course, the Anthropological literature on social and cultural change constitutes a vast literature. Some of this literature claims that small and pre-literate societies tend to change slowly while modernized and industrialized societies tend to change rapidly (Ferraro 2001). But this is clearly not always true because, for example, Jaffna village communities are currently undergoing tremendous transformations. This too has been addressed by the literature by way of two contrasting positions. On the one hand, some anthropologists have spoken about culture and social change as occurring due to vast internal and external forces; innovations, in this view, are the result of such large-scale processes as diffusion, and acculturation, westernization, modernization, and globalization. On the other hand, other scholars have argued that people themselves can throw up obstacles and resistances to cultural change. As an example of this kind of cultural resistance, I paid a great deal of attention to the Tamil conception of *kāṭṭupāṭu,* in order to examine how it was used and manipulated in the ritual contexts of everyday life.

However, both culture and society in Jaffna are in constant processes of modification. My informant Raja told me "change will never change (there is always change going on)," and so I looked at how people reacted to the constancy of change in post-war Jaffna. What surprised me

was that people were both resisting and acknowledging change. This struck me because, as a native anthropologist, I could understand the Tamil cultural practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* and how deeply people are concerned about how their *kouvravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honour) might be eroded or destroyed by cultural change and deviations in social control. But these cultural practices of social control, though perhaps superficially similar to the "honour and shame' values complex described by social anthropologists in the 1960s, are actually unique to South Asia. They are different, in Jaffna, because unlike in the Mediterranean societies described by that school (Peristany 1965), here Tamil culture, casteism, Saivism (*caivism*), Saiva Siddhanta (*Caiva Citānta*), *ākama* and non- *ākama* doctrines, Tamil cultural conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* Tamil nationalism, Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism, and many other attributes constructed the unique practice of *kouvravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honour). In this context, South Asian perspectives (locally constructed views about changes) are needed for a better understanding of the social and cultural changes in South Asia.

More specifically, this chapter demonstrates that the study of domestic and temple rituals in post-war reconstruction is part of the study of "village" or "village-temple consciousness," which cannot be understood without discussing rituals, innovations, changes, and continuity. Change is common and inevitable reality in all human societies, but its speed and styles vary. Even though this is not a major focus of this chapter, I have organized it in a manner to show the links between the study of landscapes, places and rituals. Rituals, after all, occur in places, and so the interconnections between places and rituals need to be investigated anthropologically. For example, temples and villages are recognized through rituals; for instance, although the same deity, Lord Murukan, resides in three different popular Murukan temples—Nallur Kanthaswami Temple, Maviddapuram Kathaswamil Temple, and Selva Sannidhi Murukan Temple in Jaffna -- each temple landscape receives a unique identity from a specific ritual. In any case, by 2018-2019 in Jaffna, Temple ritualscapes and domestic ritualscapes were largely changing because they were incorporating modifications (indigenization/domestication) and innovations. These alterations are

for uplifting the *kouvravam* (prestige), *pukaḻ* (praise), and *antasttu* (status) of temples, individuals, and families.

Ultimately, when it comes to changes and innovations in rituals, I felt urged to investigate them in relation to what happened to *kaṭṭupāṭu* in the context of the ritualscapes in post-war Jaffna. This chapter will answer that particular question by examining relevant ethnographic cases from Inuvil and Naguleswaram. More particularly, this chapter describes changes that occurred in Tamil Hindu weddings, puberty rituals, teething ceremonies, post-funerary rituals and video culture; and my discussion covers gender, caste, and generational differences. First, I will briefly explain the reasons people offer for social and cultural changes in post-war Jaffna. Then, I will move onto discussing relevant ethnographic cases to justify my argument of this chapter.

7.2   Reasons for social and cultural changes in post-war Jaffna: A brief summary

The war, as such, was not the only cause of change in Jaffna; rather a set of multiple interconnected causes thrown together under the term 'globalization' began to change Jaffna during the war, and continued, and carried forward those changes, in the post-war period. Because the war's direct effects and those of globalization are complexly interlinked and are inseparable at this point, this research has looked at both together. However, identifying the changes caused by either war or globalization will also involve acknowledging the range of opinion people have about them. For instance, on the one hand, I found people like Poopalu, an old man, who said to me, sadly, that due to the war and displacement, he had lost many known members and relatives in his village. But he also claimed that the practice of control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) had become powerless among young people because the LTTE's control and form of administration of Jaffna had already changed society to such a degree during the war.

On the other hand, Valliyachi, an older woman, claimed, more optimistically, that after the A-9 highway was reopened everything became available in Jaffna. She told me that banned materials are suddenly allowed to be used; more developmental work was in progress; and that

now people use Skype and Facebook to communicate with their family members in diaspora due to the convenient communication technology services of the Sri Lankan Government. Of course, these contrasting attitudes of pessimism and optimism towards the changes caused by war and globalization are, themselves, I would argue, also caused by war and globalization.

Although both voluntary migration and internal displacement took place during and after the war, technological innovations and engagement with global capitalism were limited compared to the present day. It was the end of the war that allowed such innovations and engagements to come flooding in. Hence, this chapter emphasizes how technology, global capitalism, and connectivity between Jaffna Tamils and the Tamil diaspora connectivity are together having an immense influence on the contemporary Jaffna Tamil community. During our research in the summer of 2015, for example, my advisor, Mark Whitaker, and I encountered global capitalism in the new way some people pay for blessings and spiritual advice (sometimes over the internet) about their life and health, a revealing 'commodification of spirituality' (In press).' In this and other ways, I argue that global capitalism is producing new forms of interaction and perception that are becoming a part of Tamil people's current sense and practice of *ūr*.

Similar transformations are perhaps behind the emergence of many new wedding halls (and new temples) in many villages, and in the renovation of community centers, temple youth associations, village libraries, village computer centers, and recent commercial activities. These alterations too seem to be part of what is happening, at present, to "village" or "village-temple consciousness." I would argue that these new transformations disrupt local hierarchy because they give formerly powerless people resources. Also, such innovations so disrupt the spatial relationship between gods, temples, village people, and their hierarchies that the hierarchies are no longer workable (i.e., no longer make "common sense" as they used to. Further, the presence of these things has so changed how people experience the world that those who have embraced them can no longer feel at home in the old pre-war they remember and, perhaps, for the anxious, still value.

7.3   Innovations and changes in post-war domestic ceremonies: Wedding, teething, puberty, and post-funerary rituals

I have attended temple festivals at the four temples in each village named earlier (see Chapter One) and in life circle rituals of weddings, puberty, teething, and funerals. I will be discussing three of these rituals. Also, I attended two housewarming ceremonies in Inuvil. In Naguleswaram, I participated in twenty post-funerary rituals of *antiyēṣṭṭi*; fifteen sponsored by the local people who recently lost family members and another 5 by diaspora Tamils who had come to Naguleswaram to perform these rituals during my stay there. I will not be discussing each individual ritual and its changes in this section, but I have discussed them in relevant chapters of the dissertation (See Chapters Five and Six). I have called them post-war wedding, teething, and puberty ceremonies, because war and post-war circumstance, including the Tamil diaspora and intensified forms of global flows, (Appadurai 1996), reshaped the ritualscape of Jaffna.

However, Jaffna Tamil Hindu life circle rituals are not homogenous in practice; they are, of course, varied in terms of regions, castes, and classes. Such intersectional trajectories reshaped their ritual practices. The forms of rituals have been changing throughout the history of the Jaffna Peninsula. Precolonial ritual practices have changed, and I have learnt of these changes by listening to the many stories of village folks, especially grandparents, about how such precolonial changes were incorporated within the Tamil Hindu ritual pantheon of Jaffna. For instance, registering marriages was, originally, a colonial practice that became a conventional part of the Jaffna Tamil Hindu wedding rituals. Registering a marriage is, now, most often locally known as *eḻuttu* in Tamil, which means 'writing'. That is, when a grooms and bride put their signatures in a legal code book to prove their status as a married couple, people started address the event as *eḻuttu.* Jaffna Tamils, of course, use many terms for this event—*kalyāṇa eḻuttu,* registration, register marriage, and engagement -- which was introduced in the colonial period. Even so, Jaffna Tamil Hindus culturally do not perceive something as a marriage until the *tāli* (Tamil Hindu

300

wedding badge/neckless) has been tied around a bride's neck by a groom. My grandparents, for example, did not have a marriage certificate because their engagement was organized culturally according to Inuvil Tamil practices without legal registration in the 1940s, even though General Marriage Ordinance was enacted in 1907. It was called a *campanta kalappu —campanta* means alliance/affinal relations, and *kalappu* stands for mixing. It means that people from the two families met together to confirm the marriage and exchange gifts and food. My grandmother used to show a *Manipuri cāṟi* (saree)*,* that was given to her by her husband on her engagement day in the 1940s. Similarly, I have heard wonderful stories from village people about the Tamil engagement practices that existed in precolonial times.

Interestingly, postcolonial Jaffna started combining register marriages with the Jaffna Tamil Hindu wedding ceremony. Then, it became a mandatory custom to be held before the wedding ceremony. However, people, started changing these practices in reverse due to the war, displacement, time, finance, and other reasons. For instance, marriages are diverse in practice in present day Jaffna. Some people do the register marriage first, and then, after a gap of 1- 6 months, holds their wedding ceremony; some do both on the same day to reduce the cost of the event; and some first have the wedding ceremony and the register marriage takes place on the following day. Thus, Jaffna Tamil Hindu rituals are caught in the same nexus of multidirectional interactions as the people who perform them. Let me discuss a wedding ceremony as an example of that kind of micro-changes in practice which I find so interesting.

7.3.1   *Kalyāṇam* (wedding ceremony)

We were all preparing to attend a wedding in Jaffna. My daughter Tanesha was refusing to wear the traditional Tamil Hindu wedding costume-- a full skirt and blouse (*paṭṭu pāvādai* and *caṭṭai*), which were made of nice colored soft silk fabric and golden embroidery. She wanted to wear jeans and a T-shirt, and while I did not have any preference, my wife was insisting that Tanesha wears the outfit our relatives would expect. My mother asked us why we had not bought

301

her a *Lehenga,* a north Indian style skirt which is very popular among Tamil Hindus in contemporary Sri Lanka. Finally, Tanesha wore the dress that her mother suggested. We all reached the wedding house and I was surprised to see the amazing wedding *pantal* (a colorful festive shed) defining the entrance to the wedding house.

Indeed, the entire wedding house was nicely enveloped by new forms of decoration that I had never seen before at weddings when I was living in Inuvil as a child. This wedding was held in Inuvil in September 2018 during my fieldwork. A brand-new style of wedding stage/dais (*maṉavaṟai*) and decorations had been set up instead of the conventional *maṇi maṇavaṟai* (wedding stage). The conventional *maṇi maṇavaṟai* was locally made by the Paṇṭāram caste people and was designed by them. They used cultured pearls, beads, natural or artificial flowers, velvet cloth in different colors and many other materials to build the wedding stage. This new fashion culture, I felt, had been borrowed from Sinhalese wedding flower decorators in Colombo. I had already observed at other weddings that South Indian wedding dais designs have also been assimilated into wedding stage decorations in post-war Jaffna.

At the wedding, one middle aged man told me that it was part of Paṇṭāram caste's traditional obligations/occupation to provide wedding stage decorations and preparations. According to Jaffna Veḷḷāḷar caste hierarchy, Paṇṭāram caste is lower than Veḷḷāḷar, but Paṇṭāram caste people were not treated as the low castes, *Pañcamar* (to know more on *Pañcamar*, see Chapters One and Eight). Now, people in different castes who also provide wedding decoration services, render them through innovative ideas borrowed from elsewhere. He further elaborated that some Paṇtāram gave up their occupation when they felt they could not compete with others in the business market for weddings after the war. In any case, the inside of the house was nicely draped in Singapore decorations, which were popular among people in Jaffna.

Meanwhile, the temple musicians (Icai Veḷḷāḷar caste) started to play their music for the morning part of the wedding ceremony during which the groom is brought on to the wedding stage for the bathing ritual. Velayutham, a Veḷḷāḷar man, was more concerned about whether

everything was in order for carrying out the bathing ritual performance or not. However, he was worried about the weddings ritual practices in general, because they were being, he though, deviated from their proper ritual order or *kaṭṭupāṭu* because of the way the videographer (A man hired from outside the family and is a professional videographer) was directing the bathing ritual, and also all the rest of the wedding ritual, to suite his own purposes. His aim, of course, was to produce a perfect video documentary of the wedding rather than to maintain the conventional ritual order. In fact, the videographer was making ritual innovations all along to produce an impressive wedding film and photo album, something he had learned to do at other wedding ceremonies. This videographer who was a young man was acting as a ritual conductor and was not, as would have been expected in the past, an older man who could teach the ritual order to the younger generation. Now, Valayutham told me, older people were silent because the wedding organizers were more concerned about having a good quality wedding video documentary rather than maintaining the conventional ritual order. Other older men at the wedding were also apparently feeling Velayutham's concerns. For there were several clashes between older people and the videographers related to time management where the former wanted to carry out the ritual order and progress according to the astrological time frame, while the latter spent too much time on filming each part of the ritual to stick to that regimen.

Poomani, an old woman, told me that even the bride and groom had gone for an outdoor video shooting together, something arranged by the videographer on the wedding day before the weeding rituals commenced, and she called this a *kaṇṭaṟiyāta paḻakkam* (not a known habit). Moreover, Poomani considered this a completely wrong practice because the bride and groom must not see each other until they met at the wedding stage on the day of the wedding even though they had seen each other previously. Also, people in Inuvil still seriously consider the time factor in their domestic and religious rituals as is prescribed by the *Pañcāṅkam*, an almanac

text.[93] However, the videographer plays a pivotal role in altering the timing of wedding rituals due to his intensive video shooting. During the war, Jaffna Tamils were eager to make albums and videos of their domestic events for circulation among family members who were living in foreign countries. That is, family ties and kinship networks were maintained with the diaspora through letters, photos, and videos during the war. Now, Poomani claimed, making albums and videos is more oriented toward fashion and status, and so people also upload short video clips of their wedding and puberty ceremonies on to YouTube for public viewing. For Poomani, the timing of rituals was always a big deal. And here she was articulating a concern I found many people like her had about maintaining proscribed ritual timing in the face of such video documentations. Then she heaved a sigh and hung her head in an unhappy way, saying how most practices have been turned upside down.

For the young couple, however, Poomani is a *palaiya pañcāṅkam* (old almanac text) because she talks about old rules and practices. The weddings young men boys and the bride's brothers and sisters did not bother about the old style of wedding stage decoration, timing issues, and other forms of e ritual disorder because they were not aware of the older practices of the village Poomani remembers, and were, moreover, in favor of the new forms of practice. The groom was born in Inuvil and migrated to Australia for his higher studies (MSc) and settled there. Inevitably there were disagreements. The bride's father told me that he had discontinued his daughter's higher studies (PhD) in the USA, much against her wishes, and agreed to this marriage proposal so that she would settle in Australia. The bride, happy with the groom but not with discontinuing her studies, had obeyed her father as she could not act against his decision. But the groom, looking worriedly at his distinctly unhappy bride, assured her out of earshot of her father that he would make sure she was able to continue her chemistry PhD in Australia.

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[93] *Pañcāṅkam* is a Tamil almanac printed text, which people use for their daily lives in order to fix the day and time for their religious and domestic rituals and activities in the Jaffna Peninsula. For more detail, see Perinpanayakam's *The Karmic Theatre* (1982), p.46.

On the other hand, I saw some young girls and boys taking videos and photos with their own smart phones to update the events of the wedding to other family members who live in diaspora. When I had a chat with those young folks, they told me that they had created a Facebook Messenger group and a WhatsApp group to which they were uploading the videos and photos of the day's events to share among their family members. When I asked Velayutham whether the wedding ritual innovation and videography prevailed only among the Veḷḷāḷar castes he replied that *maṟṟa aṭkaḷ* (other people) were also doing the same. Again, I was struck by the word, *maṟṟa aṭkaḷ* which I discovered, was a local term used by Jaffna high-caste Veḷḷāḷar in conversations among themselves. As I was contemplating the meaning of phrase, Kaveri, one of my informants, explained to me that, these days, high-caste people use "other people" as a pejorative way to refer to low-caste people without using their caste names. Apparently, high-caste Veḷḷāḷar people use *maṟṟa aṭkaḷ* to symbolize low-caste people.

This was a post-war wedding in Inuvil which I experienced last year. I was quite surprised by the post-war changes in Inuvil because I had lived in that village for more than 35 years, had practiced its rituals, and had also many embodied experiences of *kaṭṭupāṭu* control. In the context of phenomenological experiences of *ūr* and multidirectional orientations of *ūr*-making process, I have looked at the wedding ceremonies that have been changing in terms of some of their practices and meanings. These changes are inconsistent; some older practices are modified to gain new status, because they want to bring back the older practices to show that they are different to the others. Many informants told me that they performed their own weddings differently compared to others, and also that her wedding was done in a latest fashion though she had a late marriage. These statements express people's intentions towards ritual innovation. For instance, in my village, a diaspora family from France had their daughter's wedding in Inuvil in 2017 and used a bullock cart to transport the couple to show that they were following the "traditional Tamil custom". Further, some of these rituals have been innovated by merging local and alien cultural practices; for instance, Sinhalese or Colombo cultural practices (with regard to wedding stage or

dais decorations). The Sinhalese style of dais differs from conventional *maṉimaṇavarai* in terms of shape, color, materials, and cultural objects like *pāvai* (made of wooden sculptures representing men and woman) and *yāḷi* (an animal with a lion face, elephant trunk, and lion body, which is a mythical animal according to Tamil Hindu mythology). South Indian cinematic styles, dress codes, decorations, Singapore decorations, and imported diaspora practices are incorporated with local Jaffna practices in ways that reframe frame the ritualscape in Jaffna.

But these changes did not pay attention to the cultural resistance of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* All of these instances indicate that, for Jaffna people, when the 'form' of a wedding ceremony has changed then, at the same time, the 'meaning' of rituals has also changed. There are several examples that support my argument, and I will discuss a few of them in this chapter. For instance, *pūtākalam* is a part of Jaffna Tamil Hindu wedding ceremony, which involves a married couple serving rice and curry to each other in the shrine room of the bride's house immediately after the wedding rituals. *Pūtākalam* is a ceremonial eating ritual, however, which people are not allowed witness. People used to say that this ritual symbolically expressed a husband and wife's private life. So when the *Pūtākalam* ceremony was filmed by the videographers at this wedding, they (and all the people who would be viewing the video) were allowed to see this formerly private rite. This opening up of the rite to public display suggests a distinct change in its meaning. Moreover, I attended many other weddings in post-war Jaffna during fieldwork. Most of the weddings I saw no longer performed the *pūtākalam* at the bride's house. My informants commented that the *pūtākalam* ceremony in this way has lost its ritual value because the couple has meals with other guests at the wedding hall.

Again, it is important to note that this ceremonial eating ritual was held in *secrecy* at a special place in the house. The disappearance of *pūtākalam* from wedding ceremonies shows, many informants (older and middle age [between 40-55 years old] mean and women from Veḷḷāḷar, Kōviyar, Icai Veḷḷāḷar, and Paṇṭāram castes) told me, a loss of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and also of ritual value (*caṭṅkin peṟumati*) On the other hand, the emerging new practice of the couple having their first

meals in *public* without a ritual has erased the line between *private* and *public* domains. Such changes have made traditional weddings very cosmopolitan. Another change is that in the past, the groom and bride were not allowed to see each other after *poṇṇurukkal*, or "gold-melting" ritual. This is a ritual which is performed at the groom's house by a goldsmith who ritually melts gold for the making a *tāli* (it is a marriage-badge, a central part of the Tamil Hindu wedding necklace that is tied around the neck of the bride by the groom).

Such ritual seclusion is continued from the *ponurukkal* day to the wedding day. During this seclusion period, both the groom and bride are not allowed to leave the house until the wedding day. On the wedding day, the couple see each other in the wedding dais. The usual pre-war practice was that this *ponurukkal* took place within one week of the wedding date. But while People still conduct *poṇṇurukkal* they no longer follow the seclusion period anymore. People used to buy the wedding *saree* (*cāṟi*) after the *ponurukkal.* They also used to send the wedding invitations to village people, relatives, and friends after the *poṇṇurukkal*. All these practices had been changed by 2018; by then couples were meeting each other after the *poṇṇurukkal,* and people were buying wedding *saree[s]* before the ritual. By 2018 People were sending wedding invitations to the guests before the *poṇṇurukkal* for practical reasons; because diaspora members need to apply for visas and leave from work well ahead of time. But there are many reasons for these changes. My point, here, is that the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* is manipulated and weakened by these transformations in ritual practice.

All in all, I came to see through my observations in 2017-2018 at many wedding ceremonies in post-war Jaffna, that fashion, technology, and ritual timing (or temporality) had changed the conventional wedding ceremony. For instance, lately, the *mehendi* artistic (hand painting) tradition has been included in Tamil Hindu weddings, imported in various ways. This tradition was already popular among Muslims in Sri Lanka before Tamils took it up, but by 2019 many Tamil brides were also following it. *Mehendi,* a body art that uses henna to draw designs women's hands and feet, is a bride-centric artform. It is a popular ceremony throughout India.

307

Indians perform it as a ritual part of their weddings, but in Jaffna and all over Sri Lanka, Tamils once performed it as an event *before* the wedding. For this event, the bride's family invited small and young girls to their house and hired a person well versed in this art to decorate the bride's and the young girls' hands and feet. As a result, this new practice does qualify as a ritual part of wedding and is a modern fashion that has been assimilated in Tamil Hindu wedding ceremonies. Tamils sometimes hire Muslim *mehendi* experts to do the service while Tamil bridal artists also do the service.

Unlike in the past, when a stricter segregation was in force, grooms and brides now communicate with each other in person and via Skype, Messenger, and WhatsApp until the day before the wedding. Young boys and girls (Here I am referring the group of unmarried boys and girls who prepare for their marriage) eagerly break older practices and supply their own justifications and explanations for doing so. For instance, some young people point out, now a number of activities must be jointly attended to by the groom and bride for the wedding. For these activities, they leave the house even during the seclusion period. For instance, the groom and bride go together to the beauty parlor for facial and hair treatments.

Furthermore, videography plays a vital role in this because videographers encourage couples to come outside the wedding house for video scenes to be shot before the wedding rituals start. Jaffna Tamil Hindus strictly adhere to ritual timing (that is, the auspicious times suggested by the astrologer) when it comes to what time the groom and bride should leave their home on the wedding day. But couples often wear their bridal costume and leave home before the actual time to do the outdoor shooting controlled by the videographer. This, according to many people I spoke with, breaks up. This breaking up of *kaṭṭupāṭu* and conventional ritual practices is not merely influenced by the village's global and diaspora connections, but also by the intention of people to raise their *kouvaravam* by hosting a fashionable wedding ceremony.

However, such innovations were not confined to the present-day globalized Jaffna, but also occurred during the war. Then they were not performed to raise people's *kouvravam* but as an

308

alternative ritual practice required by war time necessity. For instance, a "wedding without a groom," was a kind of symbolic wedding ritual in Jaffna during war time. In particular, this type of symbolic wedding ritual occurred between 1990 and 1995. As previously discussed in my personal life history in chapter two, many Tamil young boys were forced to migrate to foreign countries during the war. Therefore, parents of sons often proposed marriages to girls from Jaffna in their absence. Those brides were eventually sent from Jaffna to foreign countries to complete these marriages.

Therefore, before they left, their families often arranged a wedding ritual for brides with absent grooms; the groom's sister acted as the groom. On an auspicious day, the bride would be dressed at her house, and then brought to the groom's house where the groom's sister and the bride would be seated on a dais. They would exchange gifts and rings and, afterwards, the bride's family would organize a feast for the villagers attending the event. Importantly, they organized this ritual only after finalizing the proposal on a day close to her departure to the foreign country of her prospective groom. However, there were no sexual relationship between the two women. In this case, it was older people who innovatively made-up this ritual practice; one, which, of course, broke with their own cultural conception of *kaṭṭupāṭu.* Hence, both young and old people engaged in ritual innovation. However, after the war, the practice of having weddings without grooms ceased. I found another interesting ritual practice, a teething ceremony, which people innovatively organized in post-war Jaffna. These innovative ideas were borrowed from diaspora members who visited their *ūr* for the purpose organizing their own children's teething and puberty ceremonies. If Jaffna Tamil Hindus also conventionally practiced the teething ceremony, then what were the innovations they had made? Let me discuss a particular teething ceremony as an example of the micro-changes in practice that I found so interesting.

7.3.2 *Pallu koḻukkaṭṭai* (teething ceremony)

In 2017, during my fieldwork in Naguleswaram, I attended domestic rituals involving the whole life circle of Tamil Hindus in four households. I will describe here a teething ceremony (*pallu koḻukkaṭṭai*) that I attended in November 2017. The teething ceremony, popularly known as the *pallu koḻukkaṭṭai* ceremony, according to prewar norms, should be done when the child's first tooth begins to appear. *Pallu* means teeth and a *koḻukkaṭṭai* is a sweet cake that is made out of brown rice flour with a sweet coconut and jaggery filling. *Pallu koḻukkaṭṭai* looks like a Nigerian pie or a Jamaican patty but is a vegetarian snack. The filling is, a mixture of coconut, jaggery, roasted split mung beans or green gram, cardamom powder, cashew nuts and raisins, wrapped in brown rice flower phyllo dough.

The significance of this ceremony is to mark the appearance of a child's first tooth, and to pray for the child to be bestowed with teeth as beautiful and straight as the edge of the *koḻukkaṭṭai,* a small rice flour turnover. Neither our relatives nor we followed the tradition of making our children sit inside the *cuḷaku* (a rattan sieve made of the Palmyra leaves usually used in the kitchen to sift and husk rice grains). However, my mother told me that village people used to practice this, and that even she did this for me when I was teething. A piece of white cloth is placed on the child's head and then the *koḻukkaṭṭai,* the sweet cake, is dropped over the child's head. The child's mother's brother (MB-maternal uncle- '*mama*') usually performed this act.

However, during fieldwork, I saw people using a white decorated netted veil to cover the child's head instead of a piece of white cloth from a used *vēṭṭi* (men usually wear one when they go to temple), which was the former practice. When I asked the reason for this change, people gave me different opinions. One stated that it is a fashion and that it would look better than a *vēṭṭi* cloth in a photograph, while another mentioned that "ippa ellarum ippaṭi tāṉ ceiyiṉam" [everybody does so]. Poomani told me that, in the past, people used a new or washed piece of white *vēṭṭi,* which simply expressed "purity," but people now borrow decorated netted veils from

others for this ceremony. As a result, she felt, people were more concerned about fashion and good photographs than about conventional "purity" practices. My mother told me, further, that now people make teething a celebrative event to which, for instance, relatives are invited whereas previously only the immediate family participated.

Further, people now come nicely dressed to look good in photographs; and they give gifts to the child at this event, something that never happened before the war. She also pointed out that they used to perform this event in a very simple manner in the kitchen where they make *koḻukkaṭṭai* (which is where mine was done) instead of in the 'hall'(living room) -- the front room of the house where official visiting is done -- or in the shrine room. Nor did anyone take photographs.

I also found another change: The *koḻukkaṭṭai* is now placed in a tray filled with a pencil, mini book, pen, some cash, and candies, which are dropped on the child's head and are expected to be picked up by the child. People were curious to see what the children would pick up, and I noticed that there were bets among the audience over whether the little girls would go for food, cash, or book. One boy reached for the *koḻukkaṭṭai* instead of the other stuff, and everyone cheered. My niece reached for the book, and many said that she would love reading and writing and become a clever girl when she grows up. Hence, people were trying to characterize the children and their future development based on their choices.

Using a teething ritual this way as a form of semi-serious 'divination' is all new. My mother and mother's sister told us that they never had this kind of practice before the war in their village. They did not know, either, how doing this had been incorporated into the teething ritual, or when people started to follow this practice, but they agreed that somehow it has become part of traditional practice today. In addition, these kinds of events are now recorded by video and photography and shared with family members all over the island and with the diaspora through Facebook and Skype. One of my cousins, for example, has made a separate Facebook page for our family to share such photographs and videos. He told me that this is a practical way through

311

which all (who are in the diaspora) could be aware of what happens in our *ūr*. Also, just like the

people in the diaspora who are fond of hearing and seeing the events occurring in the home

country, people in the home country too like to see what happens in the diaspora, all via

electronic media (particularly on Facebook). As with the teething ritual, my fieldwork brought to

my attention other new practices, new forms of being, new forms of interactions, and new

perceptions, all taking place via global flows and global interactions

     When I browsed about the teething ceremony on the internet, I found similar practices in

other societies. Tamil Diaspora members have borrowed ideas from the various foreign

environment where they live, and those ideas have been exchanged with family members back

home through photos, conversations, visits, and social media. This is how innovative ideas are

imported and exported. For instance, the puberty ceremony is followed by a cake cutting

ceremony now. Yet this was invented in Jaffna during the war. Nonetheless, it has now become a

part of the puberty ceremony, and the diaspora members also perform it this new way in foreign

countries even though this practice was commenced in Jaffna. There are many innovations found

in another life circle ritual: the puberty ceremony. How did the Jaffna Tamil Hindus come up

with them? What implications did this have for the cultural practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu*? Let's begin

with my recent experience at a *cāmattiya caṭaṅku* (puberty ritual) I attended in Inuvil.

7.3.3   *Cāmattiya caṭaṅku* (puberty ceremony)

     This ceremony was held in Inuvil in May 2018. I saw most of my relatives engaged in

different activities for this ritual. I walked towards the house in which the ritual was to take place

with the hopes of meeting some of my older friends who were also visiting the host. Though the

ritual had been scheduled for the following day, it is a usual Jaffna *ūr vaḻakkam* (village custom)

for the relatives and friends to visit the ceremonial home the day before the ceremony in order to

take part in ritual arrangements. I noticed that this practice had evolved, because now, most of the

arrangements, unlike previously, are done through catering and decorating services.

Earlier, such work was divided and happily shared among village friends and relatives. Now, only certain services are still collectively shared. To understand the recent changes, I had many conversations with people during my fieldwork in Jaffna and they reported that due to the war, displacement, and globalization, many people from the village have left and the remaining network is limited. They also said "ippa ellām order tān" [now all the arrangements are provided by catering and decorating services]. And though the host makes the arrangements with caterers for such services, village people still pay a visit to the host's house merely as a formality to mark their presence (cumma kaṭamaikku talaiyai kāṭṭa vēṇum), as otherwise, they would feel 'kuṟai' "an emotion that includes a range of feelings corresponding to deprivation and depletion" (Clark-Decès 2005: 14).

Cāmattiya caṭaṅku is a coming of age ceremony performed for a girl who has 'attained puberty,' and for Jaffna Tamils, it is a day that has an astrological value, which supposedly determines the good or bad fortune of her future life. In Jaffna, older people, invoking a patriarchal ideology that emphasizes a connection between family respect (*mariyātai*) and the potentially shameful behavior of young women, say that when a girl attains puberty or becomes a 'big girl' (*pēriya piḷḷai*), she should not see unrelated males or go outside the home until the completion of a seclusion period of eleven days. Elders say the primary purpose of this period is to chase away evils (dangerous powers) or shield the new 'big girls' from the evil-eye (*kaṇūṟu*), evil-mouth (*vāiyūṟu*)[94] and the dangerous evil spirit (*tīya cakti*)[95], as all threats loom large during

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[94] The Tamil term *kaṇūṟu* or *vāiyūṟu* does not express the English meaning like malice, but constitutes dangerous powers, as Margaret Trawick says, "eyes are treated as emitters of powerful transformative emotional force. Further, she notifies that the power in the eye has a dangerous erotic component, see Trawick 1992. People are affected by these dangerous powers that they believe in. Mines demonstrates that "people are affected by what they see, and they carry that affect them and can pass it on. Such is the logic of the ill-translated "evil eye" in South India (2005: 133), see Mines 2005.

[95] *Tīya cakti* can be generated from bad or dangerous forces, which are different from evil-eye and evil-mouth, but older women believe that the 'big girl' (who reached the coming of age) can be affected by these *Tīya cakti*. In order to protect them and to move freely after puberty, this ritual must be performed, and these bad forces are either controlled or cooled by this ritual

the transitional phase between attaining puberty and marriage, and this perhaps reflects wider fears of family dishonor.

In Jaffna, when a girl reaches puberty, people say "a girl has become a big girl" (*periya piḷḷai*) or has come of age (*vayatukku vantu viṭṭāḷ*) or become an adolescent (*kumaṟpiḷḷaiyāki viṭṭāl*). Prahalathan (2015), recently, claimed that these words are "archaic word forms" and that Jaffna people do not have them in their vocabulary. But I would argue with this generalization as I found such words still being used among older people. However, I did find that the English term 'age attain' is popularly used by many people now. It is mostly used by the educated people and is also quite common among the youngsters and school children (mostly teenagers) who often use it in their daily conversations. Hence, people still use both terms. In some villages in Jaffna, people give importance to the day the girl reaches puberty because that particular day determines her future life in terms of wealth, prosperity and fertility inducement. When I stayed in Inuvil, in 2017-2018, what I often observed was people always gossiping about this matter and connecting it with older stories of the positive and negative incidents of their lives. Here, day the vent occurs denotes either an auspicious day or an inauspicious day because the date possesses astrological value. However, I argue that this temporality is another form of patriarchal control over women maintained through religious and astrological domination.

When people note the first sign of puberty, then the girl is ceremonially given a bath, which is locally called *kaṇṭa ṭaṇṇīr vārttal*. After seven or eleven days from the first sign of puberty, she is eligible to have the big ceremony that is the puberty ceremony. It is addressed by different names such as *cāmattiya caṭaṅku, pūpuṇita nīrāṭṭu viḻa*, the 'age-attain' ceremony (among the people in Jaffna), and the *saree* ceremony (among the Tamils in the diaspora). It can take place on the seventh day, eleventh day, or even later, but people prefer it to happen immediately as the girl must go to school. The seven or eleven days after the ceremony are the seclusion period.

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performance as my interviewee Pappa related (Pappa is a pseudonym.) during my fieldwork in 2017.

Mankalam, my informant, explained that during the seclusion period the girl is kept in a separate place or room of the house; she is required to isolate herself for a few days, and not allowed to see males during this period. Only the mother or another woman (from within the family or close relative circle) are allowed to take care of the girl, they are allowed to meet her only to fulfill her necessities. Older people believe that this period is very dangerous as the girl would be easily affected by the evil spirits. Mankalam pointed out that people, however, do not strictly follow these rules nowadays. I had a casual conversation with Abi and Pirakavi, who had recently gone through this ceremony, and they told me they had not taken the seclusion period that seriously. They were not afraid of the dangerous evil spirits as they had watched enough ghost and adventure movies that they took them less seriously. So they had communicated with their male cousins during the seclusion period and they had also come out of their rooms when male members of the family visited their houses. I heard from them that most young women of their same age group preferred this ritual elaboration of the seclusion period because, freed of its restrictions, they were then able to get a puberty ceremony album to show to their friends.

According to prewar conventions, after the seclusion period, a day is fixed to have the ritual celebration; and relatives and village neighbors are invited to take part. The girl is dressed in a *saree;* indeed, this is the first time that she wears a *saree* (girls are not allowed to wear *saree* before puberty), and it shows that she has become a "big girl". Also, the *saree* connotes the girl's new identity as a sexually mature woman. Hence, wearing a *saree* symbolizes the transition from girlhood to womanhood. This is perhaps why Sri Lankan Tamils in the diaspora use the term, "*saree* ceremony" instead of "puberty ceremony" or *pūpuṉita nīrāṭṭu viḻa* in invitations, videos and commemorative photo albums. Then, the ritual is carried out by elderly women while, interestingly, in Jaffna by contrast, most Hindu rituals are led by males reflecting that Jaffna Tamil society's patriarchy.

However, by 2017-2018, this practice too had changed, and some people by then had adopted different costumes to wear instead of the *saree.* Abi and Pirakavi, for example, decided

315

not to wear a *saree* for their puberty ceremonies. Instead, they chose *ghagra choli* and *lehenga*;[96] two costumes are from North India. They claimed that *saree* is for matured women or married women, but they are just teenagers and preferred this cloth because it is more fashionable and good looking for them. I observed in 2017-2018 that even some Tamil brides wore these clothes instead of *saree* on their wedding reception days. Abi and Pirakavi told me they had learnt about these clothes from their friends' puberty ceremonies. Also, they argued that they did not want to wear *saree* since they were teenage girls, and not women. This is an important point, one worth looking at through a feminist lens. if the point of these ceremonies, for men, is to advertise the sexual maturity of these girls, here the girls seem to be saying that "we do not want to be mature women" yet. One might surmise that they do not want this because of all the *kaṭṭupāṭu* restrictions that come along with being a 'sexually mature' but unmarried women.

The most important part of the conventional pre-war ritual was *ārati* which was designed to dispel evil spirits. For this, married women bring offerings of fruits, flowers, food, snacks, paddy, etc. to the stage. The offerings, however, are first placed on number of separate trays, and each tray is carried for *ārati* by two women. During *ārati,* two women hold up the tray of offerings and circle it three times in front of the puberty girl. Such symbolic expression denotes dispelling evil spirits from her body. In the past, eleven trays were offered with each tray carrying a particular article for *ārati*. Once if the eleven trays of eleven articles were used for *ārati,* then the *ārati* ritual was over; people never did the *ārati* on a second time by repeating the eleven trays. Also, two women performed the *ārati* by holding each tray, so twenty-two women did this ritual part. But people now permit women to offer each tray for *ārati* multiple times. When I asked the reason for this change, people told me that by doing so, every woman gets a chance to participate in the ritual, whereas earlier only twenty-two women were able to participate in it while the

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[96] They are completely different form of clothe style hailed from Northern India, which are in three parts; full long skirt with embroidered works and pleated; a blouse looks like midriff-bearing blouse; and dupatta is a scarf like a shawl.

others were excluded. Thus, people have created a democratized ritual to include more relatives and new friends in ritual participation. In this way, again, an earlier ritual rigidity (and pre-war practice) was weakened and ritual innovations were allowed to be made.

I now understand from the many conversations and interviews that I had with people during fieldwork that even when people were aware of the original reason for this ritual, they still did not really feel they were dispelling evil spirit in practice; instead, they just continued the practice with many innovations. Those ritual innovations and the attacking of evil spirits are examples of beliefs going in two different directions, with people's major focus now on innovation and modernizing the ritual rather than on dispelling evil spirits.

Yet when people celebrate the puberty ceremony on a grand scale, they are afraid of the evil-eye and evil-mouth (which are different from evil spirits), which might be caused by the malicious gave of the guests. Such malicious looks would be seen as dangerous for their wellbeing and prosperity. Therefore, people perform a remedy (*cānti*) to ward off (deflect the power of it away from its target) the evil-eye and evil-mouth after the puberty ritual. Like I have pointed out in chapter five, Kamalam and Vevy made special vows to their *kulateiyvam* to protect them from such malicious gazes after their successful domestic rituals. Similarly, people who had the puberty ritual in a grand style also took care to use a remedy after the ceremony. A puberty ritual's whole purpose in the past, of course, was to dispel these dangerous spirits from the girl; but by 2017-2018, people had created a new ritual space for protecting not only the girl but also her family members, house, prosperity, and her people's wellbeing in general.

In the past, I have witnessed some cases in the village where parents preferred to keep their girl in seclusion for one month for her to gain nutritional strength. During her isolation, she is given nutritional food to strengthen her health and Jaffna Tamils typically follow special practices for girls during this period to strengthen their reproductive health. One of my informants pointed out that there is a lot of emphasis dietary restrictions for a month after the puberty. There are not only food restrictions, but also other restrictions, rules and regulations are passed over the girl

317

when she becomes a 'big girl'. In general, she is expected not to talk with gents except family members and she must obey the family rules; thus, her freedom is restricted to protect her 'virginity' and 'chastity.'

My informant, Malathi, pointed out that in those days, girls were not allowed to leave home without first having an extravagant ceremony (Here Malathi was referring to the whole puberty ritual, which culturally sanctioned the girl to move out freely without defect from the evil spirits). Yet, nowadays, most parents keep their child at home until the completion of eleven days, and then allow her to go to school before having this ceremony. This change occurred, I was told, because parents needed extra time for planning on puberty ceremony preparation.

My informants told me that in prewar days, *ārati* was just performed to remove dangerous spirits from a girl's body, whereas now the ritual has been elaborated. Ritual elaboration or expansion refers to the preparation of puberty ritual. Although *āratti* was the core element of the ritual, now there are many other innovative rituals are added to upgrade the ritual and uplift one's or family's *kouvravam.* I remembered some told me that people conduct the puberty ritual like a wedding. This is another case where the ritual has been made more elaborate for purposes of *kouvaravam.* Some concerns of the *kouvravam* aspects of this ritual are here that 1) *āratti* was once held to protect the newly 'mature' girl from the spirits that might attack her newly sexual body. 2) But people after the war became so worried about their *kouvravam* and/or displaying or maintaining connections with their resource-rich diaspora kin that they altered the rite so that they could display their wealth and that of their diasporic relations. 3) But this *kouvravam*-driven need to display wealth and connections required sacrificing the timing needed to fulfill *āratti* original purpose of protecting the newly mature girl – for to do this, of course, people would have to hold it before the period of seclusion ends and the girl goes outside. 4) So, since puberty ritual is now used for *kouvravam* and display, something else had to take up the task of protecting the girl from evil spirits. Hence, 5), the additions of those rituals to the total puberty ritual.

As a result of this elaboration, the 'meaning' of the puberty ceremony has been altered. For instance, by 2017-2018 parents send their daughter to school after the seclusion period but before the *ārati* ceremony. Even though the whole purpose of the *ārati* ceremony, originally, was to protect the girl from danger by having it before the girl left the house, people nonetheless now tend to have the ceremony afterwards. However, in the in the past, people did not postpone the ritual performance they had it to protect the girl from the dangerous powers of evil spirits. After the ritual performance, the girl could move freely and go about on her daily routines. But, Mankalam, my informant, was surprised to see the recent changes; specifically, how people pay more attention to the ceremonial arrangements of the rite rather than the actual purpose of the ritual performance. These changes demonstrate how much ritual innovations and modernity have altered the puberty ritual.

In the earlier, prewar days in Jaffna, one of my informants told me, the news of a girl's puberty was usually spread by Washermen (laundry men) when they received the first menstrual cloth (considered, by most Veḷḷāḷar, a polluted cloth). A Washermen, locally known as a 'dhobi', belongs to the *Vaṇṇār* caste, which is considered one of the low-castes in the Jaffna caste hierarchy. They traditionally attended to the 'domestic services' (*kuṭimai* service) required by high caste people in Jaffna, and for this reason they usually received the menstrual cloths (Banks 1960, 1957). After the war, however, Washermen begun refusing to perform this service.

However, according to Banks, Washermen had a bigger role to perform in puberty rituals, one that imbued the "caste with ritually pure occupations" (1957: 367). Obligations meant domestic services of *kuṭimai* (vassal) and *aṭimai* (slaves) is traditionally performed for generations and the low castes of *kuṭimai* and *aṭimai* services were attached to the high caste of Veḷḷāḷar somewhat like *Jajmani* system in North India (Pfaffenberger 1982; David 1972; Banks 1957). *Aṭimai* chattel slaves and comprised in addition to a now existed caste Kōviyar, Naḷvar and Paḷḷar and *kuṭimai* castes consisted of Gold smith, Black smith, Carpenters, Barbers, Washermen and Paṟaiyar. Some of the ritual services that Barbers and Washermen were expected to perform

for high caste Veḷḷāḷar: cutting hair, accompanying funerals, puberty and wedding rituals, washing clothing – including clothing soiled by polluting substances such as the blood of menstruating women. This is why Washermen would usually carry the message of a girl attaining puberty to whomever they went to over the course of their daily routine of domestic service in the village.

But, today, Washermen no longer perform this ritual service of spreading the news for two reasons: (1) During the LTTE State period (1990-1995), the LTTE banned the ritual and domestic services, Washermen and Barbers were obligated to give to upper caste people; accordingly such services stopped. They were more than happy to lose this burden. (2) In Jaffna, after the war, Barbers and Washermen caste associations (*caṅkam*), decided they would no longer perform both domestic and ritual services for high caste people. Even after the defeat of LTTE, Barbers and Washermen preferred to continue this LTTE policy because, I was told, their children refused to continue. Further, they also wanted to maintain their own status and respect (*mariyātai*). This is, of course, is what Srinivas (1966) meant by his claim that some castes in South Asia obtained collective upward social mobility by giving up stigmatizing domestic and ritual services.

Today, people attend to these tasks themselves without Barbers and Washermen participation. I observed this transition myself when I was living in Jaffna during the LTTE State period. Also, many of my informants updated me on what was happening in Jaffna in terms of the performing these services at domestic rituals. For instance, in both Inuvil and Naguleswaram, village people divided up and performed these services among themselves once Barbers and Washermen stopped rendering their services (Sanmugeswaran 2006).

Indeed, post-war Tamil life in Sri Lanka has undergone many changes in relation to what earlier social anthropologists would call the structures and functions of prewar Jaffna society, and these urged me to think about *cāmattiya caṭaṅgu*, puberty rituals, as indicators of how such changes have been received by people there. Hence, moving beyond the many changes in ritual

320

practices as such within the puberty rite as a whole -- changes that I have already described -- I also noted that gender dynamics, still other ritual innovations, and new transnational social connections were all now part of the mix in postwar Jaffna. But perhaps most important indicated by these changes was the extent to which Jaffna Tamils had come under the increasing, transnational, influence of the Tamil diaspora.

For example, post-war Jaffna Tamils, with their greater 'connectivity' to the Tamil diaspora and to globalization, have changed their rites in ways that suggest they take a different view of both gender roles and the dangers that supposedly threaten (or are connected to) young women during their transition to womanhood. This can be seen, in particular, in the ways the ceremony is now distributed across cyberspace (Facebook, YouTube and directly through Skype). While this dissemination serves the obvious purpose of maintaining kin ties transnationally, it has also offered a new opportunity for the girls themselves to influence the way their images are being projected, and more exposure to the flexible values of the diaspora audiences they are aimed at. Both factors challenge conventional Jaffna notions of family reputation (*kuṭumpa kouvravam*) where control of a family 'greatness' (*kuṭumpa perumai*) is supposed to be firmly in the hands of the father. Hence, video culture, videography, modern information technology, and access to new social media have had a direct influence on the religiouscape and ritualscape of post-war Jaffna.

How an individual videographer really modify ritual space in villages, how videographers introduce innovative ideas into rituals as a by-product of their desire to make better films and memorial albums, and how this has displaced elders in favor of videographer as ritual conductors are all important questions that need to be answered in the next section.

7.4 Videography as more important than ritual: Re-examining the astrological value of time and the cultural value of ritual

Since the early 1980s, people in Jaffna have started recording their life circle rituals on videotape. Some time back, video-recording of life circle rituals was a new invention that people were impressed by and, therefore, they decided to film their own weddings, puberties, and other cultural events and this was further encouraged once people (only the rich) started purchasing televisions and VHS players. Regal and Bharat Studios in the Jaffna's main city were famous for filming domestic rituals and home events like birthday parties.

People in Jaffna were inspired by the technological advancement of television and video-recording and made it part of their everyday life. At the same time, before the war, Jaffna Tamils established many movie theatres throughout the Jaffna Peninsula to screen South Indian Tamil movies. Once watching Tamil or English movies became part of people's daily entertainment, people soon started using this new information technology to film their daily life activities, particularly religious and non-religious rituals. In October 1983, for example, my older sister's puberty ceremony was filmed by Bharat Studio, and this video started by including views of important places in the Jaffna main city before showing the puberty ceremony itself. My family now mourns the loss of this VHS tape during our displacement from our home in 1995, since we know the video could have been a wonderful memory because it not only contained my sister's puberty ritual, but also scenes of our village's temple, Inuvil village itself, and the Jaffna city as a whole as they were before the war.

In the 1980s, in Kondavil (a nearby village), three leading video companies—Pulavar Video, EXPO Video Complex, and Mutholi Video -- started filming religious and domestic rituals for people in Jaffna. These three companies still continue their services, though there are now many other individual companies who have recently joined the videography business. Interestingly, during fieldwork I found out that the Regal and Pulavar Video companies were providing 'sound services' (i.e., setting up sound systems) for domestic events in Jaffna before they entered the

video-recording business. That is, they were providing sound systems for domestic events such as weddings, housewarmings, puberty ceremonies, Christmas (for Christians) and birthday parties. In particular, they were arranging musical groups and other musical service such as DJs (disk jockeys) for these events where people used loudspeakers to publicize the ceremony in the village. After the arrival of the television and video-recording technology, companies that had provided sound services expanded into video-recording as many companies and people started offering sound services in Jaffna, saturating that market. Likewise, later, older video-recording companies had to close their doors as many others flooded that market as well.

During the war recording domestic rituals became even more valuable than it was before because people had to send those videos to family members in the diaspora. Videos and photos created a bridge between people at home and in diaspora. Further, wedding videos became reliable documents for use in getting visas for girls travelling to absent husbands in the diaspora; for when the girls from Jaffna got married to the members of the diaspora, they were generally required to produce wedding photos and videos to the relevant embassies as proof.

In the beginning, there were few innovations resulting from video-recording rituals, and videographers just recorded the rituals as natural events. Those rituals were guided and directed by community elders, and videographers followed their directions when recording events. After the war, however, this pattern of ritual-cinimatic organization changed as videographers started controlling the ritual space rather than listening to elders. The main reason was that people preferred to have a good videography and photo album. Gradually, then, videographers introduced innovations in the way they set up videos and photo albums which people highly valued and welcomed. For example, I cannot explain the visual graphic designs, animations, clarity of the images, creative designs and background designs, background music, etc., which the videographers included in their productions.

Further, during the war, there was a trend that videographers used the photoshopping tool to add the photos of the family members, who were in foreign countries, in the photo album of the

323

domestic rituals held in home country. This made people feel that they have not missed their diaspora family members for their home events. This photoshopping editorial task was locally spelled out as *mixing* which people used to refer to the task. When one product of this *mixing* came out in an album, then it became a model album for others to select. In addition, the *mixing* did not only include the diaspora members and dead family members, but also real backgrounds of the park or flower garden. For this, the marriage couple and puberty girl visited those gardens in Jaffna to record additional shootings. Also, the copies of photos and albums were sent to the members of the diaspora. As the videographers used their technological knowledge and creative talent in making those videos and albums, people slowly started to accept them.

These innovations were made through multilevel interactions: some videographers created ideas themselves; some were heavily influenced by South Indian Tamil cinema; and some followed other videographers as role models. South Indian Tamil cinema songs began to be greatly used as background music in these videos of rituals. As a result, the rituals themselves have emerged as cinematized objects by being recorded, and people became impressed by these productions because their own images and selves were ultimately projected to a wider world of connections through videos and photos. For example, in the past, women told me they were reluctant as girls to hold their puberty ceremonies when their parents organized them on a grand style out of shyness. But in the present generation, people told me, girls prefer to have grand ceremonies, because they like to have the videos and photos that document them. The girls like the photos and videos because videographers listen to their ideas about these electronic documents should be done, and this allows girls more control over how their images are being projected to the community than used to be the case when they were forced to sit at the center of puberty ceremonies entirely stage-managed by their parents and village elders.

Importantly, videographers even make a short video clips for uploading on to YouTube and Facebook at the request of parents (puberty ceremony of their daughter) and newly married couples. In my study, I found out that videographers have created a significant space in rituals

and played a vital role in conducting them. In the past, videographers just did the recording without any control over the ritual and within stipulated boundaries. Now videographers exert a kind of control over these rituals; a control which dominates these cultural events. I heard from many people that now people are less concerned with the original ritual purposes of domestic rituals than they are about the quality of the videos recording them. This is why people listen to the videographer's directions. Mankalam told me that in "those days" (i.e., prewar), all cultural events and rituals were arranged by elders who taught the young how to conduct the rituals but that now both elders and the young must listen to the videographers. He told me that he had witnessed many such changes and alterations.

I had conversations with many older people at weddings and puberty ceremonies where they told me they felt that videographers now controlled the ritual space. Whereas, at the same ceremonies, younger people told me they liked the innovations created by the videographers because they were all about their self-images being projected in cinematic ways. There are many reasons people put up with or even like these recent changes in ritual space resulting from innovative videography. Parents or ritual organizers want to satisfy their children's needs and expectations of owning a video which is same as what other's own. The videos produced by videographers and photographers already known to produce the best quality products, have become prominent models of ritual action for the community.

The time factor is another significant matter in Hindu rituals in Jaffna. Before the war, Jaffna Tamil Hindu weddings, housewarmings, puberty rites, gold-melting (*poṉṉurukkal*) rituals, and registration of marriage ceremonies were, as a rule, conducted on an auspicious day and at an auspicious time are scheduled according to the Tamil almanac or *pañcāṅkam*.[97] People still

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97 *Pañcāṅkam,* an almanac text, is written in Tamil. The title literally means "Five Parts" as *pañca* means five, and *aṅkam* refers to parts. This text is comprised of five parts such as *titi, vāram, naṭcattiram, yōkam,* and *karaṇam*, which are all structured according to the parameters of lunar time. Jaffna Tamil Hindus follow the *Pañcāṅkam* to fix the time of religious and domestic events. In practice, people use the European calendar (English calendar) to conduct their

follow two types of almanac texts to fix the time for these religious and domestic events, yet the ritual elaboration and innovations of videographers have not only challenged this temporal organization, but also the conventional ritual practices that depend upon it. The videographer has become a ritual conductor, who innovatively elaborates both ritual practices and time. This has provoked many conflicts between older people and videographers. And so, perhaps, another example is in order. In Inuvil, there were many individuals who started videography and photography businesses. So, I was able to interview Venthan, a videographer who is the owner of the Lathu Digital Video and Photo. How Venthan practiced videography in post-war Jaffna, how he managed the situation and how he has changed ritual practices within the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* are the focus of the next section.

7.4.1 Venthan's videography and ritual innovations

Venthan is a middle-aged man whose beliefs fluctuate between valorizing pre-war cultural values and the alternative cultural values associated with modernity, but who, regardless of this internal debate, innovatively recorded rituals for popularity and business. First of all, I will briefly explain the term, Tamil culture, before moving on to Venthan's videography and ritual innovations. Here, I have two major things that are "culture" and "meaning"; in general terms, "Tamil culture," for many, meant the past practices, customs, values, and so on, and "meaning" here referred to current or new practices. I am not contrasting "culture" and "modernity" in this way in a defensible anthropological sense. Culture, as a technical word in anthropology, means "anything humans have created and learned from each other", and that clearly learned from each other in the past and stuff they are creating and teaching each other in the present. Pre-war Jaffna practices and post-war modernity in Jaffna are equally "cultural", then, in the technical anthropological sense.

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everyday life and religious and domestic ritual time "based on the ancient Hindu and Tamil systems of astronomy and astrology." Religious and domestic ritual time is a mixture of the solar and lunar calendars. See more detail, Perinpanayagam. 1982 The Karmic Theatre: Self, Society, and Astrology in Jaffna, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts, p.46.

However, I am not equating the Tamil words, *kalāccāram* or *paṇpāṭu*, which means something like "customs and practices inherited from elders" – with the technical anthropological term "culture." In particular, many scholars have presupposed the above definition of Tamil culture, but I found such definitions or assumptions about Tamil culture are greatly criticized by the Tamil nationalists, Tamil Marxists nationalists, anti-Tamil nationalists youngsters, Tamil feminists, and various independent organizations in post-war Jaffna. Hence, I cannot simply omit the above peoples' views and new explanations to imagine Tamil culture in contemporary Jaffna. For instance, Tamil nationalists completely adopted Tamil literary and Tamil geography/territory perspectives to define Tamil culture; however, they did not neglect Tamil customs, values, practices, and so on. Tamil Marxists nationalists, of course, included Tamil literature perspective, but they argued Tamil culture in terms of equality, which included the low-castes' literature (Dalit literature), customs, practices, values, and so on to imagine Tamil culture.

Although Tamil Marxists nationalists tried to define Tamil culture, there was always Veḷḷāḷar's interferences and involvements to highlight how Veḷḷāḷar culture is a high cultural form that was generalized as Tamil culture. These definitions or assumptions were debated and criticized by the anti-Tamil nationalist youngsters (they too are Marxists); they looked at Tamil culture from a broader perspective, where they not only included low-caste peoples' culture, literature, art, music, and practices, but also Tamil Muslim culture and Tamil Christian culture to define Tamil culture. However, Tamil feminists totally rejected Tamil culture in relation to faith in god and obedience to men, since all forms of cultural practices were from patriarchal society. In addition, various independent organizations talked about Tamil culture through modern changes; for instance, the Sri Lankan Tamil Hip-Hop music or Tamil Rap music culture were also considered to be part of Tamil culture. Thus, Tamil culture is differently defined by different groups.

Venthan was born in Inuvil and is currently worked as a computer technical officer at the University of Jaffna. He had a Computer Science background and founded a computer college in

Inuvil in 2002. In that institute, he taught Computer Technology, especially for children, and ran the institute till 2007. To increase his income, he started doing event photography in 2004, and videography in 2007. He had wanted to do innovative videography in order to compete in the market with others videographers He had a thriving videography business from 2010-2017. Eventually, he used his own savings to expand the business, taking a loan from a bank for this purpose. Ultimately, he built a wedding hall, Akshya Mahal, in 2017 to increase his income still further.

Originally, he planned to buy a printing machine to make photography albums instead of depending on others to print them. However, photographers started printing photos in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, and South India for better quality. In the past, photos were locally printed in either Jaffna or Colombo, but people opted for photos printed in India because people felt they offered better constructed ritual/ceremonial albums. I observed that the videographer printed photos in India for two reasons: Firstly, due to the war and later, because diaspora members who got married in India had their albums were made in India too. Such albums would be circulated among family members in Jaffna and become a model for the others to follow. Secondly, videographers encouraged the people they worked for to go for printing in India. People like Venthan developed networks in Chennai, and he told me he sent the photo files to printers there and they would return the printed copies to Jaffna.

In Jaffna, a videographer was locally known as a *vīṭiyokāraṉ* (a video man), and as one who learned traditions by recording rituals. Venthen mentioned that in the villages of Sandilipai, Sankuveli, and Karaitivu, old people were still the ones who gave instructions to others about how rituals should be conducted – or, as Jaffna people say, were the people who knew the *muṟai* (the 'how to do'/the correct doing of a practice), and therefore, in those villages, he never had to say anything instructive. He claimed that Inuvil was also in the same position; t old people still advised their family members on how to follow the correct ritual/ceremonial order. But in some villages, there were now no old people anymore to give advice on ritual practices. For instance,

328

he pointed out that people did not even know towards which cardinal direction a banana leaf's head should be turned when set out in a *kumpam* display. *Kumpam* is an important ritual display, and representation of deity, in Hindu religious and domestic rituals. It is a display that consists of a pot with a wide, flouted, top, which is made of mud, silver, brass, copper or gold and which is filled with water. A coconut is placed in the open mouth of the pot on a bed of mango leaves, and the pot is placed on the center of a carefully positioned banana leaf. The whole display is called a *kumpam.* In any case, Venthan argued that knowing how to make a *kumpam* was basic knowledge of Hindu rituals in Jaffna; knowledge which everybody should be aware of as a Tamil Hindu. He wanted to correct people whenever they failed to follow correct ritual forms. At the same time, as a videographer, he understood the ritual diversity he had observed through his constant visits to different parts of Jaffna. For example, he observed that in one part of Jaffna the groom wore a *uttariyam*[98] (shawl) slanted from right to left, but, he argued, t it should go from left to right. So, he tried directing the people wearing them incorrectly to change their shawls to the correct form. When he asked people why they did things like this so differently from he believed to be the correct form, they told him that it was their *ūr vaḻakkam* (village custom).

Further, he was surprised when people did not follow the correct ritual timing rules for a "bathing ceremony" (*pāl aṟuku vaittal*) during a wedding in Karainagar (one of the islands belonging to the Jaffna Peninsula). *Pāl aṟuku vaittal* is a part of the puberty and wedding ritual. Both *pāl* (milk) and *aṟuku* (*aṟukampul-* Bermuda grass or Cynodon dactylon) express prosperity inducing objects in life. The family members, relatives, and invited guests apply mixtures of milk, *aṟukampul*, and turmeric powder on the head of a puberty girl or a groom or a bride in the *pāl aṟuku vaittal* ritual. Further, milk and turmeric powder are considered as sacred and purifiers to Tamil Hindus in Jaffna, and people use them to purify the puberty girl, groom and bride.

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[98] It is a kind of shawl, which is worn by crossing the body from left shoulder to right waist.

People in other villages, he told me, follow the *nalla neram* (good time) practice; that is, they performed the wedding bathing ceremony at an auspicious time fixed by the astrologer. But in Karainagar, people performed the bathing ceremony when the sun rose in the morning. Hence, people in Karainagar did not consider the auspicious time as an important factor in the bathing ritual. This was a different local practice that Venthan wanted to point out that Tamil Hindus also did not pay attention to the time factor for each and every part of the domestic ritual. Venthan told me that that people in many villages were fond of him because he knew the *murai,* which he learned from the elders of Inuvil. He believed that people in Inuvil possessed the correct knowledge of ritual conduct, which is now modified through innovations. But at the end of the day, what did Venthan think about the relationship between ritual innovations and video?

Venthan argued that changes in ritual practice were not merely done by videographers, but rather that there were many reasons behind such changes. In the past, parents made all decisions about ritual arrangements, and children obeyed them. But now the parents listened more to their children's choices in terms of clothing, decoration, *maṇvaṟai* style (wedding stage or dais) garland style, video etc. And even though the videographers communicated with the parents regarding the choices and preferences, Venthan pointed out that, the parents were directed by their children. For example, Venthan told me about the way this had changed the garlands – the necklace of flowers – worn by the girl at a puberty ceremony and groom and bride at the wedding ceremony. Parents, Venthan said, preferred garlands made of real flowers (the conventional practice), but their children often wished to have garlands made of ribbons or plastic instead of flowers. In Hindu ritual practice, of course, many people did not use ribbons or plastic flowers for garlands because plastic flowers were considered inappropriate. But children liked them because they had learned to do so, he believed, from friends or from the sample wedding albums shown to them by videographers. (This practice had diffused from Colombo, where multicultural communities borrowed such ideas from each other to innovate their ritual practices in different ways in order, I would argue, to project their senses of self.)

Why were plastic flowers considered so inappropriate according to Venthan? Venthan argued that children preferred those "modern" changes because they wanted to be able to upload photos and video clips easily to on Facebook and other social media platforms, and such innovations made this easier. But more conventionally minded Jaffna Tamils disapproved of using garlands made of plastic or ribbon because such garlands were hung around on the photographs of the dead that most people had on the walls of their houses. As young people started using plastic flower garlands, instead of natural flower garlands for their wedding engagement (register marriage) some older and younger people critically linked to the ongoing practice (from pre-war to present) of plastic flower garlands offered to the photographs of dead people. As other domestic rituals like puberty, wedding, teething, housewarming, and wedding engagement and death rituals spaces differently structured in Jaffna Tamil Hindu life, these young and older people linked the new practices with death ritual spaces.

This is, as Venthan put it, because, conventionally, Jaffna Hindu rituals and practices are divided into two types or "folds": namely, auspicious rituals, *supa kriyai* or *maṅkala caṭṅku,* such as wedding, puberty, and housewarming ceremonies and so on, and inauspicious rituals, *apra kriyai* or *amaṅkala caṭaṅku, such as* funeral and post-funerary rituals. For Venthan, thus, putting plastic flower garland around a groom's or bride's neck at a puberty mixed up these divided ritual categories and spaces; spaces, that is, that people never before mixed up.

Similarly, Venthan pointed out that in the past the wedding *cāṟi* (or saree) of the "child" was selected by parents despite their "children's" (i.e., the bride and groom's) preferences, whereas now the bride makes the selection. To be more specific, in the past, a bride accepted the choice of saree made by the groom's family, but the bride now has a chance to choose her own wedding *cāṟi.* The makeup artist associated with wedding videos also plays a crucial role in changing the traditional practices, particularly in terms of picking the color of the cloth. Additionally, the makeup artist is the primary cause of time delays that overcome auspicious timing as the makeup artists spend long hours dressing up the bride, which pushes the rest of the

ritual order out of alignment with auspicious temporality. In the past, the bride was not allowed to leave the house for dressing and instead the makeup artist would visit the bride's house. Yet, Venthan claimed, this practice to has now shifted since makeup artists are both more professionalized and more in demand than before. Further, he told me, since makeup artists now tend to have their solons either at homes or at other private places, brides must come to them – pre-wedding ritual seclusion notwithstanding.

Having observed many ceremonies in my relatives' places and different villages in Jaffna I found that Venthan appears largely correct in his assessment. I also found that the time is more consumed by makeup artists and videographers because the videographer attends to photo and video shooting at the studio. People like Venthan told me that the bride should look fresh before passing through the wedding rituals. Therefore, the videographers prefer to allocate a time for photo shooting before the wedding rituals began as the ritual process would make the bride look tired and this would make the photos and videos look less impressive. Therefore, the videographer and makeup artist always interact closely with each other to improve the quality of their work in terms of innovation and beautification. The makeup artists expect their names to be publicized through the distribution of the resulting photo albums and videos. Hence, according to Venthan, the beautification of the bride, satisfying her sense of fashion, and the need to produce quality photo albums and videos are all prioritized ahead of sticking to auspicious e times for ritual performances.

Further, the ritual is more arranged for the video, which was ultimately to display *kouvravam* rather than staged for, perhaps, cosmic or *dharmic* appropriateness or maintaining *kaṭṭupāṭu* because the movements of the people in the ritual are more dramatized than natural the as videographer directs the members to look at his camera rather than allowing them to act naturally for the video shooting. But Venthan pointed out that if the videographer did not tell the people to focus on his camera, they would blame the videographer for not directing them properly. For example, in the bathing ceremony, people apply a mixture of milk, turmeric powder

and *aṟuku* on to the bride's and groom's heads. Now people keep their hands on the bride's and groom's heads while looking towards the camera. Venthan argued that though this is not natural, it is necessary for them to do this and to look at the camera for photo and video purposes. Nirupan, another photographer, asked the question, "is the ceremony for photography and videography or are photography and videography for the ceremony?" However, photographers or videographers innovatively produce products to compete with each other. As a result, new practices are inserted in a continuing process of ritual elaboration.

In addition, many older people worry about how videographers control the ritual space when they utter "wait" or "stop" when the bride or groom are in the midst of a ritual procession or ritual performance, all, of course, so that the couple will pay attention to the camera. I found that this was a big cultural issue among older people. Among Tamil Hindus in Jaffna, I was told, when people intend to leave a home, other family members do not say "wait" or "stop" since they consider doing so *apacakuṇm* (a bad sign/gesture) that may create an obstacle to their family member's planned event or work. In Inuvil, people never say "wait" or "go" or "come back" when the bride or groom are about to leave the house, because, similarly, these linguistic expressions are considered premonitions that may lead to dangers or failure. Yet now, older people worried, videographers freely use these words while video recording the event.

As Venthan knows pre-war village beliefs, he trains his workers not to use words such as "stop" or "wait", and he or his workers tend to handle this situation differently to achieve their goals. But Sorupavathi, an old woman, complained to me that videographers introduced new practices in rituals claiming them to be the new fashion, and also justify their innovations by stating that they reduce time consumption. For instance, in the bathing ceremony, videographers often instruct participants to come forward as a couple to the ceremony in which both will, simultaneously, be bathed by having turmeric mixed with milk applied to their heads. In the past, however, two different people bathed the groom and bride. Doing so observed a cultural taboo because, usually, multiple people jointly bathe a (dead) person only during a funeral ritual. Now,

however, to save time, videographers frequently arrange things so that brides and grooms are bathed together by the same people. Yet parents and young children have not reacted to this change like the older people do. Hence, once again, the videographer is the key person who leads the ceremonial events and rituals in many villages.

Furthermore, Venthan was surprised that in some villages, elders who are well educated, did not know traditional practices, unlike in Inuvil where, he felt, people knew the *murai,* the cultural knowledge of practice. When he visited his clients' houses one week prior to the ceremonies to talk about the videography and photography arrangements for their upcoming puberty rites, his clients would inquire whether he could order some *palakāram* (various snacks, both sweet and non-sweet) for the puberty ritual. In Jaffna, people use the English term 'order' in everyday life; that is, 'order' means people getting things done by ordering things for a fee from people or organizations. He suggested to those families that they should not purchase snacks from outside for ritual purpose but prepare them at home. And if they do not know how to prepare them, to hire people to make them at home. Finally, Venthan told me that it is the time to order *kalāccāram* (i.e., order culture, which meant catering culture) in Jaffna as the village community structure has collapsed, and relatives and friends have left the village. For, unlike in the past, people now face difficulties organizing a ceremony at home.

In terms of ritual innovations, Venthen agreed that he also follows others who have made innovations in ritual. Here, Venthan or other informants in the village meant by innovation that some new practices were incorporated in domestic rituals. That is to say, the term innovation implies some fixed state before changes made. The earlier state was determined by the memories of the elders, by the *ākama* practices, and by combination of the two. For instance; pouring colored water on the puberty girl at her bathing ritual; carrying her in a *pallakku* (palanquin) to the ceremonial hall; boys carrying roses in two lines surrounding the girl in the ritual procession; and young girls carrying oil lamps in two lines along with the bride and puberty girl in the ritual processions. These are all innovations. Some of these innovative practices the result of exchanges

334

with the diaspora members. As these innovations are gradually considered to be part of the ritual, the conventional form of puberty ceremony is altered by these innovations. are also changed by these new forms. For instance, formally, young boys did not have a role to play in the puberty ritual because that ritual space was filled by old women in the past. Hence, both the ritual space and its gendering are changed by this new form of practice. Also, widows were not allowed to take part in many ceremonies in the past but are now allowed to do so in some sections of domestic rituals. However, this flexibility varies from region to region and from village to village in the Jaffna Peninsula.

Venthan pointed out that he makes changes in the ritual order when he makes the photo album and does the video editing. Once, when he was in a village for a video shooting, the ritual order was mistakenly altered when, instead of sending a tray filled with coconuts for the *ārati* ritual performance, something else was sent. However, after discussing the issue with family members, he resolved it by using editing to reset the ritual into the correct order in the photo albums and videography. The family was happy to see the correct order in the album and video even if this no longer reflected the actual order in which events took place. Since Venthan came from a Veḷḷāḷar background, he maintained his caste consciousness by not eating in non- Veḷḷāḷar caste houses when he visited them professionally. In general, videographers and photographers are invited to take part in ritual feasts, and they do. He did not restrict his workers in this regard and permitted them to eat in those places if they wish to. He himself, however, was unable to do so because he followed what his family had been accustomed to: that is, the practices of his father who was an extreme believer in caste rankings and behavior. But he struggled in managing the caste factor in his occupation as he was worried about losing his customers. If the low-caste people organized their ceremonies in an events hall, then Venthan would directly go there to attend to the job, but if they were holding the rite at their house, then he would send his workers to provide the service. Thus, he strictly followed caste consciousness in his work and advised his workers to be mindful of the people when they come to reserve the date for an event. Venthan

argued that his approach is not discriminatory, but rather a matter of his not wanting to face unnecessary problems in terms of his charges and work norms. However, he rendered his services to all castes even though he did not himself directly participate in the ceremonies of low-caste people, in those cases letting his workers attend to video-recording without him.

Finally, Venthen emphasized that all videographers should be concerned with the *mukurtta nēram*; that is, the particular segment of time in which the ritual must take place. The series of events which make up a ritual are expected to occur not only in a specified order but also in a specified amount of time as determined according to an astrologer's advice. This timing was a central element in Tamil Hindu rituals (as they were practiced pre-war) because people are afraid of the consequences of losing the specified time in ritual performance by failing to conduct it on time. People believed that if they missed the *nalla nēram* (the good time), the fault would affect their lives. I remember an old professor in the Jaffna University who would insist that most people's marriage lives were unsuccessful because their marriages were not conducted at the exact *mukurtta nēram*. But Vani, another one of my informants, when commenting on the *mukurtta nēram* concept, was skeptical. She stated that though she got married at a good *mukurtta nēram*, *her* marriage failed when her husband had an extra martial affair. I noticed, though, that younger people had diverse attitudes towards this tradition.

Some argued that time is an important factor while others claimed that despite the timing being good at a ritual, bad things likely happened to humans depending more on one's *viti* (destiny) because, according to their belief, one's destiny is written on one's head when he/she is born. Thus, they quoted the Tamil proverb "viti pōkiṟ vaḻiye mati pōkum" [The mind will follow destiny]. Others pointed out that one cannot only speak of *viti* to account for bad events, which also depend on one's ratio of *pāvam* (sin) and *puṇṇiyam* (good merit) as, ultimately, one's future fortunes are all about one's *karma* (good and bad actions). Still others claimed that *viti* is a fake idea, arguing that one must try to win life rather than rely on *viti*. Hence, this last groups counter argument to *viti* is that "vitiyai matiyāl vellalām" [destiny can be won by the mind].

336

My mother too believed in using the auspicious time concept for regulating her daily life activities, but refused the idea of *viti,* arguing that it is impossible to blame *viti* for the deaths of thousands of people during the war. For those deaths, she blamed the victimizers – those who killed -- rather than the *viti* of the people who died. But during fieldwork I found people that people, like my mother, had a variety of different views of *viti*.

In Naguleswaram, for example, Poonthavalli, an old woman, told me that her family had faced multiple displacements during the war and led a sorrowful life due to their *talai eḻuttu* (literally, their "head writing", or the destiny is written on their heads). She explained further that *talai eḻttu* means God having written the destiny of people on their heads when they are born, and that is why many people refer to fate as *talai viti* (head fate or destiny). Her daughter, Nivethida, intervened in our conversation and stated that had *veḷḷaikārar* (white people/foreigners) either followed the time concept or believed in *talai viti*, the white people would still be alive and progressing well. There was another young girl present, however, who disagreed with Nevethida's view, and affirmed instead that foreigners believed in Murphy's law,[99] which is somewhat equivalent to *talai viti,* and that they were the ones who introduced. This conversation demonstrated to me how both older and younger people held complex, multidimensional views about the roles of auspicious time and fate in everyday life.

Like some of these young people, Venthan's co-workers (all young unmarried boys between 20-30 years old) were not concerned about auspicious time when they were involved in video shooting. Their concentration was mainly on shooting the ritual and the innovations which they believed would improve the quality of the video and photo albums they were producing in order to prove that they were good workers deserving of credit from their boss, Venthan. Even though they did not consider *mukurtta nēram,* Venthan advised them to be more serious about the time matter instead of simply focusing on videoing or photo taking. Further, he argued that the

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[99] Everything that can go wrong will go wrong.

makeup artist should be blamed for all the delaying and not them as the former takes a long time putting on makeup on. However, I heard from many informants that present day innovative videography and photography consumed too much time on preparation, which placed people in more body performances than before. Body performances refer to the photogenic positions and gestures, which guided by the photographers. In this, a puberty girl, a bride and a groom are mainly focused to follow these body performances. Each and every step in the rituals are directed by videographers to capture these performances properly. And so forth; many people, many views of the importance of auspicious ritual timing and who was to blame for not maintaining it. Ultimately, though, despite this variety of views, it is clear there was still an important debate ongoing between young and old people on the issue of auspicious time issue. Hence, I would argue that auspicious time, however contentiously considered, remained an important cultural practice central to Tamil Hindu rituals in 2017-2018. Most people still believed that time determined one's good and bad fortunes according to Hindu astrology (Perinpanayagam 1982).

At the same time, I heard from most of my informants that many Tamil Hindu weddings have missed the exact *mukurtta nēram* due to various reasons: make up delies, innovative ritual elaborations, and innovations demanded by the needs of videography and photography. So along with this continued belief in auspicious temporality, people also displayed more flexible and liberal attitudes toward practice in the ritualscape that emerged from post-war Jaffna. In particular, a Brahmin priest prescribed a particular time for the ritual conduct, but later permitted different time slots to conduct rituals through justifiable explanations (I am referring to a case, which is based on my fieldwork). These justificatory explanations are purely about current social, economic, and political conditions of human life. But I wonder how this *cāstra* (Skt. *shastra*) liberalism has manipulated the rituals in Jaffna. Note, *cāstra*[100] is a rules treatise about Hindu

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[100] Its meaning varies from context to context, but here I refer to *cāstra* which discusses about rituals.

religious and ritual life. Also, there are different types of *cāstra*s (*shastras*). Given the rules supposedly codified in the *cāstra*, how were already codified time slots changed? Why were they changed? Venthan used the English term 'liberal' to explain flexibility in view here in ritual practices. From here on, I shall call such flexibility in Hindu ritual practice with respect to supposedly codified rules "*shastra* liberalism". The following ethnographic example will answer the above questions.

7.5   Emerging liberal time practice in *antiyēṭi* (post-funerary ritual) in Keerimalai

This section will briefly demonstrate key changes in post-funerary ritual practice I found in post-war Jaffna. About these key changes, there are many, but I will mostly look at the time factor and how it has been liberally, rather than rigidly, handled in rituals. However, the post-funerary ritual varies in terms of the caste and gender differences of the people performing it. Although this ritual is a Hindu practice, it is heterogeneously practiced among the Hindus in South Asia, and each country in South Asia where Hindus reside have both uniqueness and similarities. In Naguleswaram, I participated in 20 post-funerary rituals: 15 were sponsored by the local people who had recently lost family members and another 5 sponsored by diaspora Tamils who had come to Naguleswaram to perform these rituals during my stay there.

Primarily, conventionally, such ritual is made up of two parts: one part taking place at the house and the second part either in Keerimalai or any other coastal or waterside area where the human ashes might be ritually poured into a sea or river. As previously mentioned in Chapter Six, the majority of Jaffna Tamil Hindus visit Keerimalai to perform this ritual because it is religiously prescribed as an important place for post-funerary ritual (*antiyēṭi*). In 2017-2018, Kiirimalai, there was an *antiyēṭi* (one of the post-funerary ritual) *maṭam*; that is, a hall or place where post-funerary ritual could occur. This *maṭam* was managed by a priest who was in charge of it as a matter of hereditarily right because his father had been performing this ritualt here for a long time. Usually, five priests individually performed *antiyēṭi* ritual for their clients. These

priests had to pay the *maṭam* for every individual ritual. The clients had to pay the priest for reserving a date for the ritual. The *maṭam* also paid the Pradesha Sabai (the Divisional Secretariat Office) per performance in the *maṭam.* I interviewed the three priests separately to discuss recent changes in this ritual.

In particular, I looked at the time factor, which was rigid (a frozen form) in the past, but I noted that since the places where people conducted these rituals had changed, the role of auspicious time has changed in them as well. The changes are a key matter in re-evaluating the role of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in ritual practices because *kaṭṭupāṭu* is defined through cultural taboos and social norms as I previously discussed in Chapter Four. These cultural taboos are, or were, followed in the Jaffna Tamil Hindu people's religious and ritual lives, which are instructed by the elders and priests. Those taboos demonstrate that certain things are forbidden in people's religious and ritual life. However, those taboos are being altered and also, previously forbidden practices are becoming increasingly allowed/accepted. In this regard, first, I found out that people needed the liberal *shastra* practice in order to face their current post-war lives and, second, that these changes were not uniform, but they were, of course, diverse. I will summarize below the interviews conducted with the three priests and people who came to perform post-funerary rituals in Keerimalai.

Jaffna Tamil Hindu funeral rituals take place in two parts. The first, there is a funeral ritual that takes place immediately after a death, and it deals with the dead body, which many anthropologists view as the raw ritual. The second part, the post-funerary rituals, were conducted after the funeral, and they dealt with the cremated ashes. Such rituals are known as "dry rituals" (*ular caṭaṅku*) in anthropology. Such post-funerary rituals take place after cremating the body and the duration varies depends upon one's caste. The ritual to remove death pollution (*tuṭakku kaḻivu*) l takes place on the 31st day after the death at the house of the deceased, while the *antiyēti* will be performed on the same day in Keerimalai. The priest, Virudaiyar argues that *antiyēti* must be performed on the 31st day, while some priests now adjust the days. For instance, in Inuvil,

some priests advise people to do it in advance on the 21ˢᵗ, or the 27ᵗʰ or 29ᵗʰ day. My key informant, Indran pointed out that the one who cremated the body was not allowed to leave the village or travel outstation or abroad.

But this practice changed after the war. When diaspora members visited the home country for funerals, they were often not in a position to extend their work leaves. So, the priests, too, had to be flexible with their *shastra* practices. By *shastra* practices I am referring to *ākama* texts and other Hindu religious ritual texts that describe rituals and cultural taboos. To explain about the changes in *shastra* practices, another informant, Virudaiyar, pointed out that *antiyēti* must not be performed within 30 days of the death according to *shastras,* but now priests allow people to perform this rite before this because if one priest strictly followed the *shastra* rules, then the people would seek advice from another priest who allowed *antiyēti* to be performed before 30 days, and the priests do not want to lose their clients and income. In the past, I have attended countless post-funerary rituals, *antiyēti* and *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* in Inuvil where I have often heard from elders that this ritual must be performed before 12 noon.

Vīṭṭukiruttiyam is one of the post-funerary rituals and is conducted at a home where the funeral took place, after *antiyēti* ritual. In *vīṭṭukiruttiyam,* two or more priests commonly conduct this ritual, in which the priests receive *dāna* (*tāṉam*- [alms]) from the family members of the deceased. Yet, I was surprised to see that multiple practices have emerged in present-day Jaffna. When I asked Virudaiyar why it should be performed before 12 noon, he informed me that these rites should be performed before the sun sets. However, in Keerimalai, I observed that *antiyēti* rituals were performed after 12 noon and, in some cases, as late as 4:00 pm. When I asked about these changes, the priests told me that after the war, Jaffna Tamils were scattered in the country while some had migrated abroad. As people visited Keerimalai from Batticaloa, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, and Colombo, they sometimes got delayed reaching Keerimalai, and the priests did not want to send people back without performing their rituals. Also, diaspora members often

visited Keerimalai on short notice and had to adjust the time due to the current conditions of their lives.

Another change is that, in the past, women were not allowed to perform post-funerary rituals. Now, however, Inuvil priests allow (mothers and widows) to perform these rituals when the dead person's sons are not available to do so. According to the *shastras,* of course, sons are the only people permitted to perform funeral and post-funerary rituals, but this rigid ritual practice has nonetheless been changed. In Inuvil, for example, Vathi performed *antiyēti* rites for her dead husband because his son had to return abroad after his father's funeral. Similarly, my mother was advised to perform the ceremony marking the one-year completion of my father's death anniversary (called the *āṇṭuttivacam* in Tamil; and the *thithi and shraddha* in Sanskrit) as I was not in the country. I found this and similar changes in the performance of this ritual in Inuvil, and that these flexibilities were permitted without fuss by priests there. I call this tolerance for accommodative deviation from the text based ritual procedures *shastra* liberalism. *Shastra* liberalism is not a colonized form of teaching (like British colonial domination), but a matter of elite Brahmins trying to alter older *shastra* practices in many ways according to convenience.

Thus, *shastra* liberalism involves Brahmin priests being willing to alter text-based ritual practices when requested to do so by the people who require these rights. However, I did not limit the explanation of *shastra* liberalism with a few examples, but it occurs at various levels that priests, and people are willing to change the *shastra* practices. At another level, some families did not do these post-funerary rituals at all. Also, some families are advised by the priests to do *moksha* (*mōkṣa*) *arccaṉai* at the temple instead of post-funerary rituals. Unlike the previous example of mothers substituting for absent sons, some of these alternatives stop some of the conventional practices altogether. This *shastra* liberalism is not only found in post-funerary ritual practices, but also in temple and domestic rituals.

That is, such liberalism occurs when people from the Veḷḷāḷar majority, as well as people of other caste, approach Brahmin priests and ask them to alter *shastra* practices for reasons

ultimately having to do with their own needs but based on a priests' explanations and justifications. Thus, the village ritual sanctions are influenced by *shastra* liberalism; breaking tradition and accepting modernity not just for the survival of ritual but also for raising of one's prestige and honor in the society.

After the *antiyēti,* on the following day, the *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* will be at the house where the funeral took place. This rite is also part of the post-funerary ritual in which there are huge offerings/alms (*tāṉam* in Tamil and *dāna* in Sanskrit) given to the priests, and a feast is held for the village people after the offerings. The huge alms include uncooked food items of rice, lentils vegetables, and other groceries and clothes and household items of mat, plow, slippers, umbrella, lamp, jug, etc. Earlier, people used to perform the *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* and the feast at home, but some people now do *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* at home and the feast in private halls in the village. People claim that they no longer have the manpower to host the feast at home as they did in the past, but Raman, my informant, mentioned that the food at a feast must be served at home to gain *puṇṇiyam* (merit, good fortune)*.* In the past, people were seated on the floor and food was served on banana leaves. To serve the food, hosts divided it up on the floor, and people believed that doing this was a symbol of prosperity.

However, by 2017-2018, people had started to have not only their wedding and puberty ceremonies in private halls, but also their *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* and feasts. For instance, a family, originally from Karainagar village, moved to Colombo during the war and their father died in Colombo. They visited Keerimalai to perform *antiyēti* but they also did *vīṭṭukiruttiyam* in Keerimali because their relatives were not in the village and also because their house was damaged during the war. So, they performed both rituals, including the feast, in Keerimalai because Keerimalai was suggested as the best place to conduct post-funerary rituals to the Jaffna Tamil Hindus. Likewise, many structural level changes have now occurred in post-funerary rituals according to the priests' advice. Many high castes argued to me that these post-funerary rituals are now commonly followed primarily by high caste people in Jaffna. Yet I observed many

low caste people perform *antiyēti* in Keerimalai. I will draw another case from Inuvil where I had a similar experience with Karan, a man from a low-caste background who faced difficulties in making decisions about post-funerary rituals due to the *shastra* liberalism.

Karan, a 35-year-old man, was born in Inuvil and is from a low-caste background (Naḷavar caste). I have known Karan for a long time, and I visited his house to interview him in 2017. I was not aware that it was his mother's death anniversary (*titi*), and his brothers and sisters were gathered for the almsgiving and feast. Detailed instructions for how to perform this almsgiving on the *titi* are found in the *Pañcāṅkam*[101]. According to the Hindu *Pañcāṅkam*'s post-funerary rites' rules, there should be an almsgiving for the deceased person on the death day of each month until the completion of the first death anniversary. However, in practice, I found people conducted the alms giving in two, different, alternative ways. Some people gave alms on the *titi* of each month, locally known as the *mahāḷayam* (Skt. *mahalaya*), until the completion of the first death anniversary. Others give alms for the whole 12 months of *titi* on the day of the *vīṭṭukiruttiyam*. A majority of people practiced this second method for giving alms while a few people preferred the first. It depended on one's availability of time and the economic wherewithal.

In any case, after completion of the one-year death anniversary, people were instructed to perform the *titi* every year according to conventional practice. Many assumed that it is a high caste practice, but Karan argued that his (low caste) community also performed the *titi* ritual annually. Further, Karan told me there were some in his caste community who did it even every month until the one-year death anniversary. He lost his mother in 2017, he told me, and he decided to give alms each month so that he and his siblings could gather every month at their mother's house. He mentioned that since most people in his community were laborers, they work often left them without time to do it each month. For this reason, priests changed the *shastra* rules for his and other peoples' convenience. Further, he pointed out that some of the post-funerary

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[101] See also, Perinpanayagam. 1982. The Karmic Theatre: Self, Society, and Astrology in Jaffna, Amherst: The University of Massachusetts

ritual like *titi* was not changed, but, for the most part, priests (Brahmins) did not visit low-caste people's houses to do the ritual. Instead, they appointed a particular priest (mostly Saiva *kurukkaḷ*, but now some Brahmin priests also attend the low caste people's domestic rituals) to attend to it. He said that people in his caste community did not request that priests should come to do the ritual because they were not sure they would come, and they were accustomed to priests not coming for generations But he had had an argument regarding ritual impurity (*tuṭakku*) caused by death with the chief priest of the village temple in Inuvil.

Conventionally, in Jaffna ritual impurity relates to the mourning period, which people are expected observe from the death day to the pollution removal day. Death impurities are ritually removed on a particular day that varies depending on one's caste. In any case, within this period mourning relatives are considered ritually impure (*tuṭakku*). During this ritual impure time, family members are advised not to visit a temple, or a neighbor' house, or perform any religious activities. Furthermore, people postponed marriages and most other domestic rituals (except for funerals) until the completion of the first death anniversary of their family member. Some extended the observance of these bans on activity for up to one year, which was the common practice in Inuvil in the past. But Karan told me, some broke this rule now.

Actually, Karan was confused by the current trend of practices, which are prescribed by different priests in his village and other villages. So Karan approached the chief priest of his village temple to get him to clarify whether he was allowed to visit the temple during the mourning period, as some priests said was possible. But the Priest had answered that the correct decision about whether or not one should enter temples or not depended on the mindset of a person. Karan was not satisfied by this explanation. Hence, he asked the priest to explain the exact *ākama* rules and regulations regarding this issue and to provide a solid answer. The priest had replied that people in general must not visit the temple for a year, but that he was not in a position to stop them from doing so. Karan told me, further, that the same priest who discussed the rules this way sometimes interpreted the *sastra* rules differently for another person – that is,

345

for one willing to go to temple during the mourning period and perform religious and domestic ritual activities.

I was also initially struck by the way people who presented themselves as acting in accordance with *shastra* rules would, nonetheless, deviate from textually prescribed ritual procedures. Hence, I was surprised to see how often after the war people organized wedding ceremonies before the completion of the first-year death anniversary. I heard from my informants that some weddings were held immediately after the first month of the post-funerary ritual and death pollution removal ceremonies. Indeed, some people of rituals carried out actually during the ritual impurity time as well. I was told that when some people had a date fixed for the wedding before a death in their family, they were often not prepared their wedding plans regardless. Instead, they went ahead with their original plans. In some cases, I noticed that diaspora members had applied for leave (or vacation) at their workplace and were not in a position to change their travel plans because of a sudden death. Some did change the wedding date when they had a death in their family but did not feel they could wait for a year to celebrate the wedding, and did so a month after the death, a clear flouting of *shastra* rules. Again, it is worth noting that most of these changes in ritual procedure and timing related to current economic, political, and social conditions.

7.6   Analysis and Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the three components of "village-temple Consciousness have been altered by the changes, innovations, and continuities brought on by postwar reconstruction. The analysis in this section will discuss not only everyday rituals and changes in post-war Jaffna, but also demonstrate the changes that have occurred in everyday lives of the Jaffna Tamil Hindu community. Hence, I will take this opportunity to discuss many other issues connected to cultural changes in this section. I began this chapter with a story about the Murikandy Piḷḷaiyār Shrine to show that the changes were occurring not only at larger sacred

landscapes, but also at smaller shrines in post-war Jaffna. Although this chapter has focused on everyday rituals, I have looked holistically at the changes that were occurring in Jaffna in terms of social, economic, political, and cultural contexts of everyday life. In this analysis, first, I will discuss peoples' general views about change, and then move on to analyzing ritual and religious change. For people have different views about social and cultural changes.

At a larger level I detected a continuum of attitudes toward change in postwar Jaffna. Hence, early on I easily identified people with optimistic and pessimistic views of change, two views I discussed extensively in Chapter Five. Hence, optimists, by and large, acknowledged and even celebrated change; pessimists rejected and condemned it. But soon I found another group, the equivocal, who blended both notions of change; -- that is, people accepting of some cultural changes but resisting others. However, these three are not distinct groups of people, but people slip back and forth along this continuum from optimism to equivocality to pessimism depending on the context. Hence, there is no rigid separation of these three groups among the people. Further, people in this equivocal mode are those who adopt modern information technology in their daily lives by actively interacting on social media, but still want to maintain control over women's freedom and decision making. This last, of course, exhibit patriarchal continuities in postwar Jaffna society. In any case, the presence of this equivocal attitude toward change highlights how complicated it is to understand post-war change in Jaffna. For instance, some Tamil diaspora members, at once, wish to maintain conventional pre-war cultural practices and are against westernization and colonialism yet wish to have western citizenship and live western-style lives abroad.

Although some Jaffna Tamil Veḷḷāḷar elites yet argue that the Jaffna Tamil culture has not changed, I, as both a native and an anthropologist, feel that tremendous changes are occurring at social, economic, political, and cultural levels in Jaffna. Those Veḷḷāḷar elites do not want to recognize those changes as shifts that might be valuable or necessary, or even as changes that have simply happened, as they feel that the authenticity of Tamil culture would be lost if they

accept its alterations. However, culture does not persist as a fossil does, and the persistence of culture is often discussed in terms of conservativism and radicalism.

One of my informants from Inuvil retold an old phrase: "ilanta muḷḷai tirutiṉālum iṉuvilāṉai tirutta muṭiyātu" [Even if you correct a jujube-thorn, you will not be able to correct a person from Inuvil]. That is, more specifically, one could make a fence by using the branches of a jujube tree, even though the branches have thorns, but missionary people can never change the mind of a person from Inuvil. People in Inuvil told me that American missionary officials used this phrase to generalize about the Inuvil people they tried to convert to Christianity when they could not convert a single person. However, though such rigidity of attitude is not found anymore, this does not mean that there is a substantial increase in religious conversion. I brought up this idiomatic phrase to explain the changes occurring in a place that is rapidly changing through global capitalism and different global flows. For instance, some young boys claim that though Carnatic music still prevails in Tamil culture, Tamil music has been internationally recognized through A.R. Rahman's music, which is composed with a blend of world music. This shows "theory free music," which means that A.R. Rahman's music compositions are not purely based on Carnatic music theory but are adoptions of multiculturalism. Similarly, I witnessed at a wedding party, young professional male and female dancers dancing for movie songs for fun at the end of the reception; when I asked them whether their dancing was based on proper choreography, they told that they wanted to perform a "free style dance" indicating that they preferred theory free dance because they wanted to avoid the way theory controlled their body movements and emotional expressions.

Hence, culture is changed not only by interventions from outside but also by innovations from within. Further, any society seems to have within its cultural recipes, if you will, for both the production and acceptance of change but also its rejection. The innovations I have been discussing not only show a Jaffna native's ability to change, but also their deviations from social pressure and social control (kaṭṭupāṭu). But how much change are we talking about? Ogburn

348

(1966), long ago, argued that most often new ideas are best expressed and accepted hidden in old forms, but I would argue against this idea that innovations tends to be accepted only when, like a wolf, it is smuggled in with under a sheep's clothing of supposed antiquity. After all, cultural creativity often takes place chaotically, through cultural hybridization (Homi Bhabba 1994) and, sometimes, sheer human creativity. At the same time, there is also *culture inertia*---the slowness of culture to change, according to Ogburn, (1966) because of the persistence of social pressure and social control, and this is very close, here, to what people in Jaffna feel about the relationship between change and *kaṭṭupāṭu* . During the war, indeed, there *was* cultural inertia in Jaffna. A slowness, that is, not only connected to the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* but also to the sheer lack of opportunities for change.

In Chapter Five, I discussed two groups of people who were talking about post-war changes: one group, the pessimists, resistant to changing the older forms of practices in contrast to a second group who wish to make progress through changes – and who hence, see change as progress. In a sociological sense, one might say that in Jaffna social order and social stability are often emphasized when people most intend to change cultural practices. Hence, people pay great attention to conservativism or orthodoxy in order to maintain the social order and stability.

 For instance, Tamilselvi, an old woman, argued that to me Tamil culture does not die as humans die, and changes are happening within the boundaries of Tamil culture. Yet, a young girl, Nitharsana, argued, contrariwise, that culture has to be modernized rather than conserved in its older forms of practice in order for people to compete within the contemporary world. Thus, these contending, if not quite contradicting, two views are revealed in persisting culture. Hence, Jaffna culture was obviously changing throughout its historical epochs, but cultural resistance also changes from time to time to adopt to new forms of resistance. Some of my informants pointed out that customs or cultural practices are not dead, but their valuation has been changed. For instance, Palan, one of my informants in Naguleswaram, quoted a few song phrases from a recent Tamil cinema song:

kalyāṇm tāṉ kaṭṭkiṭṭu ōṭip pōlāmā
illa ōṭip pōyi kalyāṇm tāṉ kaṭṭkkalāmā
tālyat taṉ kaṭṭi kiṭṭu pettukalāmā
illa puḷḷa kuṭṭi pettukiṭṭu kaṭṭkkalāmā

Can I tie the marriage knot and then run away?
Or can I run and then get married?
Can I tie the wedding cord and then give birth?
Or can I have a baby and then get married?

Thus, Palan was looking critically at the recent changes embraced by young people in post-war Naguleswaram. The main war theatre of Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka has undergone tremendous changes. In Chapter Five, when I discussed Inuvil's "anxious transitions", I found both older and younger people talked about the destruction of village life due to the war, displacement, and the arrival modern information technology. As Benjamin (Lemert 2013) argues, rapid technological development is a source of disorder and contradiction to the existing forces in a society. Village people feel that modern technological developments have changed the village, ritual and their religious lives, often for the worse. So for many, these changes are felt to lead to destruction; particularly, to destruction of the social order.

But technological reproduction also plays a crucial role in shaping aesthetic values. Although classical arts or aesthetic values represent Veḷḷāḷar bourgeois ideology, I found multilevel interactions through modern technology to re/construct Veḷḷāḷar's images. For instance, I discussed ritual innovation at Masoda's daughter's puberty ceremony, in Chapter Five. I noted that low caste people create ritual innovations of their own without following or copying the Veḷḷāḷar practices. Foreign remittances, educational achievements, and modern technology have given more opportunities to the low caste people, and have enabled them to create a space in Jaffna's Veḷḷāḷar dominated ritual landscape for the democratization of ritual and religious innovation. Think of Venthan's interview, and one can see how photo and video albums have become texts, and products of a mode of mechanical reproduction of ritual performances (since people use others' video and photo albums to design and plan their rituals) that also suggests the

350

relevance of Benjamin's claim that mechanical reproduction changes people's relationship to what they are seeing. Perhaps the anxiety I have noted accompanying those who accept change in Inuvil, or Jaffna in general, is partly a reflection of this changed relationship, and a new and uncertain kind of seeing it has engendered.

Modern visual technology and elaborated rituality have newly structured the visual field of ritual and religious places in post-war Jaffna. For instance, Ratnasingam, my informant, mentioned that in the past, he used to see the idols of deities in temples in his village through the light of oil lamps, and this bestowed on him some kind of fierce and divine sight through his *darshan* (*taricaṉam*, Skt. *Darśan;* i.e. sacred gaze)[102] of the deities. But he also told me he could no longer observe such an auspicious sight now because the main sanctums of most temples are now flooded by electric lights. He claimed, accurately, that this use of modern illumination had increased, and become general, among Hindu temples in Jaffna. He was not opposed to this use of electricity or lights in temples, but noted that according to the *ākama,* the idol of the deity must be seen through the light of an oil lamp and the light of a camphor flame. But Ratnasingam felt that temple priests were not following the *ākama viti* (rules) any longer, and that they had changed the rules to such a degree that they had created a different ritual practice. This practice had become a new rule now and *ākama viti* is manipulated in many ways to accommodate the newly created human conditions and ways of life. Here Ratnasingam was talking about what I called *shastra* liberalism earlier in this chapter.

Consequently, modern technology and cyberspace have transformed the scared landscape (temples and small shrines), religious practices, and Hindu Saivite religious discourses of Jaffna in ways that have uplifted village Hindu Saivism and religious pluralism to another level. This can be found at three different forms:

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[102] A holy person perceives auspicious vision or sight, which is bestowed from the deity. In Eck sense (1998 [1981]), seeing the divine image, see also, Eck, Diana L. 1998 [1981]. *Darśan: Seeing the Divine Image in India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

(1) A 'Digital *darshan*' was created when a large TV was placed outside the temple in Inuvil during its festival. This was so that devotees could perceive a 'digital *darshan*' of the god even when it so crowded inside the temple that not everybody could squeeze in there. This was on an annual festival day (*tiruviḷā*) and special worship rites were happening in the temple, so people simply did not have enough space to get inside the temple. Mark Whitaker and I also had a similar experience of digital *darshan* at the Amirthakali Sri Mamangapillaiyar Temple in Batticaloa during our summer fieldwork in 2017. This temple also had a huge TV screen outside the temple where a large number of devotees were around the temple premises and could see to *pūjā* and *darshan* through digital media. This was the first time I saw this new practice of digital *darshan* in my village. The question it begs, of course, is what is the ontological status of such a digital *darshan* for the people viewing it? For someone like Ratnasingam, clearly, it was if not inadequate, at least uncertain, anxiety provoking.

(2) Village temples populate the Web in the form of temple homepages and Facebook pages dedicated to particular deities.' Diaspora people and their transnational networks have influenced the devotees of temples in Inuvil to establish temple homepages, where photographs and videos of temples, annual festivals, special Hindu festivals, deities, temple priests and devotees, can be uploaded for global viewing, particularly by the members of the diaspora. On such sites dislocated members of the diaspora can relocate themselves, virtually at least, in Inuvil's sacred landscape (or in those of other Jaffna towns and villages) by receiving an electronic *darshan* of their home deities.

Also, individual members have created Facebook pages for the various deities. For instance, see: https://www.facebook.com/inuvilpillaiyar.kovil and https://www.facebook.com/InuvilkanthasuvamiKovilInuvil/. Here, I have listed only two Facebook accounts of two different temples in Inuvil, but these two temples have many individual Facebook pages, and I will discuss them in the next chapter in detail. Similarly, Sivan

TV (sivantv.com), a Swiss based organization, has a branch in Inuvil, which video records all the annual temple festivals and consecration ceremonies of temples in Jaffna (and around the world) and uploads those videos to their Web page (sivantv.com) for global viewing. These two types of virtual being of village temples, deities, and rituals shows, as Mallaprgada has it, a "desktop deity culture, which is constituted through the practices of digital *darshan*, online rituals and virtual Hinduism" (2010:111).

These practices of digital *darshan,* online rituals and virtual Hinduism are more apparent among diaspora members than village people. Karapanagiotis (2013), Mallapragada (2010), and Ackroyd (2006) have done their studies only in diasporic countries, but I have examined this issue in the home country where these temple homepages, Facebook pages, and other online virtual sources (YouTube) are operated and managed. I will discuss them in detail in the next chapter. As Karapanagiotis (2013) mentions, "cyber-*darshan* and exchange of devotional sight between the devotee and God mediated by the computer" is the prominent form of virtual Hinduism and popular Hinduism (57), but I found that diaspora members are not only reliant on virtual Hinduism or online *darshan* but they also use those temple homepages and Facebook pages as temple web platforms to maintain their ties with their villages and to stay updated on village events.

Correspondingly, Web and Facebook operators had to upload the photos and videos of temple and ritual events, as well as people and village cultural events. However, I agree with recent notion that "idol worship, sensorial experiences and the visual image are prominent in Hindu traditions of worship (Mallapragada 2010: 113)," but the diaspora members rely on the Web to worship their village temples and observe online rituals and *darshan.* Even though desktop deity culture inscribes non-phenomenological concerns, it generates space for alternative village Hinduism for diaspora members.

(3) Pluralistic Hindu discourse is generated through the printed and online materials and new religious movements in post-war Jaffna. Some informants pointed out that Vaishnava practices

are incorporated within the village religious pantheon. They claimed that the Lord Vishnu was worshiped in the form of Lord Krishna along with other Saiva deities, which indicated religious pluralism within the Saivism context. Unlike the Saivism and Vaishnavism divide in South India, both co-existed in Jaffna without much divergence and there are popular Vaishnava temples in Jaffna. However, some informants were unhappy about the emergence of a brand-new Vaishnava temple in Inuvil. What one might call Inuvil Saivism has incorporated Vaishnavism, and these new religious practices include human gods and *guru*-focused meditational practices; for an example, an Inuvil born Canadian citizen funded the building of a completely new Vaishnava temple, Inuvil Tirupati Venkateshwara Temple, in Inuvil after the civil-war ended. Although Vaishnava deities are already part of Jaffna Hinduism, naming the temple exactly like the South Indian temple Tirupati Venkateshwara temple in Tirupati of Andhra Pradesh (a Vaishnava temple in no uncertain terms) and following Vaishnava rituals are the new religious innovations. This innovation demonstrates a geo-religious interaction between India and Sri Lanka, which can be an imported-spiritual commodity.

Furthermore, I would like to highlight two more brand new temples in Inuvil: Maruthanarmadam Anjaneyar Kovil (Anjaneyar worship is part of Vaishnavism) and Gnana Lingeswarar Temple. The second temple is a Lord Shiva temple built by the Swiss Tamil Diaspora and it has introduced a completely new religious practice. This is worship and ritual rites using Tamil *mantra* (based on Tamil language) rather than the conventional Sanskrit *mantra* system more generally used in ritual practice in Jaffna. In addition, human gods like Sai Baba, Shirdi Sai Baba, and Amma Bhagavan, and guru-focused meditational practices of Vethathiri Maharishi's Arivu Thirukovil (Temple of Consciousness) and Guruji Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living has been included, in part, in village religiosity. Furthermore, the expansion of village polytheistic-Hinduism has occurred by borrowing religious practices from India, Switzerland, and Canada and domesticating those global flows to produce indigenized forms of religiosity for

354

people to use in rebuilding their lives and to cope up with modernity (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001).

In addition, contemporary new religious practices/movements have further expanded the polytheistic Hindu Saiva pantheon in Jaffna. As a result, conventional religious and ritual practices have been further elaborated, shrunk, or altered. These changes show how new religious movements and the accumulation of a new body of knowledge have reshaped or transform the existing consciousness (pace, Siegler 1993) of Jaffna people. Personal religious experiences and common religious beliefs have been shared and merged; at the same time, emerging new religious engagements have produced different global religious experiences, which are, of course, part of the new religious consciousness of Jaffna people and their associated diaspora.

Due to following the different global flows, I noticed a transformation or alteration in the village religious and ritual practices in Jaffna. In particular, new religious and innovative ritual practices have shaped, reshaped, and redefined an existing Jaffna Saiva public (Ambalavanar 2006) tradition (or "sphere"). I believe this, engaging in a kind of vernacular cosmopolitanism (T.Srinivas 2014 & 2010), popular Hinduism (Fuller 1992), and theology of religious pluralism (Knitter 2009) have theorized the multiplicities of religious consciousness for people in contemporary post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

Further, the work of Srinivas, Fuller and Knitter provide useful theoretical perspectives for use in studying changing consciousness as this is displayed in the contexts of Jaffna's domestic rituals and *bhakti* religious practices. Although most of these new religious practices originated either in north or south India, they have now become part of a global religious practices in which Jaffna's villages are also, at least partly, enmeshed. Indeed, these practices are found now even in non-Hindu and non-Indian cultures (Shane Nicolas 2008). Hinduism, as practiced in Jaffna's villages, is mostly still a syncretic religion that assimilates new religious innovations rather than trying to exclude or destroy them. Jaffna's Saiva public is, of course, a part of Hinduism, and it also alters itself by assimilating new religious practices.

355

As we know, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, which all either came directly from Vedic sources or, in the case of the Sikh religion, as a result of Vedic and Islamic (particularly Sufi) concerns (a synthesis of Islam and Vedic concerns). Hinduism was, of course, coined and conceptualized as a unified system and unified religion through the European scholarship, particularly by missionaries, professional Indologists, and colonial administrators during the late the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Fisher 2017; Doniger 2009; Madan 2003).

Even Max Weber concluded that Hinduism was not a religion in the Western sense of term (1958:23). In Sociology, Religious Studies, and other scholarly discourses, the definition of religion was largely derived from the Semitic religions of the West in terms of church, creed, holy text, and founder (Madan 2003). Many were influenced to imagine Hinduism through such misconceptions and Semitic religious terms, when western epistemological construction of Hinduism became available in public discourse. As a result, there are many versions of Hinduism, which were written by European, American, and colonial South Asian scholars. Understanding Hinduism based on Western accounts of Hinduism generates confusions and complexities about Hinduism in contemporary South Asia. To avoid this issue, we need comparative ethnographic accounts of different religious geographies of South Asia for a cross-cultural comparison to map out the diversity of Hinduism or plurality of Hindu religious engagement in South Asian.

The first problem is with the word "Hinduism" itself. As we know, "Hinduism" is a term that only assumed its current form in colonial times, although the term itself comes from the Persian word *hindu* (derived from the Sanskrit name for the river Indus, "Sindhu" – and just meant people who live South of there (Doniger 2009: 32; Fuller 2004 [1992]: 9-11). Anyway, Hinduism as a term for "a" religion was partly a product of colonial Orientalism (by the British Orientalists or by the British colonial regime) on the one hand, and nationalism (or Hindu fundamentalism) on the other (Fisher 2017; Doniger 2009; Fuller 2004 [1992]).

However, the contemporary Indian or South Asian discourse of Hinduism developed through Hindu reformations and Hindus' own writings. As a result, a particular set of scholars (mostly local scholars) started renaming Hinduism as Santana dharma religion (*caṉātaṉa tarma camayam*— 'eternal religion'); Hinduism was placed along with the discourse of *dharma,* which prescribed moral order, duty, and law (Fuller 2004). On the other hand, Vaidika (*vaiῑka* [Vedic]) religion was another name, which Hinduism was named as it accepted the Vedas as primary precepts. As Jainism and Buddhism have not accepted the Vedas, they were identified as Avaidika (*avaitῑka*) religions. These 'dominant paradigms' of either Lows of Manu, Manusmriti/Manu Dharmaśāstra or Vedas predominantly defined Hinduism (Oddie (2006). For instance, in the sub-continent of India, different vernacular geographical region defined the Hinduism; the vernacular aspect is not just a linguistic aspect of religion, but how cultural practices and their meanings defined Hinduism. Furthermore, many criticisms emerged about Hinduism in twentieth and twenty-first century writings as Hinduism became a "dominant paradigm," which was produced through Sanskrit texts and Brahmins' interpretations during the colonial period (Doniger 2009). I argue that this dominant paradigm neglected the shared performance of plural religiosities or Hindu pluralism (Fisher 2017) or popular Hinduism (Fuller 2004) in South Asia.

By Hindu pluralism, Fisher meant that Hindu sectarianism was a precolonial practice and form of religious pluralism (2017: 24). Further, she claimed that Hindu pluralism contained shared performance of plural religiosities and Hindu differences can be understood through the lens of *sectarianism*, which was a mode of religious engagement. The Saivism and Vaishnavism more often recognized as the larger sectarian religiosities in Hinduism, but I would argue that such patriarchal sectarianism (both Shiva and Vishnu male deities) constructed metanarratives, which only portrayed the pluralism in duality position rather than multiple sectarianism. As Fisher claims, both sectarianism and pluralism were not opposites, but were intertwined (2017: 5).

However, I have a problem with reducing Hinduism to these two sects since to do so excludes other forms of religious engagement equally important to Hinduism. Hence, in general, there are six denominations found in Hinduism: specifically, Shaivism (worship of Shiva) Shaktism (worship of Shakti), Vaishnavism (worship of Vishnu), Ganapatism (worship of Ganesh), Koumaram (worship of Murukan/Skanda), and Saurism (worship of Sun). These denominations overlapped and were shared in practice. How these sharing and overlapping occurred depended on context and individual practices. But, in any case, the many sub-divisions found within Hinduism, or even Vaishnavism, need to be understood in their multiplicity and lack of restriction in order to understand Hindu pluralism in South Asia.

In terms of Hindu pluralism in Sri Lanka, I would argue that the Indian subcontinent geo-religious and political trajectories not only constructed Hindu pluralism, but multinational orientations were also part of it. Fisher (2017) pointed out that Vivekananda theology and Gandhian ahimsa theory, or Gandhian secularism, encouraged Hindu pluralism in South Asia, but I think that a single genealogy of Hindu religion in India or in South Asia limits the potential to understand the multiple genealogies of South Asia's pluralistic religiosities. Here, by multiple genealogies, I meant that the many local sages or saints who actively promoted Hindu religious pluralism in South Asia. In Jaffna, people locally use the popular terms *sitarkaḷ* or *cuvamiyār* to refer sages who lived in different villages in Jaffna and those sages encouraged religious pluralism and spirituality. Furthermore, democracy and human rights discourses enabled me to think how the shared religious performances and plural religiosities function in village Hindu Saiva religious pluralism in Jaffna. For instance, in the context of Jaffna and rest of the Sri Lanka, non-*ākama* ritual practice is considered to be below than *ākama* ritual in the ritual hierarchy. For instance, animal sacrifice was considered as a non- *ākama* ritual practice.

However, animal sacrifice was highly criticized by the Sinhalese Buddhist monks and state and the mainstream Hindu religious organizations, and finally it was banned by the Sinhalese Buddhist state. Hence, democracy and human rights discourses argued for

democratization of Hindu ritual pluralism. I also pointed out the recent development of Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism in post-war Jaffna. This new emergence of religious division within the larger Hindu Saivism was somewhat closer to Arumuka Navalar's *caiva* (Saiva) public ideology (Ambalavanar 2006), but there are differences between Navalar's *caiva* public ideology and Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism in terms of their doctrinal variations. In particular, Hellman-Rajanayagam (1989) pointed out that Navalar's Saivite revivalism, which was distinct from Vaishnavite and Saivite reformism, was connected to educational and linguistic aspirations in order to educate people to be proper Saivites (1989: 236). Also, she found two major objectives in Navalar's reform activities: first was to "renew and strengthen orthodox Saivism in Jaffna" and second was to "enable Saivism to better withstand the Christian effort at conversion." (Helman-Rajanayagam 1989:241). This was the religious awakening in Jaffna characterized by the Saiva Sinddanta philosophical thought of Navalar in the later nineteenth century, which solidified Tamil literacy and linguistic movements that demanded political awareness in the twentieth century (Wilson 2011: 459).

More specifically, Navalar's *caiva* public conception was favor to the high caste Veḷḷāḷar to make them proper Saivite during the nineteenth century (Hellman-Rajanayagam 1989). Although Veḷḷāḷar who were Sudras (the last group of Varna system), Navalar aimed to uplift Veḷḷāḷar's status equal or more than equal to Brahmins in Jaffna, because Navalar often conflicted with Brahmin priests in South India in term of their doctrine and ritual orders. Navalar attributed the right to read the Vedas and wear *pūṇūl* (sacred thread) to the Veḷḷāḷar like other upper castes. This was his pattern of religious awakening to construct a proper Saivite during his period. However, the recent development of Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism was a bit different from Navalar's project of reformism. The Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalists are against casteism, Brahmanism, Brahminic rituals, and Vedas, and encouraged all people without caste differences to participate in their newly reformed pure Tamil Hindu Saivism. Further, they reject reading Vedas or any Sanskrit materials for the ritual service and are against wearing sacred thread to be a proper

Saivite. These followers only accept Saiva Siddanta philosophy and *panniru tirumuraikaḷ* (twelve volumes of collection of religious songs praising Lord Shiva and *Siva bhakti* [*civa pakti*] sung by various *nāyanmār* and Saivite religious saints in Tamil Nadu of South India) for their ritual purposes. They are more closely associated with Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalistic consciousness that this new religious awakening to protect their Tamil Hindu Saivism, Tamils' religious rights, and the Tamil land from the Sinhalese Buddhist majoritarian state.

Though contemporary Hinduism assimilate or syncretizes with new religious innovations, these assimilations generally occur within the boundary of Hinduism as it is generally currently conceived. People unfamiliar with scholarship on the region often assume, wrongly, that Hinduism has no history of mingling with Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. This is untrue both historically and with regard to contemporary Jaffna practice. Jaffna Saivite Hindus, for example, frequently visit multi-religious shrine sites, such as Kateragama in southern Sri Lanka and the Catholic Church Shrine at Madhu, in nearby Mannar, to make vows regarding crises in their lives and fortunes. So, for individuals at least, religious boundaries tend to be blurred rather than fixed. Similarly, in the Jaffna region, there operates a kind of village religious syncretism that entails 'a mixture of religious and cultural elements', in a process which may allow multiple religious and practical possibilities (Shane Nicolas 2008). For instance, the worship of Indian "human deities" such as Sai Baba and Shirdi Sai Baba has been indigenized within Jaffna Tamil Saivite cultural practice in ways distinct from how this was done in India.

Thus, as previously mentioned, many new religious and meditational practices have been adopted by Jaffna Saivites, and this suggests that a village level form of what T. Srinivas has called 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' (213:102) is operating in post-war Sri Lanka. T. Srinivas used 'vernacular cosmopolitanism,' instead of cosmopolitanism, to explain the 'grammar of plurality' and 'engaged cosmopolitanism' in contemporary Hinduism in South Asia. She argued that cosmopolitanism is a western imperial project which came through different power relations; at the same time, it is a liberal project, which included radical diversity and interwove with

360

neoliberal global capitalism, power, and hegemony. But 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' is a locally

produced 'cultural translation,' which absorbs possibilities to construct 'grammar of plurality'

and diversity in Hinduism. Similarly, the ability of Jaffna village Hindu Saivism to absorb

influences from other religious traditions constitutes a kind of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' to

construct the village religious pluralism.

    Hence, grasping Jaffna's post-war religious changes requires that we adopt a new form of

'cultural translation' to understand the post-war reconstructions of religious and ritual spaces

ongoing in villages in Jaffna. A 'cultural translation', that is, not embedded within texts but, of

course, based on the 'non-textual strategies' people employ in their everyday cultural lives. Doing

so will allows us to use a 'grammar of plurality' to define our cultural translations (T.Srinivas

2014: 102). Furthermore, at some point, this grammar will allow us to see how *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control)

had to became flexible in the cases of larger domestic rituals due to the postwar need for

malleability and to manipulate traditional values, customs, and habits in the contexts of domestic

rituals and general religious practices at a time of great change. In another context, innovative

video culture, creative fashion technology, and other "alien" cultural practices have become

another form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* in crafting ritual practices. For instance, I have indicated a number of

ethnographic examples in this chapter where innovative videography and album models, *mehendi*

fashion art ceremony, South Indian, Sinhalese, and Tamil diaspora cultural practices influenced

the restructuring of domestic ritual spaces, which I would argue is another form of *kaṭṭupāṭu* that

people have adopted in post-war Jaffna. For Jaffna domestic and religious rituals are now online

for global viewing. The post-war circumstances of the Jaffna community and its globalized

interactions have produced newly built forms of consciousness of their locality (*ūr*), life,

existence, and identity.

    In terms of everyday rituals and changes, in this chapter I have included four different

domestic rituals to examine their changes and their new versions. Post-war rituals and religious

practices are symbolically and phenomenologically complex phenomena which require 'thick

descriptions' of (Geertz 1973) to grasp. In anthropology, of course, there is a rich theoretical tradition of ritual studies. As Grimes (1995 [1982]) states, until the invention of structuralism (Levi Stratus) and symbolic anthropology (Victor Turner), Durkheimian sociological, Freudian psychoanalytic, and British Social Anthropological theories dominated ritual studies and theories. Based on this background, conventional theories of ritual examined how rituals bound society together as a collective consciousness (Durkheim 1995 [1912]), or, at least, as some kind of functionally interdependent collective entity. Hence rituals, sociologically conceived, were sometimes recognized as important social processes. This is why, for example, *rites of passage* were seen both by Durkheim's students and later British social anthropologists (Gennup 1960) as central to understanding how individuals fit into the societies of which they were a part. Hence, the notion that such "life crisis" rituals create a transition stage or liminal space (Gennup 1960 and Turner 1969) in which individuals can be transformed to fit social purposes. Grimes also points out that this form of ritual analysis relies on a distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane' that remains part of the often unacknowledge logic of anthropological analysis (Durkheim 1995). With the arrival of Levi-Straussian structuralism, however, ritual studies took a detour away from local concerns as the relationship between rituals and myth become more important as a window for peering into the supposedly universal structures of human minds (Levi-Stratus 1967). Eventually, post-structurally, as rituals began to be seen as practices (Bourdieu 1990), contact between peoples' actions and internal motivations and larger social formations – or forms of life – were re-established.

I do agree with general theoretical direction of these conventional theoretical perspectives when studying rituals in anthropology. But I also want to examine some of these theoretical perspectives critically because of the great transformation Jaffna has undergone due to the war and globalization. The civil war and transformations have caused Jaffna's social networks and communities to reconfigure, which allowed for the 'creating of new networks' and for changes in structure (Wood 2008). For instance, new networks on the internet, and using other global

communication technologies, and an emerging new sense of community, have not only influenced post-war rituals and religious practices, but also challenged the close personal ties found in Tönnies' ideal type of *Gemeinschaft* (Slevin 2000). Thus, Jaffna's village communities have not only incorporated new global networks into people's everyday religious and ritual lives, but also transformed how people project themselves and, in local terms, how they configure their *kouvravam* – that is, their sense of how they are socially respected and accepted.

In terms of the symbolic meanings being enacted in puberty, wedding, and teething ceremonies, such meanings sometime now contradict the other ground realities people are experiencing in postwar Jaffna. My informants during the fieldwork in 2017-2018 often told me that they do not have to be aware of the meaning of what they are doing when practicing rituals. Apparently, they felt that because they have been conducting these rituals for a long time in spite of this unawareness, they hardly care about it. But meaning in some simplistic, referential sense may not be the point here. For finally, they said that what they do is a *method/practice* (*athu murai*) to perform or act, which is similar to Bourdieu's notion of "habitus" (1990).

As previously discussed, using a teething ritual as a form of semi-serious 'divination' was all new because many older informants mentioned that in the past, people did not give much importance to the teething ceremony. In South Asia, rituals, ceremonies, and festivals are not only for gathering, meeting, and interacting, but also for people to exhibit their wealth and *kouvravam* in public. Also, I observed people now adopt different types of ceremonies and events to project their self into the community in addition to conventional domestic rituals. Unlike in the past, for example, celebrating birthday parties has now increased to such a degree as to have become general (particularly, 40th, 50th, 60th, 70th birthdays and above); a completely recent trend among the people in Jaffna. Furthermore, get-togethers and re-union parties are organized by the members of diaspora in the home country (some organized them in whatever country they live in now and some organized in different countries). I would argue that these re-union or get-together celebrations became new forms of rituals in post-war Jaffna and people never had them before the

war. Some people started these events, then those celebrations became models, which spread through social media. Also, these events are part of the construction of new *kouvravam* to show home members' diaspora connections and affluences.

In terms of time, astrological consultation and ceremonies, in the past, of course, ritual like teething ceremony (*pallu koḻukkaṭṭai*) or puberty were not considered a divine-oriented ceremony. I remember my grandfather telling me that now people more often consult astrologers to discuss personal issues such as their future progress, unemployment, fertility, marriage delays, and so forth than they did in the past. He also told me that while people used astrological consultation to fix auspicious times for events to take place in the past but do so much more now. For another example, I would note that puberty rituals were once seen as 'secular rituals' rather than as religious ones, and once a Jaffna puberty ritual was performed without a Brahmin priest's service, although later such rituals were to a more Sanskritized kind of ritual that required a priest. The influence of astrology and the importance of having auspicious times for ritual events were notions introduced by Brahminical culture.

People are surprised to see what is happening to a society like Jaffna, which once practiced a strong form of patriarchal ideology and a rigid caste system in day-to-day life. But even at the most domestic level there are now challenges to both. Hence, recently in Jaffna, new   practices have been taking place in regard to the puberty ceremony. Those practices have been introduced by Diaspora Tamils who visit Jaffna to have their children's puberty rituals in their home villages. Local Jaffna Tamils have started to follow these new practices. Diaspora Tamil people have brought ideas and practices from where they are settled abroad. As Gerharz (2010) said, due to the new mobility of these migrants, there is a significant drive for a re-negotiation of Tamil identity. This process is more about the Tamil identity formation than the locality among the Tamils of Jaffna. I found a similar argument with Appadurai's (1996) work on the link between globalization and localization that can be explained as represented by the flow of people, goods, information and images linking localities around the world. This social interaction occurs in both

364

ways. For instance, I would point out that Diaspora Tamils have started to follow the cake cutting ceremony, which Jaffna Tamils invented during the war period-1990-1995 in Jaffna, and people still do practice it. The cake cutting ceremony is part of the recent puberty ceremony. People celebrate the cake cutting (like a birthday cake) ceremony either on the second day of the puberty ceremony or on the same day. This new practice was introduced by the people in Jaffna during the war, but now it has been circulated among the Jaffna Tamils wherever they live. Finally, another striking factor, for these transformations, is the videographer's role in creating ritual innovation in the puberty ceremony. These new connections and ritual innovations urge me to redefine the boundaries of the locality given the reconstruction of puberty rituals and other domestic rites through such ritual innovations and alterations.

As a result of the influence of Diaspora networks and other peoples' cultural practices on puberty, wedding and teething ceremonies, the boundaries of the locality need to be re-defined as they have interacted with "foreign" (foreign refers to the counties where the diaspora members live) cultural influences transported through all kinds of agents into the locality. Gerharz (2010) treats the boundaries of locality as an identity space; this space is established with constructions of local culture in different ways. For instance, Gerharz (2010) points out that when it comes to gender relations or gender spaces, the local boundaries are set up against the power of foreign influences/foreign culture. But this is not the case everywhere and I cannot generalize because people sometimes accept or reject the Western habits of diasporic Tamils. For instance, as Gerharz (2009) stated, Western habits sometime create a conflict between older and younger generations, but at the same time, there is a potential local change that often contributes to the formation of a new identity, which might cut across caste and class.

Regarding the puberty and wedding ceremonies and changes among the Jaffna Tamils, there are many changes I observed; for example, the puberty girl's traditional dress has been changed and people have adopted "alien" dress styles and *mehendi* from India. Also, I observed that even the decoration of the house and ceremony hall have changed significantly in terms of

new decoration styles that have been borrowed from other, non-Jaffna cultural traditions. Interestingly, perhaps unsurprisingly, I found that people try to apply their own cultural meanings to these new arrivals of commodities and modifications and transformations of this ritual rather than acknowledging the 'alien cultural items or elements' they sprang from. Anthropologists focus not only on the adaptation of alien objects or the even adaptation of alien ideas, but also on how people are redefined and retuned to use their local commodity in a particular cultural setting. Kopytoff's (1988) notion of a "cultural biography of things" have enabled us to draw an anthropological sketch in symbolic value and meanings of commodities in a particular society. In this, I do not mean to generalize by stating that the whole Jaffna Tamil society has followed the changes I noticed, but it is important to examine the 'biographical idiosyncrasies' which have created a conflict between the egoistic-self and the unambiguous demands of given social identities (Kopytoff 1988), found in Jaffna in people's fears about *kaṭṭpātu*..

Many informants including older and younger people have recognized that the religious and ritual lives of the Jaffna Tamil community have been transformed after the war and the reopening of the A-9 highway. 'Alien cultural items or elements' have been freely circulated and incorporated into Jaffna life as modernity has enlarged in post-war Jaffna. However, as a feminist activist in Jaffna pointed out to me, that modernity which came up the A-9 highway and over the internet is a *māyai* (illusion) and not a reality; hence, for her, contemporary Jaffna is in the trap of *māyai.* For her, although modernity has increased its hold on Jaffna, the woman's position has gone back to the circle of the control of men. Modernity has updated peoples' religious and ritual lives but not updated the position of woman. She further argued that even though women intend to follow modernity, men are the real consumers of modernity because women are not recognized as members of society if they did not respect the conventional practices of it patriarchal culture. Thus, women are obliged to maintain cultural order and *kaṭṭupāṭu*. Though women have been modernized, they need to act as if they like conventional practices. So, women may have to begin their married life with a struggle between traditionalism/conservativism and modernity.

I also observed that Jaffna's patriarchal structure has not changed and continues to sway with unequal power relations between men and women. The woman activist argued that patriarchal traits have reemerged to restructure their daily life. Even though women have increased their educational attainments and representation in the employment sector, decision making is still in the hands of men. Yet there have been changes here too. Bala, a 34-year-old woman from Inuvil, had a similar view to that of the activist above, but explained in a slightly different way that as both husband and wife are employees in most families in Inuvil now, both have to share the domestic work at home. Also, husbands consult their wives to seek for better ideas regarding certain matters, but the final decision is taken by the husband, so the husbands are ultimately the decision makers. However, she pointed out that her father never discussed matters with her mother and made the decisions himself. Now, the husband at least consults the wife rather than completely excluding her. So, Bala argued that there is a slight shift in relation in gender dynamics at a family level. Bala utterly denounced the woman activist's view regarding gender relations in post-war Jaffna that there is a change in terms of freedom than in the past. Freedom, she felt, does not mean that women are fully liberated from burdens, but girls at least have chances to decide on their education and employment.

Thus, Bala constructed her views based on a cultural feminism in which she did not present herself as challenge to the conventional patriarchal structure and its male-female binary. Instead, she was more concerned about a woman's freedom within the circle of cultural feminism. In contrast, my other interlocutor, the woman activist, based her views on a mixture of social and liberal feminism. Hence, unlike in the past, for some women, the issue of a woman's freedom is addressed in various ways and contexts; for instance, as I have discussed earlier in this chapter, women's voices are now more recognized in planning wedding, puberty, and teething ceremonies. Though such changes are not comprehensive, they are occurring through the newly expanded global connections and diaspora networks.

Furthermore, *kaṭṭupāṭu* is still in practice as a cultural value but there is a slight flexibility in it now, including with respect to women. But the degree and value of this flexibility, and its relationship to contemporary conditions, was something women debated. Hence, the woman activist argued that a woman's freedom was greater during the war than either before or after the war because the LTTE reformed the patriarchal structure to allow greater freedom for women. After the war, she claimed, a woman's freedom reversed as thing became more like they were prewar in terms of caste, class, and dowry. However, Bala, by contrast, argued that change for women is occurring in its own way, and gender dynamics are also shifting at various levels. Bala refused to accept what she regarded as the woman activist's radical feminist view because, as she further explained, for her both men and women are equally important to society, and because the functioning of the universe (*pirapañca iyakkam*) depends upon the unity of Sivam (*civam*—the Lord Shiva) and Sakti (*cakti*— Goddess Pārvati). Sivam refers to the male deity and Sakti to the female deity, she told me, who cannot be separated from each other when operating the universe.

Thus, Bala constructed her own argument about the status of women based on Hindu philosophy. But the woman activist rejected such religious and cultural constructions about power because she saw those as patriarchal ideas. Based on this, the woman activist also claimed that the puberty ritual has now become more of a 'cultural'-product than a ritual one because it makes a girl prepare for marriage; here, 'making' refers to the body and beauty, which are displayed to the public. By 'cultural product,' she claimed that the puberty ritual prepares a girl to be a future wife. The body and beauty of the girl are the products of the puberty ritual, and this, she claimed, satisfies patriarchal ideas. Thus, she concluded, the current post-war ritual, and the wider religious and cultural landscape, have been restructured through patriarchal ideas.

In sum, this chapter has addressed changes in specific religious practices by looking at how changes in *bhakti* religiosity in general are now occurring in post-war Jaffna. With regard to changes in specific domestic and religious rituals, I have described altered rites of passage: wedding ceremonies, puberty ceremonies, teething ceremony and post-funerary rituals. I have

shown how these rituals are now produced for public internet consumption. Such changes appear to be making daily Hinduism more modern, capitalist and cosmopolitan.

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed the linkages between the village landscape and ritual in post-war Jaffna. But this leads me to argue that still more ethnographic details on village landscape is required, which includes more details about temples and village places (peoples' houses, farming lands, etc.) in order to understand the role of 'village' or 'village-temple consciousness' in post-war reconstruction in Jaffna. Because village" or "village-temple consciousness" is an empirical reality as well as a constructed product of human experience.

More specifically, the post-war reconstruction of these empirical physical properties needs to be understood in light of more anthropological investigation about nostalgia and anxiety about social control (*kattupādu*), and how diaspora and transnational networks influences temples, villages, and places. In particular, temple disputes and animal sacrifice disputes will be discussed along with special reference to Tamil cultural practices of *kowravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honor), which will finally allow us to answer the question: what happened to *ūrness*? Hence, the next chapter will present yet more ethnographic details about temples, villages, and other important places in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

CHAPTER 8. TEMPLES, VILLAGES, AND PLACES (PART-I)

8.1   Introduction

On Saturday 24th June 2018 around 7:00 pm, I reached Marine Drive Wellawatta, Colombo

where many private buses were in line and many people were gathered to get a bus to travel to

Jaffna. While I was searching for the Venkateshwara Bus which provides a wonderful

transportation service between Colombo and Jaffna, I met Malini, my school classmate, who was

also traveling in the same bus. For me, Jaffna now seems to be a visiting *ūr* compared to the past

since many Jaffna natives live all over the island and in the diaspora. Most visit Jaffna for various

purposes. I saw many diaspora members as well as locals getting into the buses. Malini, was

displaced from her natal village during the war in 1990s because her village included in the

Higher Security Zone (HSZ) after the Civil War began. There were approximately sixteen

villages under the Higher Security Zone (HSZ)[103] and an area of 5,341-acres is currently still

under Jaffna HSZ while 1,728 acres of land were released from the Jaffna HSZ in 2015 (UN

Status Report 2016). Now, long-term internally displaced people keep returning to their original

villages to rebuild them, including their temples.

I asked Malini which was her *ūr* was and she told me it was Naguleswaram. When I

inquired further which part of Naguleswaram her home had been in, she mentioned

Karukampanai. Naguleswaram is the large complex of sub-villages, and a GN division, of which

Karukampanai is a sub-village. To be even more precise, within the Naguleswaram sub-village of

Kavunavathai Malini lives in even smaller, specific, named locale, or *kuṟicci*, called

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[103] The territory was expanded through military activities and military base encroachment and
the neighbouring villages (approximately 16 villages) were cleared by shelling, bombing and
shooting and these villages came under the control of the Palaali Military Base as a result of the
expansion process and were consequently declared as High Security Zones (HSZ), see also
Kugabalan (1996).

Karukampanai – a residential sub-unit of the sub-village, as it were. Further, Malini stated that her house was close to the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple.

Why were Malini and I exchanging such precise information about her village, sub-village and *kuṟicci*? Because Tamil people like us frequently ask each other whenever they meet, "where are you from?", and are always keen to name a 'place' (Kingsolver 2011, 1992; Muehlebach 2001; Feld and Basso 1996) whenever another Tamil ask "what is your *ūr*?" (Daniel 1984). In any case, Malini's natal village, unfortunately, was once part of the former HSZ. Recently released, her fellow villagers were now trying to rebuild their village temples and houses.

Soon thereafter, I also met Ganesh who, somewhat surprisingly, was from my own natal/native village, Inuvil, and who was seated next to me in the bus. Ganesh was currently living and working in Colombo. He was visiting Jaffna to attend the annual festival of his *ūr kōvil* (village temple) and had also been invited to attend the annual prize giving of his village school. During the Civil War, Ganesh moved to Colombo while his family continued living in his native village. Ganesh's consciousness of that place was practiced through his worshipping at village temples, an activity which embodied for him the knowledge that helped constitute a personal sense of belonging to what people regard as their *ūr* (Bourdieu 1990).

Both Malini and Ganesh had some kind of emotional attachment to their *ūr* and they also had past memories of their *ūr* as lived places. The *ūr* attachment is related to a specific locale where one was born and has lived. In Jaffna People frequently ask one another *"evvaṭam?"* (which place) whenever they are introduced to someone, and here *evvaṭam* does not only denote one's larger *ūr* landscape but also a smaller, specific, named locale called a *kuṟicci* and *vaṭṭāram* (both referring to sub-territories of a village).

Thus, a place identifies people, and is in turn identified by a temple, school, crop, commodity, community center, playground, temple's young devotee's association, scholar, literature, industry, pond, food, and so on. I have discussed the importance of these attributes in the introductory chapter and also throughout the dissertation. Hence, people have embedded

many stories within the above attributes. As a result, a place can be defined by many narrative versions; for instance, the Jaffna Peninsula was portrayed as a war zone for three decades. However, in the past, it was also read as a 'place' which was a part of the Tamil Eelam and, ethnically, segregated as a specifically Tamil 'place'. In addition, the Jaffna Peninsula had been projected, by the Sri Lankan government, as a terrorist zone of the Tamil Tigers and as a high security zone. Many villages in Jaffna have gone through a great social transformation due to the war, militarization, and the arrival of newly intrusive global market economy.

In this aspect, the intentional, targeted destructions of the civil war (surveillance, militarization, and displacement) and the postwar global economy's "creative destruction" (Zukin 1991) have transformed the *ūr* landscape enormously. When Escobar (2008) explained about *place* in his book Territories of Difference that Pacific as an encompassing place. In a similar vein, I perceive the Jaffna Peninsula as part of the larger South Asian region and Indian Ocean region, which have constructed geo-political and geo-religious spaces in Sri Lanka. In addition, the historical process of political movements (the Sri Lanka Government's militarization, the LTTE's freedom struggle, war, and violence), historical process of capital flows and accumulation have greatly transformed the post-war Jaffna Peninsula.

By *ūr* landscape, I do not only mean the usual imagination of a geographical "physical surroundings," but I am also referring to an assemblage of different cultural practices and their symbolic representations (Zukin 1991). However, in a broader sense, I have covered caste, class and gender in my analysis, which includes vernacular expression of the powerless in representing place and *meta descriptions* of places. This chapter will discuss *local representations* of places.

The great social transformation I have been describing has socially and culturally reconstructed spaces in post-war Jaffna. I need to discuss these socially and culturally reconstructed spaces to understand the reconstructed places and the lives of post-war Tamil people in Jaffna. Both terms, place and space are used interchangeably, but each term represents its own specific conceptual stance. Space is more abstract concept than place. For instance, pre-

war cultural practices and moral orders can be described through peoples' experiences, which enable one to understand spaces. So, spaces are closely connected to temporality. Furthermore, I would like to place the "post-war Jaffna Peninsula" in a global context to rethink the transformation of the region. Place-based identity, history, memory, culture, and narratives are too often left out of scholarly descriptions of post-war reconstruction of the Jaffna Peninsula. So, this chapter is devoted to discussing people's phenomenological descriptions of places such as temples, villages, ponds, *maṭam,* roads, schools, playgrounds, and so on.

In particular, the post-war literature on Jaffna's reconstruction has left out the significance of temples, villages, and places to the resettlement and healing processes of war-affected villages in Sri Lanka. This chapter argues that "village consciousness" or "village-temple consciousness" is an empirical reality as well as a constructed product of human experience. However, experiencing *ūr* in the post-war context of Jaffna cannot be analyzed in terms of a set of physical properties alone. Rather, physical properties like temples, villages, and places should be analyzed through the culturally-organized and place-based memories and culturally-constructed emotions of Jaffna people. Village and temple place can be a content of memory, which is experienced and preserved in a particular time.

More specifically, the post-war reconstruction of these places as empirical physical properties needs to be understood in light of more anthropological investigation of nostalgia and anxiety about social control (*kattupāḍu*), and how diaspora and transnational networks and the global market economy have influenced temples, villages, and places. In particular, temple disputes and animal sacrifice disputes will be discussed along with special reference to Tamil cultural practices of *kouvravam* (prestige) and *mariyātai* (honor), which will finally allow us to answer the question "what happened to *ūrness*?" This chapter will be discussed under three major sub-sections: Temples, Villages, and Places. The major focus of this chapter is on how people perceive and construct places in pos-war Jaffna. As an anthropologist, I attempt to study everyday understandings and experiences of place. Such notions of place may vary in terms of gender,

class, caste, language, regional, and ethnicity differences. To address this, I will offer sufficient ethnographic cases, and also experiences drawn from Inuvil *ūr* where I was born and lived for more than thirty-five years. To study the place through human consciousness, I have coined two terms, "village-temple consciousness" and "village consciousness" for this project.

Theoretically speaking, I will pay attention to how phenomenological and existential terms have shaped the current thoughts of the anthropology of consciousness, a literature which enabled me to understand everyday experience of place. First, I will discuss the importance of temples in Tamil *ūr* geography, and also explain the human consciousness embedded within temples as experienced by people in their daily lives. In a Bourdieu sense, this chapter discusses space and place in post-war Tamil geographies through looking at embodied Tamil dispositions or *habitus* (Ann Selby and Viswanathan Peterson 2008). Likewise, I have grasped the phenomenological sense of Jaffna village life, and the anthropological phenomenology of South Asian expressions of *ūr,* in order to understand what an *ūr* means in post-war Jaffna and how social-cultural productive life, despite postwar challenges, is constructed there.

8.2 Temples

8.2.1 Why are temples so important in Tamil *ūr*?

As a Tamil Hindu, I perceive my *ūr* through embodied experiences of cultural practices in which many *kōvils* (Hindu temples) play a part in socializing a villagers' way of life. Is *kōvil* the most important social unit in a Tamil *ūr*? Yes, of course; there is no Tamil *ūr* without a *kōvil* in Sri Lanka or in South Asia. As previously discussed in Chapter One, I followed Shreen's (1997) work to theorize the Jaffna Tamil Hindu community as a 'temple-centred' community (Sanmugeswaran, 2010). The operationalization of the term 'temple-centred' starts with an identification of the various kinds of temples with which Jaffna Tamil Hindus are involved. It also involves appreciating the deep-rooted relationship between people and their various temples.

374

Thus, a Hindu Tamil *ūr* may be seen as a temple-centred sacred landscape which generally contains multiple narratives -- myths or stories -- about the origins of its many temples.

Nor is this a truth confined to Hindu *ūr* alone. There are no communities in Jaffna without "temples", whether Hindu temples or a Christian Churches or Mosques, to embed their people in specific places. Further, in Jaffna this is not just true with regard to rural communities but in Jaffna's more urban core as well, since there are many temples in central Jaffna town. Every village possesses more than one temple. But since Jaffna society contains more Hindu temples than churches here the question might be posed: what is meant by the word "temple" in its Hindu sense? To answer let me generalize from my research findings and my own lived experiences in the area for more than thirty-five years.

Since the ancient times, the temple was symbolic of the religious, cultural, social, and political life of Tamil Hindu communities in both Tamil Nadu in India and Jaffna in Sri Lanka. Therefore, for most Tamils, the temple has long been considered to be the most important social unit in rural Jaffna Even though many philosophical and religious explanations have been put forward by Tamil people to justify the essentiality of temples in village life, a proper grasp of temples must move beyond the normal list of features related to religion, fine arts, sculpture, Hindu philosophy and *bhakti* (devotional practice)*.* For, however important these are, temple establishments are also clearly based on socio, economic, cultural and political factors such as caste, kinship, lineage, *kouvravam, kuṟicci, vaṭṭāram* and *pakuti* (clanlineage).[104] So let me turn to them.

Proportionately, though Veḷḷāḷar[105] caste people are the majority in Jaffna, the 'temple-centred' community is a common model for all castes. But Inuvil community formation based on the temples were established by Veḷḷāḷar people, and Inuvil largely consists of Veḷḷāḷar people

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[104] Sivathampy (1995) and David (1972) have different explanations about *pakuti* and Sivathampy's argument is in accord with my findings.

[105]. Vellālar amongst Sri Lankan Tamils are a dominant group in Jaffna Peninsula. Generally, they are farming related caste group in Jaffna.

and their temples. But among the Veḷḷāḷar, the temple is still a driving force. An increasing

number of temples within the caste and among castes in the same village forms a kind of

immediacy based on kinship, lineage, *kuricci, vaṭṭāram,* (both refer to the smaller units of people

of a village who are members of the same caste) and family. Both *kuricci* and *vaṭṭāram* are part of

village spatial organization in Jaffna, which I will discuss later in this chapter. There is no much

difference between *kuricci* and *vaṭṭāram*. In this context, I intend to show how the Jaffna Tamil

Hindu community organized by the association of temples also goes beyond religious and *bhakti*

aspects.

Inuivil was chosen as the focus of this chapter because the kind of temple affiliation that

Veḷḷāḷar there have in their lives is unique, especially so now, as in today's modern world,

members of many large communities associate themselves minimally with religious institutions.

Inuvil illustrates a kind of temple affiliation that, in some sense, typifies or is a model of what

other Tamil communities in Jaffna have, or aspire to have, for themselves In addition, Paḷḷar and

Naḷavar caste people in Inuvil have also have built their own (small) temples on their land (in

their *kuṟicci*) in Inuvil. However, big, mostly *ākama* temples, are owned by the Veḷḷāḷar

community and their administrations are in their hands. In Naguleswaram, although

Naguleswaram Sivan Temple belongs to a Brahmin family, people of all castes attend its

religious activities. As I already mentioned in Chapters One and Six, different castes are

associated with different temples for community organization in Naguleswaram. For instance,

Kōviyar caste people are largely attached to three different temples: the Māri Āchi (or Goddess-

Muthu Mari Ammon) Temple located much closer to Keerimalai sea beach, the Krishnan (Lord

Krishnan, an incarnation of the Lord Vishnu), Srimath Narayanaswami Devasthanam (still within

the High Security Zone), and the Kavunavathai Narasinka Vairavar temple. Meanwhile, Paḷḷar

caste people are associated with two different Aṇṇamār temples, and Veḷḷāḷar caste people are

associated with the Naguleswaram Sivan temple and Kavunavathai Narasinka Vairavar temple.

Commonly, people visit all of these temples, but their daily religious practices and their making of vows are for a specific deity (such as a caste's deity or *kulateiyvam*[106]) at a specific temple.

Village temples and *kulateiyvam* play a significant role in people's social life as was pointed out to me by key informants in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. In both villages, a newly married couple go together to their own village temple on the very first day of their marriage, and as they will continue to do for other important ceremonies such as the ear piercing ceremony, their new infant's birth-hair removing ritual, their new baby's rice feeding ritual and the hoped for subsequent weddings of their children. Most significant events in life, in other words, are associated with deities of particular places and caste groups. This is why people will break coconuts or do *pūja* to their deities (*kulateiyvam*) before starting any activity. Hence, farmers do *puja*(s) before starting planting and harvesting, and students do them before taking an exam. This indicates how domestic rituals are connected continuously and uninterruptedly with temples to fulfil people's expectations in life.

I found that so-called older temples, built long ago by kings and other historically important people, are today being renovated, rebuilt and expanded, all funded by a new wave of post-war people's contributions. In particular, diaspora funding has now greatly transformed the village's temples, and built has new ones as well. More importantly, I wish to say that that ancient Tamil kings were more enthusiastically and voluntarily involved in constructing marvellous temples than in building or expanding their own palaces based on my travel experiences throughout Tamil Nadu. This is why Tamil Nadu can correctly be referred to as the "The Land of Temples" for its unmatched density of masterly designed temples. Tamil Nadu is the home to more than 34,000 temples (The Times of India 2010) with every one of them has some special identity in terms of architecture, history, religious myth, and *Tēvāram* (religious poems about temples and their deities were sang by Nāyaṉmār). Whether strictly speaking true or not, many

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106 *Kulateiyvam* refers to family, clan, caste-deity or even village guardian deity also can be a *kulateiyvam* for some people.

ancient temples in Tamil Nadur testify to the extreme care Kings put into the temples they sponsored. See, for example, Chola's (Cōḻa) (900-11250 AD) creation of *Tañcai* (Thanjavure or Tanjore), *Peruvuṭaiyār Kōvil* or *Pirihatīṣwarar* Temple and Madurai Nāyak's (particularly the King of Thirumalai Nayak-1623 to 1659 AD) creation of Madurai Mīnākṣi Amman Temple (Fuller 1984).

8.2.2   Why were many temples built in the villages of Jaffna past and present?

Throughout the Jaffna Peninsula the landscape is dotted with Hindu shrines risen anew since the British colonial regime restored freedom of religious choice in the nineteenth century.[107] What was the reason or logic behind the large number of temples emerging in the Jaffna society? There are many reasons behind their construction such as the existence of different castes, *bhakti* (for more detail, see Chapter One), competitions between sub-territorial divisions of the village (i.e., *kuṟicci*), temples as compulsory religious units in a village, and different myths connected to various temple establishments (Sanmugeswaran 2010). Inuvil village, where Veḷḷāḷar are in the majority and are the dominant caste group, is not an exception to this generalization. Like Inuvil's Veḷḷāḷar, each caste establishes a temple for their own worship as each caste's *kulateyivam* varies. Increasing the number of temples within the same caste and among the different castes in the same village forms a kind of immediacy based on kinship, caste, *pakuti* (clanlineage)[108], *kuṟicci, vaṭṭāram,* (*kuṟicci* and *vaṭṭāram* refer to a small sub-territory [hamlet] of a village within the same caste) and *kuṭumpam* (family).

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[107] Bryan Pfaffenberger, *Caste in Tamil Culture: The Religious Foundations of Sudra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka,* (New Delhi: 1982), p. 61.
[108] Sivathampy (1995) and David (1972) have different explanations about *pakuti* and Sivathampy's argument is in accord with my findings, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 6.

8.2.3   Caste, *kulateiyvam*, myths, and village segmentation as main factors

Firstly, it is appropriate to say that Jaffna society was organized by caste based social stratification, and that that society was extremely involved in casteism. Although each caste has its own deity to worship, members of all castes visit all of the other caste's temples whenever they need to. Apart from such caste based social stratification, Jaffna's rural villages were socially classified based on *kuricci* and *vaṭṭāram* territorial sub-divisions within the castes and the village. Thus, village is divided spatially by several *kuriccikaḷ*, which is a direct reflection the way caste is organized socially. Both individual castes such as the Veḷḷāḷar, and individual villages, are divided into *kuricci* or *vaṭṭāram* or both. So, there are one set of *kuricci* and *vaṭṭāram* divisions for the Veḷḷāḷar caste and a different set of divisions for the village spatially. These units of the Jaffna village will be discussed in detail in this chapter later.

Without a doubt, these village segmentations play a major role within the village with an emerging number of large temples (*ākama* temples) and small-scale temples (non-*ākama* temples) that are based on segment differences before and after the war. For instance, in Inuvil, the first part of the names many temples are *kuricci* names. For example, consider the following Inames of Inuvil temples: the *Vaṇṇāṅkāṭu* Piḷḷaiyār Kōvil, *Parutiyaṭaippu* Piḷḷaiyār Kōvil, *Mañcattaṭi* Murukan Kōvil, *Kāraikkāl* Civan Kōvil, and the *Vaṭṭuviṉi* Aman Kōvil. *Vaṇṇāṅkāṭu,* Parutiyaṭaippu, Mañcattaṭi, Kāraikkāl, and Vaṭṭuviṉi[109] are all *kuricci* village segment names within Inuvil village's structure. Likewise, in Naguleswaram, there is the *Kavunavattai* Narasinka Vairavar Kōvil. Kavunavattai, of course, is the name of a *kuricci* of Karukampanai village, a sub-village of Naguleswaram.

Furthermore, when people in Inuvil and Naguleswaram who were speaking of their temples using phrases such as "our temple", "our festival right", "this *pūjā* belongs to our grandmother's period", "we are the people who own the *urimai* to perform this festival", and "the temple land

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109. See also, Sanmugeswaran, P, *Sri Pararājacēkara Piḷḷaiyār Kōvil: A Social Anthropological Perspective,* Maha Kumpāpiṣēka Ciṟappu Malar, Jaffna: 2009, p.134.

patron is our grandfather", they were really demonstrating their emotional attachments to particular spaces by making a claim to *urimai* (group hereditary rights) as an enduring tie between temple and community. Of course, segmentations or divisional variations are not the only factors increasing the number of temples in Inuvil. Caste is also a factor. That is, since each caste had their own deity, they each had to build separate temples for their respective communities. A final factor are temple narratives or myths. Establishing temples and worshipping different gods and goddesses are widely connected to different origin myths. But how Jaffna Tamil mythology connects to religious, social, economic and cultural life there has not been studied extensively as yet. For example, in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, all temples have either mythical stories or historical narratives related to their establishments. Mark Whitaker (1998) already pointed out that how the temples of east cost of Sri Lanka are connected to origin myths.[110]

8.2.4 Increasing re/constructions and renovations of temples in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram

After the war, many "old temples" in both villages were renovated through funding from the Sri Lankan Government, local donors, and donors in the diaspora. "Old temples" referred to the temples, which were not renovated for a long time due to the war and lack of financial support. However, village segments and their temples have always had coemption in terms of their resources and developments. Resources meant the farming land, intensive agriculture production, small industries, cigar factories and their growth. Development referred to the establishment of community centres, library, cultural centres, wedding halls, and expansion and renovation of the temples.

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[110] Mark Whitaker argued in Amiable Incoherence (1998) that myths of origin were part of the "languages of dispute" that people participating in Sri Lankan Hindu temple in-fighting use to articulate their differences. In 2014, he argued that it was the lack of such miraculous stories of origin at most diasporic temples that make them, politically speaking, such very different entities.

In Inuvil, before the war each temple had a single *kōpuram* (temple-gateway tower), but now each temple has built four *kōpurams*, like the famous South Indian temples they appear to be emulating. This marks a change from conventional Jaffna Hindu temple architecture. One middle-aged man in Inuvil pointed out to me that even though these new temple constructions have followed a specific *ākama* scripture (for there are many *ākama*), pre-war Jaffna Hindu temple architecture had maintained a uniform local character, particularly with regard to sculpture, that has now been lost. He argued further that at the end of the war, the flow of money, images, and ideas that have been uncritically incorporated into temple construction and renovation have largely occurred without anyone paying attention to older notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* (order) in Jaffna Hindu temple architecture. When one temple would introduce new styles into their construction, he claimed, other temples merely followed them in order to compete with them over public status or *kouvaravam.* During my fieldwork in Inuvil I noticed this myself. As another native of Inuvil, I could, like my informants, compare the older versions of temples as I remembered them with their current, reworkings and changes.

Of course, about temple renovation and innovation either in Inuvil or Naguleswaram, local Brahmin priests have posed explanations drawn from *ākama* texts. and so, I wondered how *ākama* texts were being interpreted to justify the changes. I realized that *ākama* texts were being interpreted by Brahmin priests differently from time to time. Thus, *ākama* texts, as one might expect, are manipulated and interpreted according to the needs, wishes and thoughs of the Brahmin priests' and the local publics to whom they are speaking. In any case, many other innovations have been made during post-war temple construction and renovation, and most temple sculpture designs are now imported from South India. Sculpture makers and architects, for example, are frequently hired from Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu through private construction companies in Jaffna and other parts of Sri Lanka. These innovations in architecture and sculpture have occurred not only in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, but in Hindu temples in the rest of the

country as well. The following section will briefly describe new temples, ritual innovations and village religious pluralism in the respective villages of Inuvil and Naguleswaram

8.2.5 New temples, ritual innovations and village religious pluralism in Inuvil and Naguleswaram

8.2.5.1 Inuvil

In post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram, in addition to the renovation of old temples new temples were also being built. In Inuvil, in particular, three new temples have been built since the war: the ended, the Inuvil-Maruthanarmadam Anjaneyar (Āñcanēyar) Temple (2001), the Inuvil Tirupati Venkateshwara (Veṅkaṭēṣvara) Temple (in 2013), and the Gnana Lingeswarar (Ñāṉa Liṅkēsvarar) (in2016). Interestingly, each temple, as I assumed, had a miracle story working as a factor in the establishing of the temple. Each story was connected to an individual life experience, which grounded a space for healing the war related consequences and modern social and economic problems and intolerances in human life. For instance, a priest who belonged to the Āñcanēyar temple in Inuvil described to me a dream which led to the construction of the temple. Farmers and vegetable traders of a fresh market (Maruthanarmadam *cantai*) adjacent to this temple had become regular devotees of Āñcanēyar with the hope of receiving Āñcanēyar's blessings toward increasing their prosperity and bettering their lives in general. Similarly, devotees from various villages and travelers (people who travel passing this temple) too regularly visit this temple for *aruḷ* (grace) in order to have many of their problems solved.

Another example of temple construction is provided by the Inuvil -born Canadian citizen who funded the building of a completely new Inuvil-Tirupati Venkateshwara (Veṅkaṭēṣvara, an incarnation of Vishnu) Temple after the civil-war ended. The Canadian presented his own (an individual) personal theological reasoning to justify the temple's establishment. He found that many Jaffna Tamils visited the Tirupati Venkateshwara Temple in Andhra Pradesh, South India,

on pilgrimages to fulfill personal vows. He wanted to invite the same deity to grace Inuvil and, as a result, when he visited the above temple in India, he decided to build a temple in the name of the same deity in Inuvil. For this purpose, he spent his personal savings to buy land and build the temple. In a similar vein, I found that the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple was built in 2016 by the Swiss Tamil diaspora and Saivanerikoodam (Switzerland), and this also introduced a Tamil *mantra* prayer method that was completely against Sanskrit-based (Brahminical-based) ritual practice. However, regarding the establishment of these new temples, I have heard different explanations offered according to the individual experiences of various people. Some informants argued that these new temples were merely built as sources of income. Those people claimed that building new temples was unnecessary as Inuvil already had enough various temples. (this was as simple as what they said).

These three temples belong to high caste people: Āñcanēyar temple belongs to a Brahmin priest who bought the land specifically to build the temple. The other two temples belong to Veḷḷāḷar caste people. The Brahmin priest had produced his own Hindu philosophical and theological reasoning behind the establishment of this temple. In particular, he emphasized that people living in a post-war community and the *kali yukam*[111] need to worship Hanuman or Āñcanēyar to solve the modern human problems of our age. Āñcanēyar in particular, he claimed is a powerful (*caktivāiynta*) deity for these times.

I have already extensively discussed the other two temples in Chapters Three, Four, and Seven. More specifically, here, I want to discuss briefly the individual purposes and the developments of the new temples. As previously mentioned, Inuvil-Tirupati Venkateshwara Temple was built by an individual who wanted to bring the exact temple of Tirupati and the worshipping of Venkateshwara to his natal village. His sole purpose was to insure that people

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[111] Here *kali* means sorrow/sad and *yukam* stands for the temporal period that has conquered the entire universe at this moment. According to Hindu philosophy, injustices, crimes, dishonest events, and non-obedient behaviors all tend to occur in a *kali yukam.*

who cannot make a pilgrimage to Tirupati temple in Andhra Pradesh would be able to fulfil their religious practices in this new temple. Some informants told me that some people in Inuvil resisted the two new temples. Those people, as Saivite Hindus, objected to the sudden emergence of Vaishnava worshipping in Inuvil since both Venkateshwarar and Āñcanēyar conventionally belonged to Vaishnava sectarianism (Fisher 2017). However, some devotees rejected this view because, in their view, the village's Hindu Saiva pluralism already included Vaishnava deities. However, I found that there were devotees from Inuvil who maintained a close interaction with the new Venkateshwarar temple because Venkateshwarar was their *iṣṭateiyvam* (favorite deity).

With reference to the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple, I found a different individual experience. Many of its devotees were involved in a Hindu Saiva nationalist project associated with reinventing Tamil Hindu Saiva identity and reawakening Tamil Saiva consciousness among the Tamils in the village as well as Jaffna. The temple's main sanctum feature, a Siva *lingam,* is held in the hands of a statue of Ravana, which is approximately five feet in height. The Ravana icon was sponsored by the Saivanerikoodam (Siva Religious Association), a group of Sri Lankan Tamil expatriates living in Geneva who have sponsored two similar lingam-bearing Ravana icons for temples in Switzerland, one in 2015 and the other in 2016. This group planned to sponsor an additional temple in India (Sanmugeswaran, et.al, 2019). Thus, this temple establishment through diasporic networks is a display not only of a transnational project but also, in the latter case, of a globalized Tamil Hindu Saiva project. Inuvil, of course, already had two Sivan temples that followed *ākama* theory in their ritual practices as performed by Brahmin priests. But the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple had a different ritual practice, which I have already discussed in Chapters Four, Three and Seven. What is important to understand here, though, is that this merging of Ravana and Siva by means of the establishment of the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple was aimed at reconstructing Tamil Hindu Saiva consciousness to protect both Tamils and their religion from Sinhalese Nationalism.

384

8.2.5.2   Naguleswaram

This section will not only discuss new temples and ritual innovation but also conflict between older and younger people regarding naming and renaming the temples among the Paḷḷar caste people after the war. In Naguleswaram too there were temples being reconstructed, renovated, and newly built. The Naguleswaram Sivan Temple was completely renovated through funds obtained from the Government of Sri Lanka, local donors, and donors in the diaspora. Some of the older temples there were completely destroyed during the war and were renovated using both pre-and post-war religious and ritual practices. For instance, Kasi Visvanathar Temple was renovated using new religious practices. After the war, this temple has adopted the disciple of the Gayathri (*kāyattri*) Pītam, which was founded by Gayathri *Siddhar* ([*cittar*] sage) Sri Murugesu Maharishi. I have already discussed about this in Chapter Six which speaks exclusively of Naguleswaram.

In Karukampanai, people built a new goddess temple, the Rājarājeswari Ammon Temple. This temple was a merely a small shrine before the displacement in 1990 and was called the Nāccimār *kōvil*. People planned to build a temple there in 1983, but this was delayed, and when the people who were displaced in 1990 returned to their villages after 2010, they decided to build the bigger temple they had planned earlier with the financial help of members of Karukampanai residing in Colombo, other supporters from the rest of the island, and from the diaspora.

Further, Paḷḷar caste people in Naguleswaram rebuilt two different Aṇṇamār temples in Koovil; a *kuricci*, which is adjacent to Naguleswaram GN division, and though people in Koovil *kuṟicci* belong to another village administrative division, they claimed Naguleswaram and Keerimalai places as their *ūr* identity. Factional differences among the Paḷḷar caste people resulted in the decision to build two separate temples in the same village. Aṇṇamār is a popular deity among the Paḷḷar caste community in Jaffna who is, mostly identified as a non-*ākama* deity and village guardian deity, rather like Kavunavathai Vairavar in Karukampanai. Before the war,

most the non-*ākama* temples adopted non-*ākama* religious devotional and ritual practices, which sometimes included *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) as a conventional part of their ritual before the war. In any case, these two Aṇṇamār temples were maintained by the Paḷḷar caste people. Many Paḷḷar caste informants told me that Aṇṇamār is their *kulateiyvam*. They also told me how the Veḷḷāḷḷar and Kōviyar treated Kavunavathai Vairavar in Karukampanai.

Before the displacement in 1990, Paḷḷar caste people maintained the temple's name as Aṇṇamār *kōvil*, but since the war they have changed the names of their temples to the Manōṉmṇi Camētē Āti Makēswarar and the Aṇṇa Makēswarar temples. By the time of my fieldwork, both temples now mostly represented Lord Shiva rather than their *kulateiyvam,* Aṇṇamār. Vairavan, my informant from Paḷḷar caste community, told me that Manōṉmṇi Camētē Āti Makēswarar temple was the earliest temple in Koovil, which was more than one hundred years old. But in 1967, he told me, his fellow villagers (most young people) decided to change the name of the Aṇṇamār temple to the Lord Shiva Temple, although they did this by degrees since they first changed its name to the Aṇṇa Makēswarar Temple. Along with changing the name to the Lord Shiva Temple, they also decided to stop animal sacrifice in their temple because they wanted to bring in *ākama* ritual practices. Those young people, including Vairavan from the Paḷḷar community, wanted to occasion a huge transformation in the status of their temple by moving from animal sacrifice to *ākama* based rituals and religious practices. This, they believed, would enable them to upgrade the status of their temple to equal that of *ākama* temples controlled by high caste people. This kind of status elevation by high caste emulation, of course, is precisely what M.N. Srinivas (1952) famously called Sanskritization.

But when this group of young reformers changed the name of their temple and its ritual practices, another group of Pallar caste people in Koovil village were against the decision to give up animal sacrifice. In reaction, this group decided to build still another temple specially to perform animal sacrifice. Veḷḷāḷar caste members from Karukampanai and Keerimalai supported this second party in building their new temple since they also had animal sacrifice in their

Karukampanai Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple. So, on this matter, the Paḷḷar caste community was spilt into two groups; one supportive of animal sacrifice; the other was against it. However, they did not really want to build a new temple because they actually wanted to stop animal sacrifice. For a while they negotiated the issue and stopped building the new temple. Further, the group fighting for animal sacrifice eventually built a new temple in 2016 in the place where they had wanted to build a new temple before the displacement in 1990. But by the time of my fieldwork in 2017-2018, both Aṇṇamār temples had given up practicing animal sacrifice, and people at both places told me they had given it up before the war. The second Aṇṇamār temple was named Aṇṇa Makēswarar, a name similar to the first Aṇṇamār temple. As the second Aṇṇamār temple copied the name of the Aṇṇamār, the first Aṇṇamār temple's name was changed to the Manōṉmṇi Camētē Āti Makēswarar in 2016 once its renovations were done. The two factions start building the two opposed temples to one-up each other, but then once that was done both realized to sanskritize regardless of their original positions. Those Veḷḷāḷar supporters could not interfere on this since they had given up animal sacrifice.

The first Aṇṇamār temple was destroyed during the war and people renovated it once they returned to their village between 2011-2016. However, a bit of a dispute about how to do this arose between older and younger members of the community. On the side of the second Aṇṇamār temple, young people preferred to change both the name and nominal deity of the temple by adding another deity in addition to Aṇṇamār. They argued that Pallar people would be united by this change because having a diversity of deities and names in their community would avoid conflict and competition over the status of temples by name and deity.

However, older people in general, while sympathetic to the overall argument, did not agree with some of the details of the younger group's plan of renaming or reselecting the temple's deity. That is, while the young wanted to have Lord Piḷḷaiyār live in the new temple along with Aṇṇamār, older people instead wanted to have Lord Shiva reside with Aṇṇamār. Due to the opposing ideas between these groups, young people joined with the older Aṇṇamār temple. Even

387

though older Aṇṇamār temple was already changed into Lord Shiva temple with Aṇṇamār, the younger people joined with the older temple. This happened because the younger people thought that their *kouvravam* would go down if they could join or compromise with the people who were associated with the second Aṇṇamār temple.

The young wanted to have Lord Piḷḷaiyār instead of Siva because the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple was already in existence where the Lord Shiva already abides, and, also, the first Aṇṇamār temple had already been converted into a joint Shiva and Aṇṇamār temple. Besides, the younger people argued, Koovil *kuṛicci* did not have a temple for Lord Piḷḷaiyār. Therefore, the young preferred to have Lord Piḷḷaiyār. As for the older people, they agreed that having Lord Shiva in their temple would be a convenience to the devotees who regularly came to visit Naguleswaram for religious purposes.

Further, as Pallar, low-caste people, they were not treated the same as high caste Veḷḷāḷar by the priest in Naguleswaram Sivan Temple. If they had Aṇṇamār as a main deity, they would need to do non-*ākama* rituals and also Aṇṇamār deity does not have an existing image or statue. Instead of idol, Aṇṇamār is symbolized as a wooden stick and stone (Aṇṇamār had a wooden stick in his hand to guard the village according to peoples' oral history) in Aṇṇamār temples in Jaffna, because there was no statue or image for Aṇṇamār. So, people worshiped the wooden stick or stone as Aṇṇamār temple throughout the Jaffna Peninsula (Shanmugalingan 1993), but people now preferred to adopt idol worshipping and rituals like in other *ākama* temples. As they were displaced from their villages and compelled to live in different villages in Jaffna, they also borrowed the idea of Sanskritization of Aṇṇamār temples in other villages in the Jaffna Peninsula. Thus, *ākama* and non-*ākama* divide and practices were further intensified the issue of identification and the status of the temple for *kouvravam* construction. Hence, let us have a look at how Sanskritization, *ākama* and non-*ākama* practices shaped the reconstruction process in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram.

8.2.6 Sanskritization, *ākama*, and non-*ākama* practices in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram

Sanskritization (M.N. Srinivas, 1952) of temples and ritual practices are a part of post-war temple and community reconstruction in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. M. N. Srinivas's (1952) Sanskritization explains the social change and upward social mobility in which people who are in the lower hierarchy adopt the high-caste peoples' religious and ritual practices. In terms of Sanskritization in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, I found horizontal symmetry in village non-*ākama* religious practices and their changes. For instance, Veḷḷāḷar's Nāccimār Temple, Paḷḷar's two Aṇṇamār temples, and in Inuvil, Paḷḷar's Aṇṇamār Temple were sanskritized by following the *ākama* ritual doctrine. Also, the above deities were village guardian deities as well as *kulateiyvam.* However, all those older pre-war—non-*ākama* practices have now changed into *ākama* temple status and rituality. At the same time, I found vertical asymmetry and diversity in post-war village temple renovations and ritual innovations in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. For instance, although the Kavunavathai Vairavar is a guardian deity, the temple and rituals are based on *ākama* rituality. Yet, this temple still accommodates space for practicing both animal sacrifice (non- *ākama*) and *ākama* ritual.

8.2.7 Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple: Religious and ritual innovations, Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalistic revivalism, and pure -Tamil ritual service

In Inuvil, Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple expresses completely innovative religious and ritual practices in post-war Inuvil. In Jaffna, although other Hindu Saiva or Vaishnava temples followed the *ākama* doctrine, those temple constructions and ritual spaces were structured by the Brahminical practices of Vedic (*vētam*, Skt. *vedas*) rituals (i.e., based on the Vedas)[112], which

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112 The ancient Hindu Holy Text is written in the early form of Sanskrit script and discuses about the Vedic religion and guidance on Vedic rituals for priests. These are ancient scripts of Hinduism. See also, Sarma, Deepak. 2011. *Classical Indian philosophy: a reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.

contain Veda *mantras* or Veda *shloka* (*vēta mantiram* or *vēta śloka/culōkam*—written in Sanskrit. However, in South India and Sri Lanka, Brahmin priests use Grantha (*kiranta*) script to read and write Vedic religious practices in Sanskrit. Grantha script is related to *vaṭṭeḻuttu* (round letters) like those found in written Tamil and Malayalam, which were used to write Sanskrit texts of the Vedas in South India (Salomon 1998). I saw the notebook used by our village priest in Inuvil written in a different script but somewhat similar to Tamil letters, and my close friend from the Brahmin community told me that it was *kiranta* script. Further, he explained to me that Jaffna Tamil Brahmins used this script to read and chant the Vedas in Temples. Moreover, the *maṇipiravāḷa* style (a blend of Tamil and Sanskrit), "like a necklace of germ and corals" (Kailasapathy 1979: 32), was also evolved for use in Tamil and Saiva literature in South India and Sri Lanka. Tamil Brahmins in South India and Sri Lanka were eager to adopt this in ritual practice (Kailasapathy 1979). Based on this background, the Inuvil Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple and its ritual innovations were reactions against the Brahmanical based Hindu Vedic rituals and Sanskrit language dominant in the Jaffna Tamil Hindu Saiva pantheon. Therefore, the young Tamils based in Switzerland were actually participating in the construction of a nw form of radicalized Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism through their establishment of the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple. A temple, that is, which they intended to reconstruct a space for *Civa vaḻipāṭu* (worship of Lord Shiva) in post-war Jaffna, because Shiva worship was a popular model of pure Saivism in the Saiva Sinddhanta tradition throughout Tamil Nadu.

Furthermore, the founder and several followers of this temple told me they strongly believed in following pure Tamil Saiva textual practices in daily rituals rather than Sanskrit or *maṇipiravāḷa* practices or using the Granta language in religious and ritual practices. Their initiative was somewhat similar to what Kailasapathy (1979) discussed in his article, "Tamil Purist Movement", in which he argued that high-caste people, particularly the Veḷḷāḷar in Tamil Nadu who began the pure-Tamil movement (*taṉittamiḻ iyakkam*), aimed to eliminate the involvement of Sanskrit in Tamil language and literature, which resulted in Tamil revivalism.

However, unlike Arumuka Navalar's Tamil Saiva revivalism, the current trends of Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism and revivalism have disqualified caste differences in this movement.

Based on this background, it is important to consider how many scholars and educationists are involved in the Tamil Saivite purists movement in post-war Jaffna through the establishment of Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple because people who are involved in this movement have argued that they wanted to sustain the "pure Tamil language (*tūya* or *cutta tamiḻ moḻi*)" and Tamil Saiva religiosity in daily religious and ritual practices. This shows that lost of educated people were involved. I have already discussed this in detail in Chapters Four and Five. For this purpose, they have recognized the *panniru tirumuraikaḷ,* a twelve-volume collection of religious songs praising Lord Shiva and *Siva bhakti* [*Civa pakti*] sung by various artists in Tamil Nadu. For followers of the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple this collection counts as exemplary of the pure (*tūya* or *cutta*) Tamil Saiva literature to be used in this temple. Based on pure Tamil language and *Saiva bhakti* literature, the devotees and followers developed a path, "*Centamiḻākamam*", which was purely constructed on *panniru tirumuraikaḷ*. According to this temple policy, anyone from any caste can become a priest (still, preference going to male priests), but who should take the training of how to conduct the ritual service in Tamil is based on *panniru tirumuraikaḷ.* Also, the priest must give up eating non-vegetarian meals after becoming a priest.

I also found that the young devotees of this temple and its display of "pure" Tamil Saivism also re-imagine king Ravanan (Rama's foe in the Ramayana) as a Tamil king as part of their Tamil Saiva discourse. A discourse, I think, intended by them to reawaken the consciousness of Tamil Hindu Saiva chauvinism by restructuring Tamil spaces and places in post-war Jaffna. According to Tamil literary descriptions of the Ramayana epic, Ravana was an ambiguous figure, both a demon king as well as a great Siva devotee. In the past, in Jaffna, I found out that his image had been sculptured in temple towers or painted in temple walls. Often his image was carved in wood and attached to the mobile chariots that were utilized in Jaffna Tamil Hindu temple festivals, which were universally known as *Kailāca vākaṉam*. All of these images were

meant to represent Ravanan as the greatest Siva devotee; but the sudden consecration of his icon, made of granite stone and placed at the Gnāna Lingeswarar Temple's main sanctum along with the Lord Siva Lingam in July 2016, made me explore people's interest in Ravenqa.

I found that by 2018 this kind of Ravanan discourse was popular among the Tamils throughout the country. Hence, the sudden emergence of Ravanan's granite statue in the *mūlasttāṇam* (sanctum) of the Gnāna Lingeswara temple showed that Ravanan's status status was being lifted to a higher position than it had been in the past, but in accordance with this new discourse. Based on interviews conducted with the founder of the temple and young people in Jaffna and Sri Lanka, I figured out that since Tamil people had lost their *talaivar* (leader/president) of the LTTE, V. Prabakaran at the end of the civil war, they sought a symbolic fictive hero instead for establishing a new Tamil chauvinism in the country to protect Tamils' rights, literature, lands, places, and religion. Even the founder of the temple told me, emotionally, that he picked up the granite stone for the image of Ravena from Mullivaikal town, Mullaitivu where the final bloody battle of the civil war took place. Hence, post-war places, temples, and spaces were being reconstructed through multiple orientations.

Other cases show this as well. Hence among these multiple orientations of *ūr* projection occurring in Jaffna, I found another interesting case to study in the Aṇṇamār Temple in Inuvil, which I picked as one of the non-*ākama* temples to look at for this dissertation, although this temple had been sanskritized. The Aṇṇamār temple case conveys how the low-caste Paḷḷar community Inuvil have reconstructed their own religious spaces through social mobility to reach their own sanskritized form of religiosity in post-war Inuvil.

8.2.8 Inuvil Kiḻakku (east) Aṇṇamār Bāmā Rukmaṇi Camēta Vēṉukōpālar Temple

Unlike the two Aṇṇamār temples that assimilated with Lord Sivan to be sanskritized in Koovil at Naguleswaram, in Inuvil, the old Aṇṇamār temple had been sanskritized with Lord Vishnu, locally referred to as Vēṉukōpālar. As Vēṉukōpālar lives with his two wives, Bāmā and Rukmaṇi, in this temple along with the local village deity, Aṇṇamār, this temple was named as the Aṇṇamār Bāmā Rukmaṇi Camēta Vēṉukōpālar Temple. In Jaffna Tamil Hindu culture, the Tamil term, *camēta* is used for a male deity when he is with their wive/s in a temple. This temple belonged to the Paḷḷar caste community in Inuvil and had been sanskritized in 1999. Having discussed the changes of deity (it means the changes of diety – of one diety for another) in this temple earlier in this chapter, I should not now neglect the other village's guardian deity, Iḷantāri, who belongs to the Veḷḷāḷar community in Inuvil. In Chapter Five, I briefly discussed Iḷantāri worship and a short film documented by Sabesan. Here, I will elaborate on the changes that were happening to Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār and their worship in post-war Inuvil. Mythologically, these two deities are closely interconnected and there are different versions of mythical stories and orally transmitted narratives.

Here I briefly discuss the rise, decay, and reform of these two caste deities (*kulateiyvankal*). Aṇṇamār was conventionally worshipped by the Paḷḷar caste people in Inuvil, while Iḷantāri came from the Veḷḷāḷar. In Tamil, Iḷantāri means 'young person' (referring to an unmarried person) among the Jaffna Tamils, and people even use this term to address young boys in Jaffna. In general, these deities are recognized as non-*ākama* deities. More specifically, Aṇṇamār worship is found as a *kulateiyvam* (caste god) among the Paḷḷar caste people of Jaffna (Shanmugalingam, 1993). But the Iḷantāri deity is only found in Inuvil. According to mythical stories and orally transmitted narratives, both these deities were previously humans living in Inuvil who later became village gods. Although they belong to two different caste groups, both castes worship both deities in the village. Samuel Livingstone (1971) argued that Ilandari *deviyo*

is also worshipped by the Sinhaese as a guardian deity of the tanks (or irrigation resevoirs) in the Anuradhapura District of North Central Province of Sri Lanka. However, Iḷantāri has maintained some popularity among his devotees in Inuvil, while the traditional village conception of Aṇṇamār has been altogether transformed. In Inuvil, Annamār has been transfigured into a version of Vishnu (Vēṉukōpālar). In general, Jaffna Tamil Hindus consider these two deities as guardian gods. There are many guardian gods. For instance, Pusparatnam (2012) has listed some non-*ākama* deities who are also guardian gods: Nāccimār, Aiyaṉār, Nākatampirāṉ, Kāḷi, Aṇṇamār, Vairavar, Kāḷakaṉtāṉ, Muṉi, Ūttaikkuṭiyan, Kālamuṉi, and Iḷantāri.

There are many historical (palm leave manuscripts) and orally transmitted tales about Annamār worship in Northern Sri Lanka.[113] Both these deities have connections with each other that I found in the original myth, the Aṇṇamār- Iḷantāri *katai* (story). Growing up in life in Jaffna, I heard a single version of the story about these village deities, but during periods of my research in 2016 and 2017-2018. I heard various other versions of the Aṇṇamār- Iḷantāri story regarding the origin of Aṇṇamār and Iḷantāri. To understand or study a place, particularly a post-war reconstrued community, one may require multiple ways of understanding and learning. So, I will briefly discuss the different versions of this story, which, I think, also reveals how castes had been reorganized in post-war Inuvil.

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113 Shanmugalingan (1993) claims, based on the *Vaiyā Nāttu Vzhappam* (1921), that there were 60 Pallar caste people who came from Madurai, South India and died during the battle in Vanni, Northern Sri Lanka. They became Annamār deities in northern Sri Lanka. Further, Aṇṇamār asked Pallar caste people to cherish (*ātarital*) Aṇṇamār as their deity and also Vērapathirar (one of the forms of the lord Shiva) created Aṇṇamār, which is based on orally transmitted *puranic* story (Shanmugalingan, 1993). Also, there are stories on Aṇṇamār swami and Poṇṇar Caṅkar among the People of Konku Nadu, Tamil Nadu and Up-country (Shanmugalingan, 1993 and Arnachalam, 1976). Also, there are songs of Aṇṇamār *cintu* (songs) among the people of Mullaitivu in Northern Sri Lanka (Metrasmeyil, 1980).

8.2.8.1   Aṇṇamār- Iḷantāri *katai* (story)

Version 1

This story was taken from Pañcavaṇṇt tūtu literature composed by Inuvil Sinathamby Pulavar (poet), who lived in the 18th century, during the Dutch era in Jaffna. Sinathamby Pulavar was also from the Veḷḷāḷar caste. According to him, Iḷantāri was Kailayanathan, a son of Kalingarayan, a ruler of Inuvil. The Iḷantāris were brothers from the Veḷḷāḷar caste community and Aṇṇamār was a laborer for the Iḷantāri's family (doing *kuṭimai* [hereditary domestic service]) from a Paḷḷar caste community. One day the neighbors of some young Vellalar/Pallar unmarried men – hence, the Iḷantāri – prevented their mother from drawing water from the common well. Angry about this refusal, the Iḷantāri overnight dug a new well just for their mother to use. They then went to Elalai village to bring a well-sweep (*tulā*) for the new well. Afterwards, these same boys were driven away by their father because they had not irrigated their garden, and to avoid him, the boys ran off and climbed a tamarind tree and vanished. A Paḷḷar caste boy (Aṇṇamār) followed them and asked to join them while the Iḷantāri climbed the tree, but they asked him to climb up a nearby palmyrah tree instead. Thus, the Aṇṇamār boy climbed the palmyra tree and his soul vanished, but his body fell down. Today, under the tamarind tree, the Veḷḷaḷār (because the family hailed from the Iḷantāri's clan) built a temple for the Iḷantāri. And under the palmyrah tree, the Paḷḷar community built a temple for Aṇṇamār. This version of the story is a largely shared narrative about these deities among the majority of Veḷḷaḷār people in the village, but not among the Paḷḷar. However, I found there are other versions as well in the village. The Iḷantāri temple's Chief Priest narrated this same same version to me.

Version-2

The second version of this story is derived from orally transmitted folklore. In this version, the Iḷantāri brothers were from the Veḷḷaḷār caste community, and they were ordinary people but not from the king's clan, which is way this version differed from the first version above. Otherwise, version two has the same content. I heard this version from a Vellalār woman.

Version-3

Version three was obtained from a Paḷḷar caste woman. She claimed that Aṇṇamār 's physical body and soul both ascended to heaven when Aṇṇamār climbed the palmyrah tree like Ilantāri's body and soul had done from the tamarind tree.

Version-4

This version was obtained from a Paḷḷar caste man who argued that the Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār were brothers. He further explained that the word *iḷantārikal* means two brothers. Their neighbors did not allow their mother to use the water from a common well in the village and so they dug the new well for their mother overnight and went to Elalai (another village in Jaffna) to get a well sweep. They stole the well sweep from that village. The following day, people from Elalai came looking for the boys for the sole purpose of asking them how they carried it off as the well sweep was unbearably heavy. When they finally spotted the boys, they were fetching water from the well for their mother to bathe; one boy was on the top of the sweep while the other one was on the ground. The mother asked the son on top not to stare at the people from Elalai, because if not, they would be digested by her sons (Iḷantāri) because they possed some kind of deine power (*cakti*). On another day, the mother had scolded the two boys who in turn climbed the tamarind tree. Eventually, their friend (Aṇṇamār) wanted to follow them, but they asked him to climb a nearby palmyrah tree instead. Both brothers reached Heaven with their bodies (*kūṭṭōṭu kailāyam*) --here *kūṭṭōṭu* refers to the human body and *kailāyam* refers to the Mount Kailash. Hindus believe

that Mount Kailash is a Heaven where the Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati live. Aṇṇamār's soul reached heaven too but his body then fell from the palmyra tree.

Version-5

This version was obtained from a Paḷḷar caste woman. She told me that Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār were brothers who lived together. They had a sister for whom they dug a well as she did not want to bathe in the lake in the village. She made a promise to her brothers that she would not comb or tie her hair up until her brothers made a separate well for her personal usage. In Inuvil, there was an old Iḷantāri *kōvil*, which was their house before he became the village deity. Later, their house was changed into a small shrine after they became village gods. Her brothers took only seven days to build the well for which they needed a well sweep. The rest of the story carries the same content as version four, but she pointed out that the Veḷḷāḷar caste people changed the the Iḷantāri-Aṇṇamār story. Apparently, according to them, the Paḷḷar caste boy (Aṇṇamār) claimed the palmyrah tree but did not gain *mukti* because he was from a low caste, and therefore, he fell off the tree. Yet Iḷantāri gained *mukti* because he was from a high caste.

8.2.8.2   Problem encountered from different versions of stories and local histories

Comparing these various versions of the story reveals puzzles and points of difference. For example, there is the confusion over whether Iḷantāri was one single deity or two deities (Iḷantāri and Iḷantārimār). Some people claimed that Iḷantāri was one deity while certain others claimed this was the name of brothers. According to *Pañcavaṇṇt tutu* literature, they are brothers. The author of the *Pañcavaṇṇt Tūtu*, Sinnathampi Pulavar, offered kingly status to the Iḷantāri, presenting them as Kailayanathan, son of Kalingarajan, who was the ruler of Inuvil during the era of Tamil monarchy in Jaffna in the 13th century A.D. But people today say Ilantāri were ordinary people.

The chief priest of Ilantāri, for his part, claimed that his family lineage came from the Iḷantāri's clan. I was confused with the time period that Pañcavaṇṇt Tūtu was written Sinathamby Pulavar during the Dutch period, but the origin myth dates back to the period of kings in Jaffna of the 13th century A.D. Sinathamby Pulavar was from the Veḷḷāḷar caste background who gave an important position to Ilantāri than Aṇṇamār. So, power has played a crucial role in constructing the story.

Local scholars like Nadarsa (1980) and Kanthaswami (1998) claim that Iḷantāri worship showed the ancient Tamil deity worship that highlights Hero Stone worship or *Naṭu Kal vaḻipāṭu* which was significant in the Sangam period. People erected Hero Stones in memory of the bravery shown by the warriors in the battle. Thus, in Inuvil, village people also talked about Iḷantāri's and Aṇṇamār's bravery, masculine power, and physical fitness. People believe they started worshiping them from the day their bodirs and souls vanished. As I discussed in Chapter Three, different versations of stroies are really matters to understanding places, caste, and power relations, which is very important to look at how post-war reconstruction of place's and temple's history are rewritten and retolled in a different way. Veḷḷāḷar hegemoney is prevailed in constructing the village history, but at the same time, the low-castes people also construct their own version of stroies about places, temples, and villages in post-war Jaffna.

8.2.8.3   Decay and reform of Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār worship and rituals: Changes and continuities

Since the 1950s, Iḷantāri worship has not changed much among Veḷḷāḷār devotees while traditional village conceptions of Aṇṇamār has been altogether transformed. In Inuvil, Aṇṇamār has been transfigured into a version of Vishnu (Vēṇukōpālar). Shangumalingan (1993) argues that in Jaffna, Aṇṇamār worship has gradually been getting sanskritized since the 1950s. In terms of ritual and religious practices, the Iḷantāri Temple continues the annual *maṭai* festival (a huge vegetarian meals offering) where they sing the *Pañcavaṇṇt Tūtu*, the *Kailyanathar Tōttiram*, and the *Kailayanathar Tiruvūñccal* (by Sinnathamby Pulavar) , and also offer the annual *macca maṭai*

(non-vegetarian meals offering) during which the Chief Priest and members of his family are possessed by the diety. But whereas once this was the practice at temples to both deities, the, Aṇṇamār temple eventually stopped having this trance performance since people argued that it was like a non-*ākama* ritual. Both temples still continue to practice ritual reciprocity between each other such that whenever either temple organizes an annual *maṭai*, each feswtival's organizers always offer part of the *maṭai* to the other temple as well. But Iḷantāri Temple still conducted its non-*ākama* ritual and worship and, as of 2018, had not been sasnskritized even as the Veḷḷāḷar family, who owns the temple, attended to its daily ritual service.

By contrast Aṇṇamār Temple gave up its non-veg meal offerings after the 1970s just like the other Aṇṇamār temples transformed in Koovil, Naguelswaram. Meanwhile, the Iḷantāri Temple still continues its non-veg meal offering. For Brahmines and Veḷḷāḷar, non-veg mean offering is a polluted (*mācupaṭutal* or *acuttamāṉa*) activity, but Veḷḷāḷar people and other caste people also still practice it in some villages in Jaffna. The Iḷantāri Temple allows "polluted non-veg meals" to be practiced in its form of village religiosity, which is somewhat similar to Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple in Karukampanai in Naguleswaram where polluting animal sacrifice is also allowed, which I discussed through some case studies in Chapter Six and will be discussing more about it in this chapter later. However, non-*ākama* temples and practices are not in uniform but, rather, pluralistic, because Iḷantāri Temple expresses a complete non-*ākama* rituality. However, Kavunavathai Vairavar temple allows both the *ākama* and non-*ākama* ritual practices, which I briefly discussed in this chapter early and also will discuss it throughout of this chapter.

Furthermore, both Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār temples stopped the playing of *paṟai* drum music, which was provided by another low caste, the Paṟaiyar community. *Paṟai* drum music was part of the non-*ākama* tradition. Hence, when non-*ākama* temples were sanskritized, they gave up playing *paṟai* drum music, except at the *Selva Sannidhi Murukan* Temple, which still continues to perform non—*ākama* ritual, including *paṟai* drum music.

Since 1999, Aṇṇamār worship has fully transformed into the *ākama* tradition. Now, the temple fully follows the *ākama* tradition and conduct its annual festival like other *ākama* temples do in Inuvil. None of this happened quickly. In fact, the Paḷḷar caste community started building their temple forty year ago but could not complete the structure due to the war and financial hardships. That is, they laid the foundation for the new temple for Aṇṇamār on 10th November 1982, but then had to stop construction. The Work was restarted after people returned from the massive displacements which took place in Jaffna in 1995. Thereafter the temple was completed supported by money from the diaspor and local villagers as some level of prosperity began to return. The temple finally had its first consecration ceremony in 1999.

 In the early days, the Paḷḷar worshipped a stick *(pollu)* and a stone as symbolic icons of Aṇṇamār until 1999. The Iḷantāri were also symbolized by a stone and stick, which people used to represent Iḷantāri; an older informant told me that Iḷantāri had a stick for guarding the village. As Aṇṇamār deity was symbolized through these objects, there was a need for launching a statue in this temple. So, there was a debate among the devotees of the Aṇṇamār Temple regarding the issue. Paramu, my key informant from the Paḷḷar caste community, told me that they could not have a statue for Aṇṇamār because there was no image form for an Aṇṇamār deity. For this, people sought religious advice from various people within their own caste as to whether they could have either Lord Shiva or Vishnu. One person suggested the Lord Vishnu's incarnation, Vēṇukōpālar. Most of the Aṇṇamār temples elsewhere in Jaffna have been transformed (Shanmugalingan, 1993) through associating with Lord Shiva. However, in Inuvil, people decided not to have Lord Shiva because, they felt, as the God of Destruction, associating with Shiva deny them growth/good progress (*muṉētrakaramillai*). Therefore, they decided to have the preserver Lord Vishnu. The temple management also relied on the advice of the temple constructors because of their vast experience with temple architecture and design. As a result of all these considerations, the decision was made to transfigure Aṇṇamār into a version of Vishnu (Vēṇukōpālar), altogether supplanting his traditional identity as an independent guardian deity.

So, Lord Vishnu and his wives, Rukmani and Satyabhama, thereafter, occupied the main sanctum of the temple instead of Aṇṇamār.

There were two key people from the Paḷḷar community involved in erecting the statue in the temple. One of them died after changing the deity in the main sanctum. When he died, there was a debate and much criticism about the changing of the deity in the temple, because while some welcomed the placing of the Vishnu statue, others refused to approve it. But the majority decided not to protest against this change because they did not want any conflicts in the temple, and so they accepted the change. A statue was needed instead of a stone or stick, because when a temple is transformed into the *ākama* status, it must have statues or idols of deities to perform rituals.

The second renovation of the temple took place in 2012 and people made a separate Aṇṇamār statue and placed it under the banyan tree where the temple was located but not in the main sanctum. This statue was carved based on imagination as there were no model statues for Aṇṇamār in Jaffna. This statue was like a man sitting position holding a stick in his hand. Also, people claimed that there were no *ākama* textual descriptions of how the Aṇṇamār statue should be made. Therefore, people proudly claim that this is the first statue of Aṇṇamār deity in Jaffna, which also highlights an innovation that used a non-textual strategy in post-war Inuvil. But what was the motivation for, and process of, elevating Aṇṇamār to the status of *ākama* (or "Sanskritic") deities – not just in Inuvil but also more broadly? Of principle interest here is the decay (and eventual disappearance) of traditional iconographic representations and modes of worship of the two guardian deities, and Aṇṇamār's resurrection as Vēṇukōpālar, celebrated with daily and annual rituals appropriated from the temples of other *ākama* deities within the region. I argue that the transformation of Aṇṇamār reflects a larger process of Sanskritization of local deities among the Paḷḷar of Northern Sri Lanka as part of an (eventually successful) effort to elevate their caste status. In this way the Paḷḷar sought to gain an equal position to high caste people in ceremonial events, temple management, and in standardized forms of worship.

Next, I looked at the *maṭai* offering rituals in both temples to see to how they constructed and reconstructed their purity and pollution practices in post-war Inuvil. Commonly, I have experienced what I also heard from Inuvil people: that vegetarian meals symbolize purity and non-vegetarian meals signify pollution in peoples' everyday life. A Non-veg *maṭai (macca maṭai)* ritual was practiced in these temples till the 1970s. After then ritual practices changed. For example, after the 1970's animal sacrifice rituals were given up at Aṇṇamār temple in Koovil, Naguleswaran. Similarly, the Paḷḷar community stopped *macca maṭai* and offering non-veg meals to Aṇṇamār, even though in the past, both temples had followed the practice of offering non-veg meals as well. In particular, young men insisted on curtailing the offering of non-veg meals to elevate the temple to *ākama* status. While the regular rituals of Aṇṇamār were given up for a while as they started the annual festival for Lord Vishnu, one older person from Paḷḷar community suggested that Paḷḷar caste people should continue the old practices. Subsequently, they decided to have a *caiva maṭai* (an offering of veg-meals only) once a year.

On the other hand, *maṭai* was special in Iḷantāri worship and people organized annual *maṭai* (veg-meals offerings), but theyalso started practicing non-veg meals offerings annually on separate days so as to not mix with the veg-meals *maṭai* day. In the past, *maṭai* also took place at the main place where the Iḷantāri's house was located and then his house was transformed into a small shrine in addition to the separate temple located under the tamarind tree. However, there was no *maṭai* ritual at the Ilantāri's house shrine as the people living nearby to Ilantāri's house had migrated during and after the war. This was matter to some older people who had been living near by the Ilantāri's house shrine because people gave an important position to the shirne as it was Ilantāri house. As previously mentioned, people still continue *maṭai* at the main temple, but as many affirm, the ritual is not the same as before in terms of many aspects.

The Chief Priest informed me that Iḷantāri worship has declined in popularity and also that he has stopped distributing holy thread (*nūl*) and saying oracles (*vākku collutal*), as people have started visiting other temples that have been transformed into the *ākama* tradition.

Some people told me that the Iḷantāri used to solve the issue of witchcraft (*ceiyviṉai cūṉiyam*) that was popular in the early days (they refer to the period before 1980s) in Inuvil, but now people say that Iḷantāri protected them from the risks associated with travel during the war period.

Although both caste communities, Veḷḷāḷar and Paḷḷar) participated in both temples, each community individually created their own spaces for interaction. For instance, the sanskritized Aṇṇamār Temple has an annual festival and its festival was owned (as *urimai*) by Paḷḷar caste people. But after sanskritization they had handed over one day/night of the festival to the Veḷḷāḷar people. I found out that just as the Veḷḷāḷar did not participate in the temple feast sponsored by the Paḷḷar caste people, the Pallar did the same when the Veḷḷāḷar organized the feast. In terms of communal meal sharing, caste still prevails to play a crucial role in structuring space in temple rituals. Yet Veḷḷāḷar told me that there was community unity between Paḷḷar and Veḷḷāḷar, which they maintained cordially. He specifically mentioned the upper level interaction like participating of both communities in rituals are related to both temples. Besides, the Aṇṇamār Temple is located on Veḷḷāḷar land surrounded by Veḷḷāḷar settlements where there is no single Paḷḷar settlement. Paḷḷar caste people largely populated the north east division of Inuvil. In the past, they were landless agricultural laborers for Veḷḷāḷar as well as toddy tappers in the village. But after the war the Paḷḷar, increased their socioeconomic status through education, employment, and diaspora remittances. However, Indra, my Paḷḷar caste informant, denied that the Veḷḷāḷar's perception of inter-community unity and she looked instead at a deeper level where subtle divisions and hidden caste consciousness construct spaces for interaction.

Furthermore, some educated Veḷḷāḷar and Paḷḷar caste people claimed that these deities were ancient deities, who were popular among the ancient Tamils of Northern Sri Lanka. As a Jaffna Tamil, I have observed many non-*ākama* temples that thave been transformed into *ākama* temples. However, the transformation and non-transformation are very difficult to understand within this binary oppositional, because many non- *ākama* temples and their ritual forms indicate a pluralistic religiosity rather than a strict *ākama* and non- *ākama* ritual duality divide. For

403

instance, as I have discussed earlier, the Gnana Lingeswarar Temple in Inuvil introduced new forms of ritual practice, which are against the Brahmanical ritual forms. When I asked the Chief Priest (Brahmin) of the *ākama* temple in Inuvil about this change, he told me that there were many non-*ākama* temples which did the same kind of puja in Tamil. Also, people usually renovated the non-*ākama* temples and hired Brahmin priests to do the consecration ceremony. After that, local people might continue to perform daily ritual services, but they would invite Brahmin priests to perform rituals for special or annual festivals.

I would like to share a similar experience related to the Vairavar Temple (a small shrine) within my neighborhood in Inuvil, which I have been involved in for more than three decades. There, the daily ritual service was performed by the locals of our neighborhood and, indeed, anybody from this neighborhood could do the *puja.* But the temple owner invited Brahmin priests to do the *pūja* once a year for the anniversary of renovation of the temple. Hence, a combination of both practices was performed by people in Inuvil.

In addition to the *ākama* temples and deities, there are many village deities, who could sometimes be known as guardian deities as well, but I found that people who lived close to the temples of Iḷantāri and Aṇṇamār considered them as their *kulateiyvam.* In our neighborhood, some families considered Vairavar as their *kulateiyvam.* I have often heard scholars claim that non-*ākama* deities are worshiped mostly by low caste peoples, but I argue that this is not always true because I have witnessed many high caste people in my village and in other villages pay great attention and priority to the non-*ākama* deities. The belief in non-*ākama* gods did not mean that people ignored *ākama* deities. For instance, during my fieldwork in Jaffna, my friend was advised by an astrologer to accomplish a vow for his *kulateiyvam* and when I asked him whether Lord Piḷḷaiyār or Lord Vairavar was his *kulateiyvam,* he stated that he would do the vow for Vairavar even though he belonged to the big *ākama* Piḷḷaiyār Temple in Inuvil. He further explained that he made the vow to Vairavar because his mother used to make various vows to

404

Piḷḷaiyār when he was a child, and that she simultaneously made important vows to Vairavar as well whenever he was down with fever or any other illness.

Though these practices were followed by people for a long time, they faced more complex situations when they began to deal with and question modern social and economic issues. At end of the day, people found social, economic, and political issues at local and national levels. Under such circumstances, temples were not spared problems, as they too were involved in many local disputes. The next section will deal with temple disputes in post-war Jaffna.

8.2.9   Increasing temple disputes in post-war Jaffna

After the war, I observed that in the village temples in my home village there were a number of ongoing disputes between families, mostly within the same caste -- as in Veḷḷālar -- over temple festival *urimai* and ereditary rights (*urimai*) to membership in the temple administration (*kōvil nirvāka urimai*).[114] Such conflicts over 'rights' have a long history in Jaffna temples extending back to well before the war; and, surprisingly, the war itself seems to have had no direct effect on their continuance at my village temple, nor at Jaffna temples in general. Rather, diaspora funding and the expansion of temple development constructed spaces for such disputes. Perhaps, as a result of the war and its aftermath, the practice of having temple rights conflicts appears to have increased throughout the Jaffna Peninsula.

So while temple disputes continued in the village during the war at a pace similar to that found before the war, such disputes really increased after the war. At that time people, especially the Veḷḷāḷar majority, were returning to their home places not only keen to redefine their villages' histories and identities to show their own involvement in their *ūr* but also anxious to reinstate Veḷḷāḷar domination, *kouvravam* (honor), and authority (*atikāram*) in the village communities they were reconstructing. Or so, at least, my research in Inuvil and Nagulesvaram would suggest.

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114 *kōvil nirvāka capai* is about temple administration right, which is also known as temple trusty (*tarmakarttā capai*)

405

Of course, temple disputes in South Asia have been often discussed in the scholarly literature on temples in South Asia (Whitaker, 1999 and Appadurai, 1981). But village conflicts, based on *kurichi* (neighborhood)*, pakuti* (patri-clan areas)*,* and *vattāram* (also a neighborhood) among the Veḷḷāḷar, should also be seen as part of the conundrum of temple disputes, even though they have been largely left out of other discussions of temple disputes.

People in Inuvil themselves say that temple disputes and *urimai piracciṉai* (hereditary rights disputes/ problems) have increased since the war. Ruban, one of my informants, said that in Jaffna, "just as one cannot see a temple without a ritual oil lamp, there is no temple without a court case (*yāḻppāṇattil viḷakku illāta kōvililum pārkka vaḻakku illāta kōvilē illai*)." These temple disputes did not just refer to conventional temple controversies about rights related issues, but also to various other issues related to people's anxieties about how the postwar period, socially and economically, was transforming life in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. A commonly shared claim, for example, was that temples had become more business centers than religious spaces. For example, people noted that the fees demanded by temple priests had gotten very high; and that many temples had priests who fought with one another over who should get lucrative *pūja* (worship) rites. People also noted the rise in temple *nirvāka cabai* (or temple trustee board) disputes among the devotee members with claims to *urimai*.

Further, people also complained that Brahmin priests were also expanding their ritual innovations and so including too many new things in temple practices due to pressure generated by their reliance on sponsorships from Inuvil and Nagulesvaram Tamils in the diaspora. Such diaspora contributions also challenged pre-war village class formation by providing new sources of income to the villages' lower ranked castes. Of course, with respect to temple innovations, whether ritual or architectural, Brahmin priests were always able to offer explanations in terms of *ākama* orthopraxy. Most of my non-Brahmin informants, however, believed priests were doing ritual innovations to make more money. What is clear is that the postwar, indeed, situation spurred the formation of new *elites* within the high castes and low castes of both villages.

Altogether, then, diaspora funding, new class formation, and the reorganization of *kouvravam* (or honor) order worked together give rise to new disputes and ideological-conflicts or "clashes" (*karuttu muraṉpāṭu*).

Furthermore, new postwar institutions were established within the temples to increase income, power, and prestige, like wedding halls and cultural centers, and these also gave rise to new disputes that had to be managed by temple administrations. In the past, of course, temple administrations only had to handle the temple's own organization and local property, but at the end of the war, diaspora money flowed into temples to fund the long-distance prestige ambitions of exiled villagers by funding the building of new wedding halls and cultural centers. Thereafter temples often received more income through these new directions and institutions than they did from their old, local sources and, therefore, new disputes emerged about the distribution of this new income. But such disputes were not only about money but also, as such disputes always have been, about the morally coded prestige formations shaping daily village life. This is why, at the end of the war, while temple disputes, high-caste authority/power struggles over temples, and *urimai* have not changed in substantance, they have increased in number and frequency in Inuvil and Naguleswaram. Being always about more than what they seemed to be about, in postwar Inuvil and Naguleswaram the "more" that they had to address had increased, so the disputes did too. Hence, I found that even small temple renovations created disputes among the members that were really ideological conflicts involving the villages'power hierarchies.

In any case, despite this increase in the number of temple disputes, I found that the notion of rights (*urimai*) itself seemed to have remained relatively constant for people at a moment of great historical and political upheaval even as other aspects of local identity – including individual spirituality and peoples' feelings of connectedness to specific communities, local and ethnic – were being transformed. This suggests something about the centrality, or at least wide-spread usefulness, of struggles over temple *urimai.* This is perhaps why Hindu temple conflicts

are so familiar in their local contexts, and thus referred to by many names: *kōvil caṇṭai* (temple fights), *kōvil piraccinai* (temple problems/disputes), and *urimai piraccinai* (rights disputes).

Hindu temple conflict is not a new topic in South Asian studies. There have been many anthropological studies (Whitaker, 1999 and Appadurai, 1981) that have tried to understand this issue. In general, temple conflicts are understood as rights-related disputes, *urimai piraccinai,* that occur due to underlying disputes over power sharing, land revenue management, temple ownership, festival rights, membership rights, decision-making rights, and prestige issues.

Surprisingly, in my own research, I found that these kinds of rights or ownership-oriented struggles intensified social unrest between different groups. In this section, hence, I will explicate the diversity of *urimai* issues found in temple disputes in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram. I will not be going through the details of the court cases about the disputes; that would take too long. Instead, I will briefly describe the different types of temple disputes rather than laying them out in exhaustive detail, since doing so will best illustrate how people in temple disputes express the forms of village-temple consciousness people have constructed to use in the post-war reconstruction of their villages, temples, and home places. Therefore, this section will discuss temple entry disputes, *kouvravam* disputes, and *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) disuputes. But first, I must briefly describe the general features of temple patrons and managements/administrations in Jaffna Hindu temples.

8.2.9.1 Temple patrons (*tarmakarttā*) and the management of Jaffna Hindu temples: A brief overview

In Inuvil, mostly the Veḷḷāḷar are landlords on a grand scale. Therefore, most temple patrons are Veḷḷāḷar. Though generally Brahmins are thought to be at the top of the social-ritual hierarchy in terms of religious, cultural and *varṇāciirama dharma*[115] criteria, Veḷḷāḷar are the

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[115] Four orders of life in Hinduism: *Bramcharya* (student life), *Girihasta* (marriage life), *Varnaprastha* (retired life), and *Sanyasa* (devotional life).

majority of landlords and thus, economically, socially and politically, the most influential or dominant caste in the Jaffna society (Pfaffenberger 1982; See also, Srinivas 1952).

Thus Pfaffenberger (1982) claimed that, regardless of the ritual pre-eminence of Brahims, the Veḷḷāḷar were ranked first sociologically in Jaffna due to land ownership. Pfaffenberger's claim is well backed up by my own research and well documented in the existing literature on Jaffna. It may appear surprising, of course, for in much of the popular literature on Hindu castes (Dumont 1981), it is frequently assumed that Brahmins are always at the top of the caste system, but this was not for quite a while. First, Srinivas who came up with "Sanskritization" notion also invented the term "dominant caste" to reflect this very thing; for instance, Veḷḷāḷar is the dominant caste in Jaffna Peninsula than the Brahmines. Also, Hocart's (1970[1936]) writing was partly based on his own experience in Sri Lanka described caste hierarchy as more reflective of a groups relationship to the King as in *rajakariya* than to purity (and Brahmins as the purist) as in Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (1981). The anthropological literature on caste is more complicated. For example, Banks (1969), another anthropologist of Jaffna, pointed out that a low-caste Kuricchan in Malabar will consider his house polluted if a Brahmin enters it. That is why Banks (1969) argued that, in Jaffna, the Veḷḷāḷar should be ranked above the Brahmins. However, Saiva Veḷḷāḷar (pure vegetarian) are classified as a "backward class"[116] in Kerela (Hoole 2013).

The main reason behind this social arrangement is that Veḷḷāḷar were the landlords and, hence, temple patrons because temples were generally built in Veḷḷāḷar's lands. In this context, Brahmins were hired by Brahmins to perform the duties of *pūjā* and were often settled on land or in residences which belonged to the Veḷḷāḷar. Banks (1969) said that in the 1960s the temple Brahmins of Jaffna, apart from a few exceptions, did own neither the temple properties nor the temples in which they served; rather, they were salaried servants of the Veḷḷāḷar who managed the temples. Veḷḷāḷar managers, by contrast, served either because they had rights to serve as part of a

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116 The Government of India categorized castes into different classes based on their social and economic bacgrounds for the reservation purposes.

committee or in their capacity as descendants of temple founders. But, in this regard, the famous Naguleswaram Temple constitutes a special exception, for it is owned by a Brahmin caste family that also controls the temple management and functions.

Hence, Naguleswaram aside, Veḷḷāḷar people play their most conspicuous roles as temple patrons and temple managers providing funds for the construction of temples and for the maintenance of priests festival expenses, and routine operating costs.[117] In Jaffna villages, the usual pattern is that the Brahminserviced temples are the property of the Veḷḷāḷar. In some temples Brahmins have the hereditary right to perform the *pūjās*, but only as the servants of the Veḷḷāḷar manager, whose influence extends far beyond any purely secular management of the property. For example, at Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple the Veḷḷāḷar manager has a recognized right to interfere in the details of temple ceremonies, particularly in the matter of temple festivals and their organization.[118] In this context, I would like to note that temple system disputes are often created by the interference of temple managers. There are many temples that have gone to courts over ownership issues and management problems because particular lineage/s always have influence over temple management and administration.

However, the interaction between Brahmins and Veḷḷāḷar is related to political as well as social meaning because Brahmins are hired to serve in the temples, which are controlled by the Veḷḷāḷar. Brahmins have few interactions with other castes for the most part, except with Icai Veḷḷāḷar (the providers of musical service for the temple rituals) and, to some extent, the Paṇṭaram (flower garland makers and decorators for temple rituals). Actually, those interaction are mutually established within a Veḷḷāḷar framework because Brahmins' duties like those of the Icai Veḷḷāḷar and the Paṇṭaram are equally required for the running of mostly Veḷḷāḷar-owned (*ākama* temples). Contrary to what is thought by Veḷḷāḷar that, Brahmins do not perform at the

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117. Bryan Pfaffenberger, *Caste in Tamil Culture: The Religious Foundations of Sudra Domination in Tamil Sri Lanka,* (New Delhi: 1982), p. 62.
118. Michael Banks, 'Caste in Jaffna'*,* in E.R. Leach (ed), *Aspects of Caste in South Indian, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan,* (Cambridge: 1969), p. 67.

temples that belong to lower castes, though some Paṇṭaram caste people sometimes became local priests to serve in low castes' temples – something I will discuss in this chapter later.

Caste and kinship, then, play a significant role in administration and management of most of Jaffna's temples. Though temples are public places theoretically open to all for worship, dominant castes hold the power to determine the nature of and access to all activities related to temple management. There is a system of hereditary management still actively maintained, although the Sri Lankan Hindu Temporalities Ordinance introduced the reach state control in this regard (Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities 1951). I would like to quote here a note from the Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities, where N. Kumarasingham, an Advocate in Colombo, who strongly favoured a Hindu Temporalities Ordinance. He said that State control of temples was essential. He cited instances of large-scale misappropriation of temple funds by trustees and managers. He was, therefore, in favour of the creation of Boards on the lines of the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act and added "where there is hereditary management at present, such hereditary Trustees should be given a place on the Board, but they should not be given a predominant voice so that continuity may be maintained and local sentiment might be respected."[119]

Regardless of the law, respect for local sentiment in one regard was unlikely. On the contrary, the public administration structure of most temples did not include members from low castes. Rather, temple administration remains structured by rules and regulations based on the caste system. In general, the Veḷḷāḷar dominates the membership of most temple boards. This is witnessed by Paramsothy (2008) resent study in which he states that most temple administrations include people from Veḷḷāḷar, Brahmins and Kōviyar (high) castes, while other castes are involved only on a much smaller scale. However – a caveat -- temple administration in Jaffna has

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[119] . See for more details, Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities. Sessional Paper V. Pts 122, Ceylon Government Press, (Colombo: 1951), p. 23.

to be understood as also involving more than merely being a member of caste. For rights to administration are most often lodged in specific families, lineages, as patrilineal hereditary (*paramparai/ cantati*) rights within a caste and among the castes.

Temple entry disputes were also *urimai* issue throughout the Jaffna Peninsula. These were disputes where high caste people, mostly Veḷḷāḷar, denied members of Jaffna's lower castes access, with varying degrees of restrictiveness, to temple premices, rights and activities. In the past, an extreme form of temple entry denial was practiced in many Hindu temples in Jaffna due to purity and pollution practices connected to preserving caste hierarchy. This meant that high caste people such as the Veḷḷāḷar perceived themselves purer than low caste people who they, consequently, treated as polluted. This purity and pollution complexes were further intensified through the influence of Arumuka Navalar's establishment, in the 19th century, of a *Saiva public* consciousness (Ambalavanar 2006). The temple entry issue, thus, related directly to other forms of Veḷḷāḷar centered temple and, hence, village control in pre-war Jaffna.

8.2.9.2   The Temple-entry dispute in Inuvil and the Jaffna Peninsula

During my research, I was informed that low caste people were still denied entry to certain Hindu temples in Jaffna. And I found a similar temple entry dispute ongoing between high caste Veḷḷāḷar and low caste people at the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār Temple in Inuvil. In this dispute, the Veḷḷāḷar temple authorities, who had been denying low caste people's entry into temple for three generations, were confronted by a low caste protest movement. This protest in style echoed a 'temple entry movement' that was very active in Jaffna in the late 1960s long before the civil war (Vegujanan & Ravana1988; Pfaffenberger 1990). This dispute revealed to me differences between the way high caste people and low caste people viewed temple and the issue of *urimai*. Among high caste Veḷḷāḷar or Brahmins, *urimai* issues are understood through the lens of hereditary/inheritance. Hence, one's family and wider kinship connections are most important

to consider because, for high caste people, these define one's *urimai* over the temple. For high caste people, this was somewhat related to ownership that in theory has been patrilineally inherited. But for the low castes people, *urimai* issues were related to their fundamental rights (as they viewed them) to have access to public temples for worship. Even though temple entry issue was relatively subdued after the 1968 'temple-entry protest' in Jaffna, the denial of *urimai* was still practiced when decisions had to be made regarding whom might become a member of a temple's administration, as well as with regard to ritual actions such as lifting the temple *vākanam* (typically denotes to the deities' vehicles, which are made of wood in representing animals or birds) or getting a festival right.

However, the LTTE approached this issue strategically by limiting their interference with caste-based practices in Jaffna during their active state period in Jaffna between 1990-1995. In other words, they placed a ban on low caste people carrying out ritual services for the high caste people. Yet the LTTE were not against the Veḷḷāḷar hegemony in Jaffna. For instance, Hindu temple management, temple festival rights, and rights of entry into the inner halls of the temples (even though the low-caste people were allowed to enter the outer parts of temple premices for worship), access to wedding halls, and commensality (or joint dining) were all left by the LTTE under the control of Veḷḷāḷar. Hence, certain temples in Jaffna did not allow low-caste people entry during the LTTE period of 1990-1995, but the LTTE did not interfere in temple-entry disputes in Jaffna because the LTTE needed the financial support from the Veḷḷāḷar people. This does not mean that the LTTE did not interfere in caste-based discrimination at all in Jaffna, but the LTTE banned different castes' *kuṭimai* (domestic services) and ritual services, which I hav discussed in detail in Chapter Seven. Jaffna. This shows that Veḷḷāḷar hegemony persuaded people to live in accordance with its dictates in subtle ways in order to maintain Veḷḷāḷar's cultural power over the economic, political, religious, and social spaces of the Jaffna community.

As I said, according to my research some Hindu temples authorities still deny low caste people entry into their temples. For instance, in Inuvil, the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār Temple,

413

which belongs to a Veḷḷāḷar family, had not allowed low caste people entry for three generations. Let us have a look at the perceptions of two people of this in Inuvil: one a high caste Veḷḷālar man, Mr. Vel; and the other a low caste Naḷavar man, Mr. Karan. Karan is a 38-year-old teacher from the low caste Naḷavar community of Inuvil. He told me, angrily, that his people were still kept from entering by the temple's Veḷḷāḷar management and the temple *urimai.* He argued that Navalar people did not have anything to do in the temple, and therefore, his people protested their exclusion in public in the village level several time, though there was no outcome. Hence, his people were searching for other opportunities, like building new temples or renovating a small temple in order to carry on with their ritual activities. People of his community people, he assured me, as recently as two years ago (in 2017) renovated an Amman temple in Maruthanarmadam, a small town located adjacent to Inuvil.

Naḷavar people did have a hereditarily right (or *urimai*) to one festival night at the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār Temple. But high caste people people even so had an issue with Naḷavar people going inside the temple to take part in the festival. The management of this temple in 2019 was the most recent generation of the family that has controlled the temple, and not allowed low caste people to go inside the temple, for three generations. That is, Kandasamy, the father of the current managers, and the former president of the temple until he died in 2014, had gone along with Ponnuswamy, his predecessor father's prohibitions against temple entry. This was why on the Naḷavar's festivals, Kandaswamy, just like his father before him, would demand that the festival sponsors (*tiruviḻā upayakārar*) wait outside the temple when Karan community people (Naḷavar caste) appeared at the temple for their festival.

This was distpite some protestations to the contrairy. For Ponnuswamy had talked to Karan's father and other Naḷavar people about the temple entry issue when Kandsawmay was still alive and assured them that if they would only wait patiently until his father had passed away so, things would change. Ponnuswamy asserted that that he himself was not bothered by caste differences but was afraid to change things while still under his father's control. However, these

pronouncements aside, when Kandaswamy died and Ponnuswamy became president, he carried on prohibiting low caste people entry into the temple just as his father had before him and continued doing so until his own death in 2014. Only after this did his children start allowing low caste people inside the temple. But in 2019 a low caste person, expressing a notion common to those communities in Inuvil, told me, "why should we go inside now when we have been worshiping Piḷḷaiyār standing outside for many years? Piḷḷaiyār graced us to solve our problems, so we would prefer to continue worshipping him as we have done before." This should be seen as positive resistance denoting how they were wanting to maintain their own *kouvravam*. This resistance must also be seen within the practical context of the wider region. That is, as, Karan told me, Naḷavar caste people had alternative temples available, such as Nainativu Nagapooshani Amman Temple and Selva Sannidhi Temple in Jaffna and Thiruketheeswaram Temple in Mannar where they could movefreely without anyone interfearing with them because of their caste identity.

Vel, who is a 43 years old teacher, from Veḷḷāḷar background, also affirmed Karan's story on the temple entry issue at the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār Temple. He, in fact shared a story about three of his female students. They had gone to the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār temple to make vows when they got their high school exam grades to ask the god to ensure their success. One of them was from a low-castebackground. Ponnuswamay, the former temple president, knew the girl's caste identity, and so allowed only the other two students entry. The third girl, denied entry, was left crying outside the temple. Eventually, she went to Vel, her teacher, to complain about her treatment. Now in Inuvil, there are many sub-territories in the village divided according to caste. One such territory, has a community center (Anna community center) run by the Naḷavar caste community predominate, hence, the people associated with that center easily identified as Naḷavar by Inuvil Veḷḷālar. Hence Vel, for example, was addressed as a Naḷavar by Inuvil Veḷḷālar. But Anna community center Naḷavar also proudly claimed that they had rights to own the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār temple because, as they put it, their sweat had sprinkled the land while

415

they were working at tobacco cultivation in the village. After all, during the tobacco harvest, these people used the temple premises for spreading out the harvested tobacco leaves to dry them in the sun. In this way, they claimed rights over the temple and its neighborhood as part of their daily life. This, in a way, was their answer to the Vel's student's mistreatment.

Based on the various perceptions of the temple-entry issue displayed above, I understood how the *urimai* issue of low caste peoples's were largely neglected. At the Sekarāsasēkara Piḷḷaiyār Temple, one of the twelve nights of the annual temple festival were hereditarily given to the Naḷavar community in Inuvil, and some Naḷavar families do this festival jointly, but they were not allowed to do so inside the temple in the past. Many scholars, of course, have spoken about the temple entry issue in terms of an analysis of fundamental human rights – the right of access to religious places of worship (Paramsothy 2008; Pfaffenberger 1990; Vegujanan and Ravana 1988). But I would argue that to understand this in Jaffna terms one must go deeper by seeing how this issue relates to the cultural practice of maintaining *kouravam* order. And although by 2019 low caste people were, for the most part, allowed to attend Inuvil's temples for worshipping, they were still not given membership on the temple trusty boards/temple administrations. In addition, they were not allowed to carry the temple *vākaṇam*, or the sedan chair like vehicle that conveys the god during temple festivals, an idex of of temple *urimai;* nor were low caste people allowed to move freely inside the temple like Veḷḷālars could. My informants were aware that there was, of course, a painful irony here. Tamils who, as a minority within a Sinhala majority state, had fought, and continued to fight, for Tamil rights (*urimai*) in Sri Lanka the state, were being denied their *urimai* in in Inuvil's temples as an Inuvil minority among the Tamil minority.

In the next section, I move on to discuss how Veḷḷāḷar dominated temples in Inuvil handled the temple disputes within themselves in terms of *kouvravam* (public honour)*, paramparai urimai* (hereditary rights), and power. However, I was not allowed to investigate similar disputes documented in the Naguleswaram Temple's court cases in comparable detail. Still, the few details I do have are suggestive. I found out there were court cases between the

416

Naguleswaram Temple priest and his cousin brothers (that is, parallel cousins). His cousin brothers also had rights over temple *pūja* but the man who, in 2019, was the current priest chased them out. But since the Chief Priest is old and ill, his son came from Canada in 2016 to look after the temple and was soon its priest. When I started my fieldwork in 2017, I met a Brahmin woman who was running a small shop within the temple's premises selling *pūja* items for devotees. After a month, I could no longer find either the woman or her shop. I heard from several devotees later that she was the sister of the current priest from Canada, and that it was he who chased her out of the temple and destroyed her shop. In this case, as in the case discussed below, temple politics are played for high stakes. The following section is about the Temple disputes in Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple, which will be discussed in Part two of Temples, Villages and Places of Chapter Nine. I have divided this chapter into two sections. The Part two is fallen on Chapter Nine, which demonstrates the Temple disputes in Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple and villages and places with special reference to the spatial organization in Jaffna Peninsula.

CHAPTER 9.   TEMPLES, VILLAGES AND PLACES (PART-II)

9.1   Temple disputes at the Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple: Past and present

9.1.1   A brief history of the temple and temple ownership

There were two conflicting histories of the founding of the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple;

one version claimed that the temple started in 1620 A.D.; the other that the temple started earlier,

before before 1620 A.D. I spoke with a local historian, Mr. Sarveswarann. He told me he had

collected information about the temple, and had wanted to publish its history, but because of the

war and its aftermath people did not allow him to do so. Nevertheless, I am indebted to him for

access to these two versions of the temple's history.

As I mentioned previously, the version of temple history which claims it began before

1620 A.D. cites as its source a locally famous history text, the *Yāḻppāṇa Vaipava Mālai* , an

Ancient Jaffna history book written by Mayilvakana Pulavar (Pulivar=poet/scholar) who lived in

the middle of 18th century (Sabanathan, 1953). According to this text, Tirukōviūr

Pērayiramutaiyōṉ was the chief of Inuvil village in 1365 A.D. as Mudaliyar Rasanayagam has

also documented in his book *Ancient Jaffna* (1926). Some informants in Inuvil believed that the

establishment of this Kanthaswami Temple had a connection to Kanagarasa Mudaliyar[120] who

was the chief of Inuvil after Pērayiramutaiyōṉ. Those informants claimed that Kanagarasa

Mudaliyar was from the Pērāyiramuṭaiyōṉ's lineage and could not figure out the Kanagarasa

Mudaliyar's period. This temple was approximately four hundred years old. Village people have

connected historical facts and orally transmitted narratives. After the Portuguese invasion of the

Jaffna peninsula in 1620 A.D., Christianity became a politically predominant religion, and this

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[120] Mualiyar, an honorary name was given to the Veḷḷāḷar caste people who were in the first rank
in the Tamil Chola feudal society and they were top ranking bureaucratic officials in medieval
Tamil Nadu. See also, Irschick, E. F. (1994). *Dialogue and history: Constructing South India,
1795-1895*. Berkeley: University of California Press. According to Yāḻppāṇa Vaipava Mālai,
when the Jaffna kingdom was established in 13th century AD, Vellalar chiefs from Tamil Nadu
were responsible in establishing and organizing the settlements in different villages in the Jaffna
Peninsula. Among them, Mudaliyar played a significant role in organizing the village settlement.

heavily affected the cultural practices of Jaffna natives. Further, the Portuguese demolished many

Hindu temples (about 500) in Jaffna. Thus, was the Inuvil Kanthaswami shrine also destroyed by

the Portuguese, or so people told me in 2018 according to their orally transmitted narratives.

Again, people tried to build the temple in 1621. However, history, both written and oral, goes

dark regarding what happened to the temple between 1621and1840. In particular, there were two

versions of history of the Kanthaswami temple. These two versions[121] of the temple's history

created problems among the people that some supported the version one while others claimed the

version two. This was very important to note that the post-war people in Inuvil construct the

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[121] One version was that some older informants claimed this temple was built by Kanagarasa
Mudaliyar and often overwhelmed with a myth, which is connected to the Kanagarasa Mudaliyar
period and the temple establishment. According to this myth, one night, people saw a visible
lightening closer to the location of the Mudaliyar's house and they realized that his house got a
fire. Further they thought his paddy (rice) storage gotten a fire attack, but Mudaliyar came
running toward home. Mudaliyar had the household courtyard, when people reached to this
courtyard (*muṭṭam*), they realized that nothing happened to his house and could not see any
symptom of fire attack. Then, Mudaliyar explained the reason for exposing the light that was not
from the fire attack, but it was divine light from the Lord Murukan. Then, he described his
experience that while he was sleeping, two Brahmin (the high castes in the Hindu caste system)
boys appeared in his dream. According to this dream, he was told by the two boys that they came
from Kanchipuram of Tamil Nadu and they requested Mudaliyar to build a temple for them in
this village, and then, they disappeared. As a result, he built two small shrines: one for the Lord
Murukan and other one is for the Vairavar (one of the popular guardian deities). Gradually, these
small shrines were transformed into two larger temples: Inuvil Kanthaswamil temple and
Villathiyadi (it is a tree name) Vairavar temple, which is within the same Kanthaswami temple
premises. Villathiyadi Vairavar is under the control and administration of the Inuvil Kanthaswami
temple. In addition, people acknowledged Kanagarasa Mudaliyar's for his bestow, therefore,
people founded a memorial stone to remember him after his death. They worshiped the memorial
stone, which was found during the temple renovation in the past. Later, people started to call this
place by addressing his name Mudaliyaradi, people still call this place with the same name that I
used to hear during my stay in the Inuvil village. A second version, that was orally transmitted
narrative, is about Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar and his dream, which discusses another version of the
temple's history, which was more popular among the people of the village than one. Hence, many
told me the history of the temple establishment from this narrative. According Kulanthaiyar
Velayuthar's dream, the Lord Murukan appeared in his dream and said, "he came from the
Kanchipuram of Tamil Nadu and he planted a bark of the Nocci tree at Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar's
betel garden and stepped his footprint where the bark of the tree (Nocci tree) was planted." The
following day, Velayuthar went to his garden and surprised to see the newly planted bark of the
Nocci tree and footprint. In order to support this story, people had two evidences: (1) the name of
this Kanthaswami temple land is Nocciyollai mittiyan (the place was marked by Nocci tree and
footprint by the Lord Murukan) that has been documented in the land deed; (2) the Nocci tree is
still inside of the temple.

temple's history based on different transmitted oral histories. At the same time, some local educated people used historical archives to support their claim on the Kanthaswami temple's history.

Many big Hindu temples were built in Inuvil between 1625 A.D. and 1975 A.D. for two reasons. (1) Inuvil was very popular for tobacco cultivation and the cigar industry, which many Veḷḷāḷar received a high income, allowed them to sponsor the building of many temples. (Note my earlier discussion of Inuvil's tobacco in Chapters One and Five). (2) The British colonial regime, following its principles of in-direct rule and utilitarian 'secularism', allowed freedom of worship. Hence, people built many temples (Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah, 2013). Based on recently found *kalveṭṭu* (accounts written in stone; literally "stone carved"), Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah (2013) argued that temple construction occurred in two different stages. V. Arunachalam constructed the Kanhaswami temple in the first stage, which was during the early 19th century A.D British period., and, after seven decades, members of V. Arunachalam lineage renovated the temple and made it a hard lime-stone (*polikal*) building. Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah (2013) assumed that this *kalveṭṭu* may actually have been made during the time of the fourth generation of Arunachalam's lineage, during which they wrote down the name of the temple's founder and who was to administrate the temple after the founder. Lineage members at that time may have wanted to confirm that their generation owned the temple administrative ownership/right (*urimai*) in order to avoid any kind of ownership issue regarding the temple in the future. Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah (2013) further pointed out that this *kalveṭṭu* writings begins with "Jaffna Kacheri *Kōvil* (temple) registry table." During the British period, British rulers collected information about the temples to make registry books. According Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah (2013), people who worked at Kacheri during the British period had access to these records. So, the temple owners collected the information from the officers who worked in the Kacheri.

Based on the information collected form the temple registry book, Arunachalam's fourth generation made this *kalveṭṭu* to legitimize their ownership over the temple. I do not have sufficient information to explain this further, but I argue it would have been the other way around, that the Kacheri officials would have gone to the temple administrators to collect this information. If that were the case, and if the temple managers realized what was going on, then they could have supplied Kacheri officials with information which supported their own *urimai* arguments. This was what Mark Whitaker (1999), writing in his book Amiable Incoherence, said about how temple elites took advantage of the colonial governments need to collect information about the temple in order to manipulate the colonial courts into backing their temple political results -- by giving them information about the temple's history that was in accordance with temple elite priorities and goals.

According to interviews and orally transmitted narratives, the abolished Kanthaswami temple, destroyed by the Portuguese in 1620, was rebuilt in 1840 (some claim) and the consecration ceremony (*kumpāpiṣēkam*) of the temple was held in 1852 (Kowsaladevi 1993). Based on the *Liberation Movement History* (*viṭutalai iyakka varalāṟu*) written by Nadarasa (1960), the recorded history of the temple's management runs from 1852 onwards. According to the orally-transmitted narratives and Nadarasa (1960), Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar was the founder the temple and some village elders claimed that Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar's period should be before the Portuguese arrival in Jaffna. This was the second version of history of the Kanthswami temple. Supramaniyam, a son of Arunachalam and a great grandson of Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar, started the hard lime-stone construction of the temple. After Aruchanalam's death, Supramaniyam became a temple administrator as well as a patron of the temple properties (moveable and immovable) donated by the villagers. However, Supramaniyam died before completing the construction of the temple, so Supramaniyam's son Arumukam continued the temple construction work and temple administration. Members of Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar's lineage were subsequently appointed either as administrators or as patrons by virtue of patrilineal

uirimai. Although Kulanthai Velayuthar had four sons and a daughter, one of his sons, Arunachalam, was involved in the temple's construction and development according to both oral and written history (Pathmanathan and Krishnarajah, 2013).

After Supramaniyam's death, his son Arumukam was appointed as a temple patron on 01ˢᵗ May, 1852 (Nadarasa 1960). Later, since Arummukam had no son, he appointed his son-in-law, Ramalingam Ambalavanar, as manager (*mukāmaiyāḷar*) of the temple and properties in 1879. Subsequently, Ambalavanar appointed his own son, Kathirithampy, as president/manager on 04.01.1891. This became a key point of future temple disputes since Kathirithampy was Arumukam's daughter's son (thus an affinal relation), while conventionally the temple ownership was inherited patrilineally. During the Kathirithampy period, both oral and written history (albeit, history written or conveyed by Veḷḷālars sources, so hardly neutral) suggest Brahmin priests made many "blunders" (*catikaḷ*)[122] in temple practice that, actually, rebounded to their own benefit, and were also involved in corruption and sold many temple properties.

However, I cannot rely on these histories as neutral sources since they all written by Veḷḷāḷar who had a stake in the dispute. To do this kind of work on temple disputes, I will have to relate the sources to the stake holders involved, and then see how the various competing narratives represent the various sides in the dispute. But I do not have sufficient data to see how Brahmins, Veḷḷāḷar, and low caste people each have their own stakes in these disputes, and how they affect the historical narratives they produce. Accusations of this sort of misbehavior were another factor behind the emergence of what one might call "groupism" in the village as people involved in the temple broke out into distinct parties supporting various stake-holders and local ideological positions: hence, groups supporting priests, temple owners, patrilineal inheritance ownership

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[122] *Cati* is a kind of planned revenge done by people to their enemies. When a person or group of people are disappointed or affected by others, those affected people would make blunder to others. For example, in the temple, a group of people disturb ritual service or temple festival procession purposively.

(*āṇvaḻi oruttu*) as a principle, and the possibility of matrilineal inheritance of temple rights. The resulting grounds and 'teams' for conflict were thus set.

When Kathirithampy handed over his post to his brother, Mr. A. Supramaniyam, he brought a case against the Brahmin priests, who are descended from South Indians who settled in the Inuvil to do service in the temple at the behest of the founders of the temple in the 17th century. He brought this case before the Jaffna High Court in 1914 because, he claimed, the priests were starting to gain control of the temple and the properties by using the support of some other Veḷḷāḷar in the village. This revealed to me that during that the particular period, there was a divide within the Veḷḷāḷar of Inuvil. This divide was based on *kouvravam* (prestige) dispute between groups.

According to many Veḷḷāḷar people then, and in 2018, the Brahmin priest had won his court case by producing a fake document, a case that had continued on till 1943. Between 1914-1920, there were many instances where some Veḷḷāḷar people join the priest's side in exchange for promised administrative positions if he won the court case. The priest did win, but I was told, never gave any positions to Veḷḷāḷar people. Due to the disappointment, some members from Veḷḷāḷar blunderlingly, struck out against the priests. That is, apparently, the Brahmin priest was able to manipulate some Veḷḷāḷar members into causing disruptions during temple rituals and festivals which the priest was then able to bring to the attention of the court to prove his case against the Veḷḷāḷar. Again, this way of using the court to back up one's side in a temple dispute is exactly what Whitaker (1999) found to be the case in Amiable Incoherence. This is a case of manipulating the British into an active role in temple disputes – something the British thought they were avoiding by their 'temple register books". This way of conducting disputes, I have argued elsewhere, is precisely why the LTTE started avoiding temples – because they realized they were being manipulated into temple politics, and they did not know how to avoid this happening except by staying out of such politics altogether.

In 1938 Veḷḷāḷar members brought a case in 1938 at the Mallakam District Court in Jaffna. They were following the leadership of Vadivel Swamikal, a highly regarded religious saint who lived in Inuvil at the time, about whom I remember my father telling many stories. Their brief was that the priest had produced a fake document saying that the Brahmins spent LKR. 80000.00 to build the temple in 1842. The investigation of the issuing dispute lasted from 1938-1941. As much money was involved in this dispute, the court case was transferred to from Mallakam District Court to the Jaffna High Court. The actual investigation begun in 1942, and temple owners and other supporting teams from the village collected many documents: land deeds and *tōmbu* (details of the land prepared during the Dutch period [1619-1797] in Jaffna) for the temple and temple lands to prove their contention that Veḷḷāḷar from the founder's patrilineages had been appointed temple administrators until 1914 and the Brahmin priest's legal coup. This court case lasted for six years and, again, the priest won the case.

As a result, younger Inuvil Veḷḷāḷar became angry, and the temple dispute became a more public village struggle under the leadership of Veḷḷāḷar youths. To control these youths and properly guide them to conduct their struggle without violence, Vadivel Swamikal formed the Inuvil United Front Service Association (Inuvil Aikkiya Muṉṉaṉi Cēvā Caṅkam); soon many talented people, scholars, and village medical practitioners became members. This association decided to lead the struggle against the Brahmin priest in a non-violence manner, emulating Gandhi's ahimsa ideology. This association directed the young to abstain from conducting violent acts and advised people to be patient. They then filed a case under the of various Veḷḷāḷar lawyers and educated people in Jaffna in 1948. This was a Veḷḷāḷar cause, which seems to me that an earlier struggle was over social order – a struggle to reassert Vellalar authority. This court case was conducted at the Colombo Supreme High Court from 1948-1953 led by the Dr. S. Ramalingam (from Inuvil) through the support of the Inuvil United Front Service Association. As young people were involved in this movement, they worked hard to free their temple from the priests' control and exploitation. The relationship between the priests and the public in Inuvil

weakened, and the priests also faced livelihood problems due to having a reduced income from the temple as the temple was, then, in a critical situation was this because Veḷḷāḷar patrons were withholding money. Meanwhile, the association collected money from the Veḷḷāḷar in Inuvil to continue the court cases for many years. Many philanthropists, who were involved in this struggle, spent money and sold lands to get money to continue the court case. In Inuvil village, I heard many stories about this court case and how people lost money through it. However, this struggle showed me how people fought for their ownership and *kouvravam,* and is, of course, therefor, also a part of "village-temple consciousness."

Many historical figures (lawyers) were involved in the temple dispute such as H. V. Perera, Mr. K. Vanniyasingam, S. J. V. Selvanayagam, Mr. C. Sanmuganayagam, H. W. Tambiah, and Mr. Sarvananda as the case was quite complicated (Nadarasa 1960). While the court case was being investigated, the defending party (also a group Veḷḷāḷar people) supported the priest by inviting him home and giving a donation. Further, they tried to play religious music at the temple while the temple was under the court's custody. According to Nadaras (1960) and Ramalingam (1967), the priests and some Veḷḷāḷar members somehow wanted to disturb the court case and they were against the temple liberation movement as younger people were involved in it. Three judges (the chief justice, Mr. Sir. Alan Rose, other two, Mr. S. Nagalingam, and Mr. Silva) struggled to arrive at a decision. Due to a disagreement between two of the judges, they spent nine consecutive days discussing the case in depth before eventually arriving at a third opinion.

In 1953, the three judges declared the temple as a village public temple (*potu kōvil*), but one where the ownership of the temple founders *and* the *pūja* rights of the priests were to be strictly protected; for this reason, the temple's current management was told to make a scheme of management to carry out the court's decision, which should be submitted to and discussed by the district court in Jaffna (Nadarasa 1960 and Ramalingam, 1967). Public temple meant that the priests and individual families (for example descendants from Kulanthaiyar Velayuthar) cannot claim ownership and management of the temples instead of a temple administrative board or

charitable trust, which will administrate the temple. However, I could not get the copies of temple dispute court cases of 1953, but I collected some copies of court cases belong to later periods (1972, 1978, 1986, 2000, 2010, and 2014). I require some more research on this issue to find out more information. The temple archive describes (based on the earlier court decision in 1953) that Inuvil Kanthaswami temple was established and dedicated as place of Hindu Public Religious Worship and all its properties movable and immovables and its temporalities constitute a Public Charitable Trust within the meaning of section 99 of chapter 87 of the Legislative Enactment of Sri Lanka. Further, the administration of management of the said Charitable Trust shall be vested in Board Trustees to be elected and constituted as hereinafter stared.

Even though the temple was declared a public temple, there were many newly emerging internal disputes and sub court cases to be appealed before the management was able to bring a scheme of management (*tiṭṭam*) to the court. Most importantly, village people preferred S. Ramalingam (who worked hard for the temple) as their representative of the temple in the temple administration. However, his cousin brother, Mr. K. Ambalavanar brought a case saying that temple ownership rights belonged to him; a case encouraged by his parallel cousin brothers (A. Ramuppillai and A. Sinnathampy) who had originally inherited the rights through their patriline, the Kulanthaiyar-Velayuthar patrilineal clan (Nadarasa 1960). This court case was conducted for a year, but nothing happened.

Perhaps this was because there were lots of divisions among the Veḷḷāḷar of Inuvil. (disputes between Brahmin priests and the Veḷḷālar people; later this dispute was between Veḷḷāḷar supporters of the Brahmin priests and other Veḷḷāḷar people, not any other castes were involved in this). Village people formed many groups, and even the Inuvil United Front Service Association (Inuvil Aikkiya Muṉṉaṉi Cēvā Caṅkam) were fractured into two groups due to ideological clashes. Some village scholars (*Paṇṭitar*) and other people worked together against S. Ramalingam and the temple liberation movement. This temple liberation movement first came up in 1955 to fight against the Brahmin rule and Veḷḷāḷar supporters of the Brahmin priests to

liberate the temple from their rule. Some people joined with the priest. Thus, the temple dispute became more complicated, leading to the creation of multiple schemes (*tiṭṭaṅkaḷ*) to establish a temple administration (*nirvāka capai*).

Indeed, instead of one court-ordered scheme, five different plans were submitted at the District Court; each plan prepared by a different group, and each plan's ideas disagreeing with the others about temple management. The Court, nonplussed, picked one and ignored the other four. However, either Nadarasa (1960) or Ramalingam (1967) have not listed the five groups and their plans. For this, I will have to visit the Jaffna District Court to look at the old copies of the court cases since the temple has lost all the files during the war and displacement in 1995.

Following, then, the first plan, the Court decided on having one member elected from the Kulanthai-Velayuthar clan and four members from the village (members from Veḷḷāḷar caste only) on the committee. They formed the committee in 1955 and got legal control of the key to the temple back from the priests. This was significant because ownership of the temple door key represented the power of the temple according to Jaffna traditional practice. However, the temple key and jewelry, practically speaking, remained with the temple priests because they needed the key every day to enter the temple to perform pujas.

This aside, the *tarmarkarttā capai* also passed some new regulations about how to manage temple income. The distribution and management of temple income had been the big issue of debate between the priests and temple management. Members of the temple trust board had long felt that priests had been enjoying using the entire income of the temple for their own ends between 1914 and 1955, when the temple became public. So the *tarmarkarttā capai* received a signed document from the priests to stand for the temple key and jewelry. But when the *tarmarkarttā capai* asked for them from the priests, the priests refused to return them because, they argued, because they argued that the period during which the return of the jewels and keys were to take place was not mentioned on the singed document. Effectively, then, despite the court ruling, authority over the temple still lay in the hands of the Brahmin priests. So the *tarmarkarttā*

capai had to return to court once again, in 1957, and it was only in 1965 that the court, again, ruled in their favor. But when *tarmarkarttā capai* members went to the temple on September 17, 1965, they were again refused entry by a few members, supporters of the priests, who claimed that *they* were the real owners of the *tarmarkarttā capai*. The temple lock was finally broken open at the insistence of the court on September 21, 1965.

Still, for various reasons, this temple dispute continued popping up in different forms in 1972, 1978, 1982 and 1986. Another complication arose, for example, that related to a question about what constituted proper lineally inherited *urimai*. That is, since Arumukan, the temple board president, had no male children, he appointed his son in law as his successor. This precipitated the formation of two factions, one challenging Arumukan's action in the name of preserving patrilineality; the other defending his action and the need to sometimes recognize affinely distributed *urimai*.

The Mallakam District Court had to solve this dispute in 1986. But in the 1986 Court's decision, the priest's *urimai* to participate in temple administration was once again included. So, again, disputes recommenced in 1986, and an interim *tarmarkarttā capai* composed of young devotees from the village had to run the temple from 1986 to 1995 (Temple archives). There were further court cases brought forward between 1995 and 200, and these were continuing up to the end of my period of fieldwork in 2019. The material on this temple's complicated internal disputes is so rich, indeed, that I must limit my discussion of their history at this point. Instead I must turn to a discussion of a few salient features of this temple's disputes, about how and why they took place in post-war Inuvil, and how this helps us to further understand "village-temple consciousness."

There were often temple disputes between different groups at Inuvil's and Naguleswaram's temples due to competitions over power and ownership among those who considered themselves to have a right to participate in the administration of such temples. For example, there often were disputes about who should hold the power and who, ultimately, should make decisions about

temple management. These issues both created and highlighted conflicts between caste and other kinds of factional groups in the villages. Frequently people took such disputes to the Jaffna District Court in order to solve them. So frequently, indeed, that temple conflicts and temple politics continually affected temple worship.

More importantly, in the case of the Kanthaswami temple the Jaffna High Court decided to raise its status to that of a "big temple (*periya kōvil*)" since the temple owned a large amount of property: according to the temple archives, the temple owned 28 immovable properties (land) and 319 types of movable properties. All the priests of this temple held the inherited right to have houses on the temple's land, a right they held for free in exchange for the ritual services they supplied the temple, though they also got paid. Though priests were e not allowed to sell these houses since the land they sat on belonged to the temple, but they could forever dwell on that land. Also, there were the household of many other families occupying temple lands who paid the temple annually.

I have briefly discussed each court case connected to the Kanthanswami temple based on its temple archives. Those archives are invaluable documents about the history and temple disputes of a Hindu temple in Jaffna. As Appadurai (1981) and Whitaker (1999) state, while from the point of view of colonial and, later, state law, temple deities in such disputes did not, in one sense know what was happening in their temples regarding the temple disputes, local elites working according to their own temple ideologies, were struggling within them to maintain their positions and *kouvravam*. However, that, at least in Mandur (Whitaker 1999) and in Sri Parthasarathyswami Temple in Triplicane of Tamil Nadu where Appadurai worked, the "silent deity" was only silent to colonial and, later, state legal officials. From a temple ideological point of view, however, the God intervenes all the time; indeed, even the legal outcomes of temple disputes, according to my informants, are influenced by the God. One older informant argued that even though village people talked about the divine power of Lord Murukan, others did not pay attention to him, and it was they who created the temple disputes and court cases for many years

which so badly affected the daily rituals of the temple. My grandfather told me that the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple did not have annual festivals for many years due to temple court cases.

The British Temple Ordinance or Law (which was common for the all Hindu temples in Sri Lanka) was on one side while the village Veḷḷāḷar elites' *cati* (blunders) were on the other, which was a more powerful ideology than the temple theological ideology in terms of the operation of the temple and its administration. I already explained about the *cati* in early part of this chapter that the Veḷḷāḷar people created various revenge activities (blunders) against Brahmin priests and other Veḷḷāḷar people. This was similar to what Whitaker (1999) talked about "temple ideology" in his work. The blunders of the Veḷḷāḷar would be part of temple ideology. that is an example of a language dispute—which is what temple ideology was- that groups and people in Inuvil Kanthaswami temple could use to struggle with each other about power, *urimai,* and *kouvravam.* In that language, by the way, unlike Colonial or state law, the God, Murukan, did have a role to play.

Now, the temple had the *tarmarkarttā capai* containing nine members in which two members came from hereditary families; one is from Kulanthaiyar-Velayuthar family and other is from the priest family who inherited the *pūja urimai,* and then there were seven members from the village. Before this, the membership through affinal kinship was included as they contributed to the temple development enormously, but later, they withdrew their membership and produced a consent document stating they did not want this particular temple *urimai* in the temple administration. To understand temple disputes, then, we must also understand how kinship, *kuricci,* and *vaṭṭaram* all played vital roles in how people split into groups to fight with each other based on the above attributes. Some young members independently formed the group and worked for it; for example, Inuvil Iḷantoṇṭar Capai (young devotees association) which was formed by the young male members from Inuvil village (mostly from Inuvil west) in 1976.

Varan, my informant, explained contemporary that contemporary disputes in the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple arose because of disputes over income management and temple

administration. He pointed out that people hesitated to give money for school development, instead they spent it on the temple. He was against new renovation work in the temple being lavishly sponsored by the diaspora. However, he did not want to go against such activity publicly as the other members would get angry. Unwilling to face such anger, Varan, who had been a member of the temple board for several years, left the board in 2016, three years before we spoke. In thus quitting the temple board Varan was unique. While court decisions mandated that the Inuvil Kantaswami temple's board should be changed by re-election every three years, its current management were ignoring this, and had, as of 2019, been in power for five straight years.

For Varan, the temple's court ordered change in status in 1953 to a public temple (*potu kōvil*) was important and should count for something in these disputes. The disputes themselves, however, seemed to be argued along more narrow lines. Hence, the Kanthaswami temple land belonged to the families who founded the temple originally, so, they argued, such families should have more *urimai* than the priests. The priests, for their part, argued that the Court and temple administrators should give hereditary *pūja urimai* to them because it was by conducting those rituals that they generated their major income for survival. Later, on the same basis, they argued for membership on the temple board. Yet many Inuvil people, and the temple board, had been bitterly disappointed in the past by the actions of the Brahmin priests who controlled the temple for many years that Varan told me.

Varan asked why the temple continued for the last five years with the same temple board (*nirvāka capai*; also known as a trustee board). Further, he complained, as the board members had not completed the audit and account balance of the temple's renovation and construction expenses, including an account of the daily income derived from providing pay-for-ritual services (*arccaṉai*), the committee justified keeping the same temple administration or management until they were done with their audit. This bothered Varan, whose major concern was that the committee or administration of the temple should be changed every three years as per the Court's decision. He further suggested that the income and expenses of the *tiruppaṇiccapai* (the temple

renovation board) should be handled separately from the daily income from *arccaṉai* and the basic expenses of temple maintenance. Neither should be mixed with the other, which would be too complicated. However, other members disagreed, so he resigned from the committee. Thus, present-day temple disputes intensified, as I said in earlier chapters, due to the diaspora funding, temple renovations, and the building of wedding halls and cultural centers, which all created different grounds for disputes in post-war Jaffna.

Even though the Inuvil Kanthaswami temple is a public temple, Varan argued that its administration should consider the temple owners (i.e., those who founded the temple) as part of temple management. Varan explained it to me this way. Elizabeth, he said, is the queen of England in terms of their *kouvravam;* likewise, the Inuvil's villagers should give the same *kouvrawvam* to the founding families of the temple to protect their *pārampariyam* (tradition, sometimes lineage). However, a group of Veḷḷāḷar members were against this idea, arguing that when a temple is public, the founding families should not be a part of the management. But Varan said about some members who were already on the administration that even though they did not have the *cantati piratinitittuvam* (the lineage representation) for temple ownership, they now wanted to continue their membership regardless. This meant that people who were elected as members of the temple administration wanted to continue as members through the new election process, thinking by this means also to create a path to continued membership for their children. Varan was against this practice and wanted to operate the election and administration in a democratic way. Thus, Varan argued that election should be conducted every three years, but here the members remained on the board without having the election for a long time. Even the same members and their children were elected constantly whenever the temple had the election.

In terms of Inuvil's increasing number of temple disputes, Murthy, another informant, tried to clarify for me why there were many temple disputes and court cases in post-war Jaffna. He claimed it was because people wanted to derive *pukaḻ* (praise) from their fellow villagers from being a member of the temple board or due to being president at the temple, and in this way

construct some kind of *kouvarvam* at village level. People who could not get some kind

educational qualification to earn *kouvravam,* he said, sometimes preferred to peruse temple

administration to earn *kouvaram.* He stated that the temple was almost equivalent to politics, for

being elected to the temple administrative board was as good as being in state politics. Further, he

told me that daily laborers and farmers who did not have permanent jobs were often associated

with temple disputes. He was generally speaking about the temple disputes and temple politics in

the Hindu temples in Jaffna that some people claimed ownership over temple property (money,

land, jewels, etc.) in the temple. Based on this, there were some disputes emerging in the temple.

Temple administration, he said, is the second-best type of politics to show one's power next to

state politics. He argued that in contemporary Jaffna, the mentality of Tamil people about temples

reminded him of the way the TNA (the Tamil National Alliance, the most popular Tamil party)

did its politics. That is, often people in the TNA who had no real political knowledge would hide

behind their proclamations of Tamilness. In a similar vein, Murthy pointed out, the people who

were more involved in temples often did not really have *paya bhakti* (fear and devotion)*,* the real

theological knowledge of the temple and religion. Ultimately, he concluded, people wanted to lift

up their *kouvravam* and *pukal* (praise) through their involvement in temple management and its

disputes.

My ethnographic findings about the temple disputes at the Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple

confirm that post-war Jaffna Hindu temples face many different kinds of temple disputes. That is,

not just those related to *urimai* and *kouvaravam*, but also disputes that have emerged about the

management of income and confronting individual ideas held by committee members. The

distinction between the *kouvravam* disputes and income related disputes that *kouvravam* disputes

are related to power and *urimai* driven, but the temple income is commonly managed by the

managers (who are not necessarily to be hereditarily inherited members). When the temple

mangers failed to report the proper audit records of the temple income, then the conflict arises

between the manger and other members on the board. Regardless, these post-war temple disputes have restructured Inuvil's sacred landscape, and so are part of "village-temple consciousness."

On the other hand, I found out that due to the postwar Sri Lankan Government's ban on *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) at the newly reconstructed Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple in Karukampanai, Naugleswaram -- my other ethnographic case --, people there were facing religious discrimination. This amounted to another type of temple dispute because, there, it was a government law which divided people in terms of their different ideas for or against animal sacrifice. So, we must turn to this case next.

9.2 The ban on *vēḷvi* (animal sacrifice) at the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple in Karukampanai

9.2.1 What is *vēḷvi* in Hinduism?

Animal sacrifice is a worldwide ritual found in many religions: Judaism, Christianity (in terms of the passion of Christ) Islam, and many African religions (Boaz 2019). Animal ritual slaughtering or animal sacrifice at Hindu temples in Jaffna is called *paliyidal* in Tamil, but another local term is *vēḷvi,* which refers to animal sacrifice. The term *vēḷvi* is the more popular one among people in Jaffna and in the media (newspapers and social media) as well. *Vēḷvi* commonly means *yākam* (Skt. *yagna*) related to worship at sacred fire, which was a Vedic ritual. But the Oxford Tamil Dictionary explains that *vēḷvi* refers to a ritual (animal sacrifice) offered to a deity at a non-*ākama* temples in Sri Lankan Tamil Hindu villages (https://ta.oxforddictionaries.com). In my fieldwork I found out that people used the term *vēḷvi* to imply animal sacrifice. Furthermore, as Mala, my informant, mentioned in Chapter Six, during the Vedic period, a whole horse was offered to the sacred fire, known as the *Ashvamedha yagna* (the horse sacrifice ritual—this does not mean that the horse was slaughtered, but rather that the whole horse was given to the fire). This was the ritual kings conducted to prove their imperial sovereignty. In a similar way, the

Kavunavathai *vēḷvi* in Karukampanai village was also to construct Vairavar's sovereignty over the community through the ritual's effect and his divine power.

Vairavar's sovereignty and divine power, however, were affected and disturbed by state power and Sinhalese Buddhist nationalistic ideology through the national law banning animal ritual slaughtering. People at Karukampanai highly valued the *cakti* (power) and *aruḷ* (grace/divine power) of their *kulateiyvam,* Vairavar. Village people claimed that both their temple and its animal sacrifice rituals are more than three hundred years old. Kavunavathai *vēḷvi* was, indeed, one of the oldest ritual practices, and had been a quite popular ritual throughout the Jaffna Peninsula. Also, animal ritual slaughtering was a part of village religious pluralism – the mingling of *Agama and non-Agama* practices discussed earlier -- and was practiced in many Hindu temples in Jaffna, though Arumuka Navalar, Jaffna's great 19th century reformer of Saiva Siddhanta religious practice, was against animal sacrifice during his period (1822-1879). Indeed, a critique of sacrifice was one of his major criticisms used to reawaken what he believed was a proper Saivite religiosity in Jaffna.

9.2.2   Animal sacrifice scenario in Sri Lanka: past and present

In Sri Lanka, court cases about the ritual of animal sacrifice in Chilaw and Jaffna have been increasing since the war ended in 2009. The Sri Pattira Kāḷi Amman Kōvil in Munneswaram, Chilaw and the Kavunavathai Narasiṅka Vairavar Kōvil in Karukampanai, Naguleswaram, are both promising sites of animal sacrifice in Sri Lanka. Since the war ended in 2009, a series of court cases were commenced in Chilaw and Jaffna proposing to ban on animal sacrifice in Hindu temples in Sri Lanka (Boaz, 2019). The national proposal to ban animal sacrifice was part of a discourse constructed nationally through animal rights' protests, anti-animal violence campaigns, and the Buddhist notion of non-violence (*ahimsa)*, and pure Saivism ideology.

About these new waves of thinking and reordering of *conscience* in reconstructing villages in Jaffna, Valli, an old woman, told me that in the past (three decades ago) people used to talk about sin (*pāvam*—demerit) by killing animals or birds or creatures, but today people receive comments about animal rights, or on children and pregnant women not witnessing animal slaughter, or that health inspector's concerns about health and the environment. During the displacement, I saw a woman from another village slaughter a chicken for her daily cooking without fear of sin. Some older people argue that these new comments are additional or supplementary information that the state has used to divert people and push the notion animal sacrifice should be banned without looking at the locale views and cultural meanings of *vēḷvi*. Hence, I would argue that the diversity of religious practices previously available in Jaffna, including animal sacrifice and eating non-veg meals, was being actively devalued by 2018 by the alien cultural and political forces of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and Indian modern Brahmanical Hinduism.

The Sinhalese Buddhist Government of Sri Lanka passed legislation banning animal sacrifice in Hindu temples in Sri Lanka in 2018 after a petition to ban the practice was submitted to the parliament. This was a petition collected by 300 Buddhist monks and signed by 750,000 people (Boaz, 2019). But locally there were many controversies and conflicting views about the animal sacrifice ritual in Munneswaram and Kavunavathai temples. For example, the Jaffna High Court ordered the Kavunavathai temple's management to stop animal sacrifice in 2016 before the national bill banning animal sacrifice was passed. Further, people noted that this legislation banning sacrificed was strongly proposed by offering scientific and environmental arguments by, for example, anima rights supporters, who simply neglected the local cultural logics and meanings of animal sacrifice. As an anthropologist, of course, I am neither supporting nor arguing against animal sacrifice. But I do want to present Jaffna people's perceptions of this issues, and how this issue was constructed differently by people of various ages and gender groups. Ultimately, most of the Jaffna public felt that banning the conventional practice of animal

436

sacrifice was religious discrimination. That is, a law passed by the Sinhalese Buddhist majority Government of Sri Lanka to insult the Tamil ethnic minority freedom of religion.

Boaz (2019) pointed out that in Sri Lanka, since 2010, there were frequent discussions about proposing a national law prohibiting animal sacrifice in Hindu temples in Sri Lanka due to the animal sacrifice controversy in Munneswaram Kāli Temple in Chilaw. At the state level, many ministers, Sinhala-Buddhist politicians, and different political parties were against animal sacrifice in Munneswaram and they wanted to bring a national law on it. In 2012, the *Jathika Hela Urumaya* (National Heritage Party-a predominantly Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalist political party in Sri Lanka) addressed the issue by demanding a nationwide banning of animal sacrifice. Likewise, the Sinhalese majoritarian state supported all of these voices protesting and banning animal sacrifice based on Sinhala Buddhist state ideology and the Buddha's teachings. For many people in the Jaffna region, banning animal sacrifice revealed that Sinhalese Buddhist nationalistic power not only protected the Sinhalese Buddhist state-based Buddha Sasana ideology, but also their control over Tamil Hindu religious spaces and practices in post-war Jaffna villages. However, this seems to me more complex because some Hindus in Jaffna, using Navalar for inspiration, actually agree with the national ban. The ban was a good way to drive a wedge between *ākama* and non-*ākama* Hindus in Sri Lanka.

9.2.3 The ban on *vēlvi* at the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple in Karukampanai in Naguleswaram: legal and humanitarian aspects and debates

As a result, in 2016, the All Ceylon Hindu Congress filed a case against the animal sacrifices performed at the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple at the Jaffna High Court (Jaffna High Court, 2016). Their justification for the ban was that animal sacrifice took place in the courtyard of the temple so severed animal heads and blood would be visible to the public -- including passing children, young people, and pregnant women. The violent event might affect the pregnant women and the baby. They were also upset that animals were seeing their fellow animals being

slaughtered (Sacrificing Animals in Hindu Temples, 2014). Further, the State Legal Council criticized the practice by calling it "primitive and barbaric" (Jaffna HC Bans, 2017). Consequently, the Jaffna High Court Judge M. Ilancheliyan issued an interim injunction against animal sacrifice in 2016.

However, I heard from my informants that people were still trying to get permission to perform animal sacrifice from local health services officials despite the ban, which was somehow communicated to the judge through local religious leaders. Therefore, he informed people that they would pay a fine if they tried to carry on with *vēḷvi* in contempt of court. Later, owners of the temple and supporters of animal sacrifice from the village appealed against his decision, but he issued a very strict and final decision banning all *vēḷvi* in 2017, and people were told they would be brought to the court if they violated this law. When I was conducting my fieldwork from 2017 to 2018 in Karukampanai, Keerimalai, and Naguleswaram, certain people initially suspected me of collecting data about this issue for the Government. Therefore, at first, I did not investigate the animal sacrifice controversy since it was so very serious and sensitive to the Tamil Hindu minority community. So, I waited for many months until I was able to win their trust by investigating other matters till, eventually, they were ready to openly speak about the issue. I also had access to printed material such as newspaper articles and journal articles about the issue.

In Sri Lanka as a whole, this issue was discussed at various levels because people from Kavunavathai Vairvar temple had brought forward an application for overturning the 2016 Jaffna High Court decision prohibiting animal sacrifice in Hindu temples in the Northern Province (Christopher, 2019). But animal activists urged Mano Ganeshan, the then Minister of Hindu Affairs, to implement the decision to ban animal sacrifice. D. M. Swaminathan, then Minister of Prison Reforms, Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Hindu Religious Affairs, also supported the ban and brought forward a new law to this effect.

Even though there was an appeal to allow the practice of ritual animal sacrifice by anyone who had a license under the Butchers Ordinance and who adhered to the provisions of the cruelty

438

to Animals Act, several objections to this were immediately raised: that the health of the animals to be sacrificed should be first certified by the Public Health Inspectors, and that a veterinarian should provide a certificate about the health of the animal before slaughtering. Also, people argued that ritual sacrifice, if allowed, should take place in a humane manner (Christopher 2019). At the village level, however, many people were very upset by all these new rules and regulations and were worried about the government abolishing the devotional practices they performed for their *kulateiyvam*, their caste God. But this issue cannot be understood as a case of a divergence between local and national views. For during my fieldwork in Naguleswaram, I received many different views about *vēlvi* from various people; views which I will describe in the following section. Some there supported the continuation of *vēlvi* while others totally rejected it. Nor did these two views reflect some simple generational divide between nostalgic older residents and younger people more amenable to change because, really, both older and younger people in Naguleswaram held conflicting views.

Since this debate was also covered by local newspaper I will, first, briefly discuss some of the interviews that appeared in a Tamil newspaper, *putiviti* (New Destiny) (28.10.2017). There a Mr. Mahalingam was interviewed who worried that *vēlvi* had not been performed for the last two years, and that the Government would have to face the likely consequences of such ritual laxity, such as unexpected accidents and deaths. People performed animal sacrifice as a *vow* (*nērttikkaṭaṉ*), he said, to get rid of their sorrows and deceases. Mahalingam further claimed that this ritual had been conducted for many generations before he was born, and that was why people were so upset over its sudden banning (Rockshan, 2017).

In another newspaper interview, the current priest of the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple, Selvakkumaran Iyar, argued that *vēlvi* was not a new practice, but a long prevailing one, and therefore, should not be stopped by anyone. Yet, it is a practice in many Jaffna temples that were slowly giving up. Nonetheless, he said that each temple had a unique identity, and the *vēlvi* ritual was part of the unique identity of the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple. Further, he argued, Tamil

culture would lose its existence if people followed the civilization (*nākarikam*) by giving up conventional practices (*muṟai*). He said that just as other ethnic groups (i.e., the Sinhalese Buddhist majority) protect *their* cultural values, so Tamils too must guard their own unique identities (*aṭaiyāḷaṅkaḷ*). The *vēlvi* should be considered as a ritual and a custom rather than as an entertainment or kind of business. Many devotees, the priest continued, argued that there are many car accidents occurring in Jaffna, and that this was entirely because of the ban on *vēlvi*. People were, he told the newspaper, coming up with innovative alternatives to get around the ban. Recently, he remembered, one couple made a vow to sacrifice a goat for their child's illness to be cured, but instead of having the goat sacrificed in the temple they sold their goat and offered the money from the sale to the temple *till* box (*uṇṭiyal*)[123]. The priest told me that the parents were not satisfied with this work-around, but they did not have any other option than to accept it (Rockshan, 2017).

Next, I read the newspaper interview of one Mr. S. Kamalanathan (48 years old), who pointed out that *vēlvi* has been conducted at the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple since his father and grandfather's time. He believed that due to the ban on *vēlvi,* there had been many deaths and accidents in Jaffna. He claimed that this was because Kavunavathai Vairavar was an aggressive deity; if the *vēlvi* for him was not performed, the consequences would be severe. He further explained that people at Karukampanai domesticated goats specifically for the purpose of *vēlvi* at their homes, and this was a life ritual (*vāḻkkai caṭaṅku*) for them. In particular, many young people were involved in domesticating goats, and spent much of their daily life taking care of those goats destined for animal sacrifice.

The newspaper also interviewed one Mr. K. Mahendran (62 years old farmer) about this issue. Mr. Mahendran is also from Karukampanai village, and he pointed out that even when the temple was renovated, Vairavar statue was supplanted in the sanctum of the temple by the temple

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[123] A till box is an offering box that many temples have at or near the door to the temple.

administration at the time of its consecration ceremony in 1973, the temple management still did not give up *vēlvi*. He told the newspaper in the 1980s, Rasathurai, a member of Parliament, and a Minister of Cultural Affairs under the government of [name of Prime Minister at the time] attempted to ban the *vēlvi,* and brought forward a proposal to do that to be discussed in the Parliament, but the proposal was not passed into law. At that time, he said, *vēlvi* was nonetheless temporarily curtailed while this proposal was being discussed in the Parliament. Mahendran said that people of the village, including himself, filed a case at the Court against this suspension of practice, which they won, and so the temple went on performing the *vēlvi*. Subsequently, due to the war-time displacement of people from 1990-1996, the ritual was not performed, and then they had to obtain special permission from the Sri Lankan military through the Grama Niladhari (village administrative officer) to conduct the *vēlvi* again in the temple as the temple was under the High Security Zone, a condition which continued until 2011. Since 2011, he told the newspaper, village people continued conducting the *vēlvi* until it got banned in 2016 (Rockshan, 2017). In addition, he pointed out, between 2013 and 2014, a small controversy arose over whether *vēlvi* should be conducted in the public courtyard of the temple, but this was solved by moving it to a location veiled from public view. In 2015, another change, for health reasons, was mandated for ritual performers; that the place of sacrifice should be covered with polyethene to stop blood and flesh from spreading into the soil. Based on what I could glean from the newspaper article, all of the people above were supporters of the *vēlvi*. But the article interviewed those opposed to it as well.

Hence, in the same article, there was the view of Mr. K. Sachithananthan (Leader- Sivasenai in Jaffna) who objected the *vēlvi* based on Saivite, Buddhist, and Jain philosophies. He was inspired by Mahavir (the 5th century BCE founder of Jainism) and the Lord Buddha (the 5th century BCE founder of Buddhism) who both, he claimed, opposed *vēlvi* in India. He pointed out further that *vēlvi* was not conducted in Murukan, Pillaiyar, and Sivan Temples (i.e., *ākama* temples), but *was* performed at the temples of village deities. In the past, Sachithananathan said,

441

Minister Rasathurai had brought forward legislation banning *vēlvi*. But when this was not successful, he joined fellow members of parliament in a hunger strike to stop *vēlvi*. Later, they filed a case at the Malakam District Court in this regard, but the temple management and village people still got permission from the Divisional Secretariat Office in Jaffna to conduct *vēlvi* by accepting some conditions stated in the health inspector's certification. After this, fellow members of the Sivasenai group (Hindu Saiva Nationalist group) sent an appeal to the Ministry of Hindu Culture to stop the *vēlvi,* which was also a failure. Eventually, the Judge of the Jaffna High Court, M. Ilancheliyan, issued a ban on *vēlvi* in 2016 (Rockshan, 2017).

So far, I have discussed the views of various people as found in interviews conducted by the reporter, Rockshan, published in a Tamil newspaper. These interviews show that villagers held a range of opinions about animal sacrifice, although Rockshan clearly focused mostly on those supporting the practice. At this point I want to turn, next, to the various views of *vēlvi* I discovered doing my own ethnographic research interviews.

Case-1

I met Lingam from Kavunavathai (a *kuṟicci* of Karukampanai village) where his *kulateiyvam* Kavaunavathai Vairavar's Temple was located. He was so excited to speak to me about *vēḷvi* although, according his own words, "it cannot be imagined and described by words." He remembered an earlier part of his life in his *ūr* related to *vēḷvi* in which about one thousand goats and one thousand chickens were sacrificed on the *vēḷvi* day (one day event) of every year. After the animal sacrifice, the meat of the goats and chickens was sold among the members of the village and throughout Jaffna, and the price of one equal share (*paṅku*) of the meat was about Rs.5000.00. However, he said, when the Jaffna High Court banned animal sacrificing in 2016 due to the pressure of external forces (the Sri Lankan government bodies, local religious associations, and individual religious leaders), these external bodies were not aware of the strength of Vairavar, who was a very powerful and aggressive deity in the village. So Lingam warned the people who

were against the *vēḷvi,* saying, "they cannot estimate Vairavar by *law* and *order* and do not know how much people have suffered because they have not performed *vēḷvi* regularly." Lingam told me that even when the people of his village were dispersed to different places during the wartime displacement, they sometimes came together from afar to perform this ritual in a common place on behalf of the deity. Lingam told me, further, that he believed that it was because Jaffna people had not performed animal sacrifice for the past few years that there were so many accidents and deaths occurring in Jaffna. In the past, he claimed, Vairavar had protected the village when they regularly performed the sacrifice every year. *Vēḷvi* was not just a religious ritual, according to Lingam, but a festival for the entire village, and people had treated it as a great festival in the past. That is, the animal sacrifice festival was performed on a grand scale before the war and, people in the Jaffna region recognize this Kavunavathai village because of its popular sacrifice festival (Kavunavathai *vēḷvi*).

Case-2

I talked to Easvari, from Keerimalai section of Naguleswaram, and she told me she still believes that it was her *kulateiyva* Kavunavathai Vairavar who protected her life during her displacement during the war. In the past, she remembered, her uncle used to slaughter animals at the *vēḷvi* ritual in the temple. She said that she also visits the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple (*ākama* temple) but has more affection for Vairavar. She narrated the story of how *vēḷvi* was started in that temple (See Chapter Six for more details about this story). The story was that once upon a time, young girls (unmarried) were sacrificed (human sacrifice) in this temple, but a sage visited this village and forced to stop this practice, and suggested people to sacrifice goats and chickens instead of humans. She argued that there had been no robbery, murder, fights, sorrow, conflicts, deceases or deaths in the village, or in the Jaffna Peninsula, when they had *vēḷvi* ritual every year without an interruption, but she claimed that all of these misfortunates had arisen because *vēḷvi* was no longer being performed due to the Courts having forbidden it. As a result,

she said, many young people have had untimely deaths -- (three girls had died; two of them had committed suicide due to personal reasons and the other of cancer) and unexpected accidents had been reported quite often. Now, she pointed out, animal sacrifice was not a new practice in the Jaffna region because it was already practiced at the Māri Āchi and Annamar Temples in Keerimalai (I already discussed about these two temples in Chapters of Six and Eight Part-I). Later on, she said, though these two temples too gave it up, the Kavunavathai Vairavar Temple continued to practice it until the 2016 ban. Thus, Kavunavathai Vairavar had become popular among the people of Naguleswaram and Keerimalai; and particularly among the people of Karukampanai, who treat Vairavar as their *kulateiyvam*. Yet, at the same time, she noted, some families are against *vēḷvi* as they are pure vegetarians.

Case-3

I talked to a number of young people about animal sacrifice. Some young people (mostly men) were opposed to *vēḷvi*, but other young girls (unmarried) argued that their village has been badly affected by failing to perform *vēḷvi*. The young men, for their part, argued that vegetarian people should come and abandon the *vēḷvi*. They felt sacrificial practices were the result of disgusting, superstitious beliefs that have really shamed Jaffna Tamil Saivites. Also, they felt such practices showed that their Tamil society is not yet civilized. Some of them claimed that while it was true that, *vēḷvi* has been practiced in many temples since the Vedic period, that practice was slowly being given up after the Buddhist and Jainism teachings of an ideology of ahimsa, or non-killing, became popular among people. Some of the young men argued that that neither Kāli at Munneswaram[124] nor Vairavar at Kavunavathai have demanded for a goat or chicken as an offering, and, hence, that it is only humans who have created these barbaric and

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[124] Munneswaram is one of the Pañca Īswaraṅkaḷ (five Shiva temples). Other four are Thiruketheeswaram, Thirukoneswaram, Naguleswaram, and Thodeswaram, which all are located on the coastal parts of Sri Lanka. These five temples are dedicated to the Lord Shiva, which are more important to the Sri Lankan Hinduism because they are connected to different Hindu epic and puranic stories.

uncivilized practices according to their own desires. Other young men argued that there is no difference between people killing a goat or chicken at a butcher shop and killing an animal in the temple. The implication being, for these young Saivite vegetarians, that regardless of locations, both killings were equally profane. Other young people disagreed with this equivalency, arguing instead that while slaughtering animals for food was a universal practice, slaughtering animals for sacrifice should not be tolerated, and, therefore, the two could not be compared. At the same time, still other young people – male and female? – questioned the action of adopting an international moral order while abandoning their own cultural practice of *vēḷvi*. Thus, indeed, they equated both animals slaughtering for food and ritual animal slaughtering as religious offerings.

9.2.4   A discussion of *vēḷvi* from past to present

These three cases demonstrate difference stances on *vēḷvi* after the Court's decision to ban the *vēḷvi* in post-war Jaffna. In this chapter, I have brought up three types of temple disputes: temple entry problems, animal sacrifice, and *urimai* battles over temple administration or management. I have picked these three kinds of disputes based on my personal experiences living in Jaffna for more than three decades. Similarly, these three kinds of disputes were intensively discussed in the Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities, Etc. published in 1951. According to this report, these issues were often brought to the attention of British officials during the latter part of the19[th] century and through the early 20th century until 1948 and independence. Many people participated in debates about these issues, and their views were compiled in this report. According to the report, the temple entry issues were considered as social issues and fundamental human right problems by many complaint makers. There were many debates about temple entry and a majority supported it, but a few cases favoring temple entry in the 1950s were rejected. Animal sacrifice was intensively discussed throughout the island at that time too, and the report compiled letters from individuals and religious organizations on the issue.

I will briefly discuss how animal sacrifice was discussed more than sixty years ago in this report because it seems, to me, relevant to the present debate on *vēḷvi*.

According to the report, many Jaffna Hindu people then pointed out that *vēḷvi* was considered sacred in the Vedic period. The Vedas and the Agamas (*ākama*), as I mentioned earlier, are sacred books, and further the report says that many Jaffna Hindus see them as authoritative for religion because they were given by God. Moreover, I would point out that *because* they were given by god, Jaffna Saivites also think no one can dispute their authority. However, according to the report, Jaffna Hindus 60 years ago also thought the authoritative prescriptions of these texts were only for the Saiva religion or Saivism alone.[125] At the same time, the *ākama* prohibit animal sacrifice to the Lord Shiva or Sivan and to other Gods of the Saiva religion (like Piḷḷaiyār and Murukan). On the other hand, *vēḷvi* was performed for other Gods such as Vairavar, Amman, and Kāthavarāyar, So I would argue that though the Saiva religion forbids killing, certain Saivites nonetheless wished to practice this ritual, of course, to gain benefits from certain deities. This tension between Saivite orthopraxy and the practical need to obtain benefits from non-Saivite and local deities has underlain may strong debates between *ākama* and non-*ākama* traditions in the past.

Considering the ban on animal sacrifice more broadly, one might argue that in the village the ban on *vēḷvi* created the problem of a deteriorating *kourvaram* ordering. For example, in Karukampanai, people who were already against *vēḷvi,* felt entitled to criticize the people who wished to carry out the *vēḷvi* by pointing out that they were breaking a national law on banning *vēḷvi*. This situation also divided the village into two groups: s supporters and non-supporters of *vēḷvi*. This divide and conflict encouraged people to fight for their fundamental religious rights, but also to safeguard their *ūr mariyātai* (respect) and *kouvravam.* On the other hand, another discourse emerged based on the notion of *karma,* warning that animal sacrifice lead to

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125 Of course, Vaishnavism in other parts of South Asia would claim the Vedas, at least, as also authoritative for them.

446

punishment through a collection of bad *karma.* Some people affirmed that they believed that one

repercussion (of animal sacrifice or failing to do animal sacrifice) was that the whole village

population was uprooted from their homes for more than two decades by the war, and that there

was so much loss of lives and properties through-out the long-term journey of displacement.

After reading this report, I understood that temple entry was encouraged by many scholars

and religious leaders through the Temple Ordinance who wanted to wipeout animal sacrifice.

They thought that many non-*ākama* temples were engaged in *vēḷvi,* and that it was low-caste

people who were most often associated such more non-*ākama* traditions and temples. The

religious leaders and policy makers therefor would have thought that if they had a policy

sanctioning low-caste people to entering *ākama* temples, then such low caste people would be

inclined to give up animal sacrifice. Also, they felt that the *ākama* model was the best model,

which was conveyed through authoritative religious teachings and revivalism. As a result, they

thought, many non-*ākama* temples gave up *vēḷvi* in the past.

There was some evidence of this in the more recent past. For example, as I have already

mentioned in this chapter, two Aṇṇamār temples in Koovil stopped *vēḷvi* in 1967. Further,

Vairavan, my informant from Paḷḷar caste community, told me that other non-*ākama* temples

adopted *maṭālaya viti,* a specific code of non-*ākama* conduct, for daily religious practices, which

code of conduct included *poṅkal* (offering milk rice to deities) *kuḷitti* (cooling the deities by

offering them special food and porridge) and *vēḷvi*. Between 1965 and 1967, in their village, there

had been two brothers who worked hard to create a desire among the young people to stop the

vēḷvi, and their efforts became successful in 1967. Their argument was very effective. They

claimed that their community was becoming poorer by engaging in *vēḷvi* because to do so they

had to spend lots of money keeping the sacrificial animals fed and cared. Indeed, they claimed, in

the past the Paḷḷar community had had to spend so much money on animal feed that they had not

had enough to eat themselves. Yet they had had to maintain the growth and size of those animals

to compete in the market that arose selling sacrificial meat during the festival season. In

pragmatic terms, the practicing animal husbandry for ritual purposes was a very challenging industry for low caste people due to their relative poverty, or so these two brothers believed during their efforts to correct their community.

Arumuka Navalar, the great 19th century reformer of Saiva Siddhanta, was against *vēḷvi* and other Vedic rituals, the performing of which, he felt, would not allow people to achieve *gnanam,* a stage of pure knowledge or wisdom, which leads one to achieve *moksha* or *muktti* – that is, release or enlightenment (Ambalavanar 2006; Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1989). Navalar's religious revivalism and his version of *ākama* teachings, then, had influenced Jaffna people to give up animal sacrifice in the past. As a result, there were very strong debates between adhearents of *ākama* and non- *ākama* doctrines. Navalar had criticized many contemporary temples, which he felt were not in line with *ākama* because those temples and their priests had made too many additions to the practice of *ākama* (Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities, Etc. 1951).

Like Navalar in the 19th century, the *Saiva Paripalana Sabai* (Society for the Preservation of Hindu Saivism) also attemplted to revive Saivism to stop *vēḷvi* in most Jaffna temples in the 1950s. At that time, though, *vēḷvi* was still practiced in 185 temples with 9680 goats and 16780 chickens being slaughtered (Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities, Etc. 1951). Indeed, this practice played a vital role in the Jaffna economy because of the meat sold after ritual slaughtering.

Nonetheless, based on the report, I realized that many people and religious organizations had been against *vēḷvi* in the past, which is also what is happening in post-war Jaffna, though often under somewhat different auspices. Namely, that many individuals, animal rights advocates, environmentalists, and, as in the past, religious leaders and religious organizations have objected to the continuance of *vēḷvi.* Yet, religious believers and devotional people still argue that since *vēḷvi* has been in existence for so long, and since people kill animals for food anyway, they should not have to stop sacrificing in temples. Furthermore, non-killing and non-vegetarian

ideology, they claim, was imposed upon Jaffna people through this kind of act (ban on animal sacrifice), but these ideologies cannot be generalized to all as everyone's *conscience* is constructed differently. In the same vein, in the past, according to the report, many religious leaders and individuals suggested that legislation about this issue was not needed (contradicting the Sri Lankan Government which actually passed a national law prohibiting sacrifice in 2018). Rather, for them, education and propaganda alone should suffice to revive society. Further, the report mentioned that the state should not interfere in religious matters since the "freedom of worship is one of the fundamental rights of a citizen in a democratic state and animal sacrifice is not an offence under the penal code" (Report of the Special Committee on Hindu Temporalities, Etc. 1951: 218).

Hence, I would argue that *vēḷvi* is a practice carried out by some people to make vows and to satisfy certain deities in the meeting of devotee desires. As such, animal sacrifice was a part of a complex Hindu pluralism of practice in the region. But Jaffna Hindu religious pluralism and diversity were dominantly controlled by Saiva *ākama* revivalism through Arumuka Navalar 19th century construction of a *Caiva* public doctrine (Ambalavanar 2006). A doctrine, that is, encouraged the worship of *ākama* deities and the discarding the village deities, like goddess Kannaki, and the abandoning as well of non- *ākama* practices like animal slaughtering and the offering of non-veg meals. My data suggests that the tension between *ākama* and non- *ākama* deities and practices – and, hence, between what I am calling "pluralism" and the strict orthopraxy of Navalar's version of Saivism, is long standing, and that the post-war period signals a return to this old tension rather than completely new.

I would like to elaborate on the debate about animal sacrifice by mentioning the special place a cow has in Hinduism. I have thought about why goats and chicken are allowed to be slaughtered, while the cows are not, though they are eaten by low caste people in Jaffna, and also by Dalits in India. Further, the low-caste groups and Marxist groups in Jaffna that know about the Dalit political movement in India. I would argue that the 2016 law banning animal sacrifice and

449

advocating pure vegetarianism recreated the religious and ritual spaces by using the modern Brahmanical concept of the "holy cow". In India, animal sacrifice often included buffalo and goats slaughtering by various cultural minorities operating within a larger Indian religion (Hinduism) for many generations (Keith 2007). Ghadimai 's (the goddess of power) festival of animal sacrifice, for example, was long very popular in both India and Nepal. The Ghadimai Temple was located on the border between India and Nepal so people from both countries couldeasily participate in it. However, the Indian Government banned this traditional religious practice though its practice of constitutional secularism (The Hindu 2009; Chigateri 2015). Because of this, the Indian state's interference with minority religious practices became visible not only within India, but also in other countries as well (Boaz 2019). When the Indian government banned the practice, they justified doing so by saying that secularism demanded. Asad, for example, makes the same argument in his Formations of the Secular (2003). That is, that secularism, in the name of dividing religion and the state, actually brings the state into the most intimate relationship with religious practice as the ultimate arbiter of what is, in fact, religious. However, religious nationalists, such as the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party), like to argue that secularism is really just another religious stance rather than the neutral ground it pretends to be.

This in fact has become a form of religious discrimination common in the Global South; for instance, the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil is currently working on a proposal to ban animal sacrifice in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Boaz 2019). In India, Hindutva is a violent majoritarian ideology of native nationalism defining the Hindu right within a Brahmanical religious discourse. As previously discussed in the last chapter, Brahmins construct/reconstruct social and religious life though *sastra* liberalism; for instance, Brahmins are against animal sacrifice and cow slaughtering and non-veg meals due to their use of the notions of purity and pollution to define moral orders. Yet Brahmins percussion artists play the percussion instrument, *mridangam* which is made of cow skin. It is arguable that there is a problem with how they have

450

accepted slaughtering a cow to obtain its skin to make "pure" religious music while also being against slaughtering animals for other religious purposes. In any case, in this way politized practices and discourses have become a form of discursive power (like a *mantra*) for dominating the religious, ritual, and performative spaces in South Asia.

So far, I have discussed three different disputes in post-war villages in Jaffna and the various discourses used to conduct them which are all involved in restructuring "village-temple consciousness". Now, I will move on to discuss post-war villages in general.

9.3   Villages

As Mines (2008) states, like the different versions of the Ramayana epic, Tamil villages or *ūr* can be represented in many ways. In fact, each version of the Ramayana epic generates a different experience of the story by reshaping it through multiple forms of telling. In the same way, the Tamil village is articulated through multiple forms of acting and telling. For instance, I have often heard the same Ramayana text repeated in different ways many times by various scholars at Hindu temples in Jaffna during my childhood, and each version was told in a discursively different way. For example, the orator might narrate the story in relation to India-Sri Lanka geo-political disputes, to emphasize some literary aspect, or religious sanction, or aspect of gender relations, or, perhaps, as a comparison between the lord Ram and the demon king Ravana. Thus, just like a the Ramayana story is acted out through discursive performances, the Tamil village can be defined through different levels of relating; for example, a high caste Tamil Paṇṭitar (Tamil educated scholar) writes about the Tamil village with an academic style, but this is different from how a village farmer would relate it to his *ūr*. Further, the Paṇṭitar's (Tamil scholar) writing about his *ūr* will, since Paṇṭitar are conventionally male and upper caste, will give us a male oriented and high caste interpretation of the village. I have already discussed villages in earlier chapters, but in this section, we will discuss the spatial organization of villages in Jaffna.

9.3.1 Understanding the spatial organization of villages in Jaffna: From the past to the present

Figuring out how people in Jaffna villages talk about space is no easy task. This is because Jaffna people use a complex and rather bewildering set of sometimes overlapping terms to delineate space within villages – a legacy, to a certain extent, of the multiple colonial and state regimes that have defined land tenure and revenue units in the region since the 16th century. Bewildering as this may be, a discussion in some detail is still necessary for four reasons. That is, first, because this spatial language is what people in Jaffna use to speak each other about space; second, because space as characterized by these terms is connected to places where people of different caste identities live and, thus, also to peoples' views of how people of different castes are supposed to act (hence to notions of social and moral order); third, because the different temples of caste-associated gods are also distributed according to these spatial sub-divisions and, in this way, in a sense, anchor them; and, finally, forth, because these terms were intensely important in the discussions people I saw people having while engaged in the process of rebuilding their villages after the war – particularly in Naguleswaram where easily recognized landmarks were no longer available to guide the people's spatial imaginations. In all these ways, then, the complicated discourse people used to talk about space in their villages is directly connected to the village-temple consciousness that this dissertation is arguing was central to people's ability to participate in the post-war reconstruction process. Hence the need for this discussion of space.

Now according to Logeswaran (2015), whose book is based partly on Gibb and Beckingham's (1944) translation of the *Travels of Ibn Battuta*, when Ibn Battuta visited the Jaffna Peninsula in 1344 A.D., Jaffna was divided into four provinces (large territorial divisions) and each division was further divided into "Parrus". The term "Parrus" was used to delineate an *ūr,* or more usually a number of *ūr*, as, collectively, one territorial unit. During the Dutch period,

"Parrus", was transformed by them into "Paris"; and this, in turn, under the British, was changed to "Parish", although the Tamil term, *kōvilpaṟṟu*, was used by both regimes. In Tamil, *kōvilpaṟṟu* actually refers to one's *bhakti* or love for a particular temple; so it is logical to assume that the Dutch, and the British after them, took this term and associated it with terms a religio-spatial area that they themselves better understood: the Parish. In Jaffna at present, the word *kōvilpaṟṟu* is still used on some land deeds to specify particular locations within Jaffna villages; indeed, I have seen this on my own family's land deed and several others as well.

To complicate things further, Logeswaran (2015), the Jaffna historian, assumed that this term may have been used at two different levels. First, Christian clergymen would have used the term Parish to refer to an area associated with administrative work (such as keeping records of births, baptisms, conversions, weddings, and deaths) for their own particular Church. Second, under the British, this term was used to describe the location and boundaries of land as registered under the British colonial government. Hence, the Parish was the responsible administrative structure for both purposes.

In 1863, the British introduced a land registration law (Land Registration Ordinance No 8 of 1863) in which the term Parish was used on land deeds for identifying parcels of land and their location. As I said, this information is still on many land deeds. For example, Inuvil village belongs to Uduvil *kōvilpaṟṟu*, which also includes many other villages under this Parish. This practice has continued from the Dutch period to present times. During the Dutch period in Jaffna, Dutch rulers registered the details of land ownership on what they called a *tōmpu* document. This document was very valuable to Jaffna Tamils as they added value to their land. This document carried the exact details of the land, such as which belonged to whom, as recorded by Dutch officers. They also appointed *tōmpu* officers at the Kacheri to protect these documents and to read them to the public whenever issues arose regarding peoples' lands. Questions, that is, of land ownership, land boundaries, access to water rights from a common well (limited to certain

families), etc. When the British introduced their land registration law in 1863, it was easy to transfer the information about land tenure from *tōmpu* to land registration.

However, the descent details of land ownership (how land is inherited, who it belongs to, and how a particular parcel of land was inherited by someone) were not included under this land registration law. Hence, different laws were introduced in 1877, 1901, and 1927 to improve land registration formalities and reduce land related issues (Logeswaran, 2015). Along with these legal land reforms, the Government of Sri Lanka introduced another law in 1980 to include the above details about land on a deed as well as further details about how land was inherited by the owner of the land (land transactions), including the land deed document. Also, after 1980, the deed contained the boundaries of the land and a map of the land drawn by a government surveyor to prove its exact size and location. When one parcel of land was sold or transferred to another, the *tāi uruti* (the mother deed—the original deed of the land) was also enclosed to prove the land ownership and transactions. These records were more expensive, and required aid by the World Bank to complete, but the World Bank stopped its funding before the new record was completed when their period ended. After that, the Sri Lankan Government introduced *Bim Saviya* (the Registration of Title Act—it was called the *Maṇṇṉ Makimai* [glory of soil]) in 1998 to provide stronger, clearer details of land ownership.

In addition to the *kōvilpaṟṟu* and the details of the land, another special feature, *iṟai,* the village sub-division of a village, which is a part contained within the *kōvilpaṟṟu* territorial boundary, was also included. The detail of *iṟai* were used to confirm one's land location and detail. For example, a village may have one *iṟai* or more than one. This micro level land detail within a village enabled one to identify one's land with ease. The *iṟai* is mostly related to the cardinal direction of the land. Until 2010, a village's Grama Niladhari (GN—village officer or *Kirāma Nilatāri*]) administrative division was not included in the deed, but now deeds include both the GN division and *iṟai*. GN divisional names are also based on cardinal directions, but their cardinal directions are different from those of *iṟai.* GN divisions were made in terms of the

population size of the village. For example, Inuvil is divided into four GN divisions such as Inuvil south west, Inuvil west, Inuvil north east and Inuvil east; each this GN division includes many *iṟai* that I cannot provide without looking a larger sample of land deeds.

Grama Niladhari is a Sinhala term that denotes a village administrative officer who is appointed by the government through a public examination, but this position was inherited from father to son during the Dutch period when someone in this post was known as a Vitāṉai (village headman). Eventually, the name of the post was changed to Vitāṉaiyār (village headman) in 1806 during the British period. Later, the name of this position was changed again to Grama Sevekar (Kirāma Cēvakar) from 1960 onwards. Now, this post is identified as that of Kirāma Uttiyōkattar (village officer, which is equivalent to the Sinhala term Girama Niladhari). However, in Inuvil and Naguleswaram, I noticed that many older people and young people still use the term Vitāṉaiyār, which was in practice during the British colonial period and later. Though some used the term Grama Sevekar, but I saw 'Grama Niladhari' being written on almost all the name boards of the village administrative offices.

Today, *kōvilpaṟṟu, iṟai,* the number and name of the Grama Niladhari division, the name of Divisional Secretariat office, the name of the district and the province are all included on one's land deed to provide more clarity for solving the land-related issues of identifications that frequently come up in reconstructing post-war villages in Jaffna. As previously stated, according to Jaffna spatial discourse, a *kōvilpaṟṟu* was a large, bounded, territory within which many *iṟaikaḷ* (the plural of *iṟai*) are found; and *iṟaikaḷ are* further subdivided into a still smaller units, the *kuṟiccikaḷ* (the plural of *kuṟicci*). Yet, *kuṟicci,* by 2018*,* were not part of the government's own legal language for describing village territory or land registration, as Logeswaran (a retired lawyer) has mentioned in his work (2015). These village *kuṟiccikaḷ,* then, were established informally by people, albeit using a Dutch colonial discourse from long ago, and for this reason no longer had distinct, legally, demarcated boundaries delineating them one from another.

Kuṟiccikaḷ, incidentally, were often named after animals, plants, ponds, and even the names settlement founders associated with the areas where they were located. For example, Pākutēvan pulam (Pākutēvan is a name of the founder and *pulam* denotes a place), Vaṇṇṭil mūlai (bullock cart corner, Vaṇṇāṅkāṭu (forest of beautiful flowers), Maṉṉaṉ tōṭṭam (Kings' garden), and Parutti aṭaippu (storage of cotton). But I noticed that some of these names had also became the name of particular parcels of land on deeds for identification purposes. Yet, I am not quite sure whether all *kuṟiccikaḷ* names are mentioned on all land deeds, so this is something I will have to investigate in future research.

When I conducted earlier research for an undergraduate dissertation in my village, Inuvil, I found that people still talked about certain parts of Inuvil as *kuṟicci*, and that they spoke as if these *kuṟicci* were sometimes further divided into even smaller units called *pakuti* and *vaṭṭaram.* I also found that people spoke of *vaṭṭaram* sometimes as another form of sub-territory in the village. Of course, this agreed with what I discussed, above, about these terms sometimes appearing on land registration documents. Indeed, I need more research on this to investigate where these terms come from.

I discussed this matter with the eminent Tamil scholar Professor K. Sivathampy in 2010. He explained to me that under the Dutch, Jaffna was divided into revenue units of descending sizes called, from large to small, *kōvilpaṟṟu, iṟai,* and *kuṟicci*. Parish, or kōvilpaṟṟu, were defined in relation to the area associated with a particular church, and that such areas were called a Parish. According to Sivathampy, a *kōvilpaṟṟu*, or Parish, was the largest division. Next came the *iṟai*; the word *iṟai* here meant a revenue unit, and after that comes the name of the particular parcel of land concerned. This particular parcel of land is called in Tamil, *kāṉi,* and this particular parcel of land is gotten a name of a *kuṟicci*. The collections of individual lands are under one *kuṟicci,* thus, there are several *kuṟiccikaḷ* in the village, but I do not have sufficient information to provide that how many individual lands are included in one *kuṟicci.* Also, there is no literature to find out the

intensive information, and therefore, I do need more research to investigate them. A *kuṟicci* refers to a distinguishable, contiguous area of land.

As I said earlier, Sivathampy said that it may be named after plants in the area. The Dutch were the first to launch a system of land registration with their *Thombu* (*tōmpu*) system (a colonial document or record that registered ownership of property). This system referred to the location of a particular parcel of land in relation to a revenue unit and perhaps a larger administrative unit. Here, I would briefly elaborate about *tōmpu* in Jaffna that *tōmpu,* "a word derived from the Greek *tomos*, from which the Latin tome, or large book, originates, was a term used by the Dutch to describe a public land registry" (https://brickmag.com/from-the-incomplete-thombu/). *Tōmpu* enabled one to obtain the identities of a pot of land. Each plot of land described the identities of adjacent plots of land; for example, one person's land's each side (cardinal direction) was marked by another adjacent plot of land (there the adjacent plot of landowners' names were mentioned).

Alongside these terms occurred another one, mainly *pakuti*; which did not refer to a spatial unit but, instead, to a particular lineage. But by the 20th century the word *pakuti* was mostly just used to refer to an area within a village. That is, in common parlance, the word *pakuti* can refer to an area where a particular group of people live. Now caste was the major identity that people were concerned with at the village level, and since people of the same caste lived in groups, any of these terms for areas within villages could be used as a coded way of referring to the caste groups that lived there. Thus, a village can be seen, spatially, as a constellation of sometimes overlapping named areas associated with different caste groups. This point is made clearer by another term, *vaṭṭāram*, which means "circuit", as in, I suppose, the areas within which people of a certain sort circulate. This term has nothing to do with the legal language associated with government land registration schemes but, instead, directly denotes an area where people of a certain identity live (Personal communication with Sivathampy on 21.10.2010).

When Banks (1957) conducted his fieldwork in Jaffna in the 1950s, he used the term "ward" to identify village sub-territories such as *kuricci.* Later, David (1972) simply used the local term, *kuricci,* or "nucleation of wards", which literally meant sections of the village. As Banks (1957) and David (1972) observed correctly, different landowner or "high" castes lived in different wards. Further, David found in his research at Myliddy village in Jaffna that landowners had knowledge of the spatial organization of their villages, but not of the village in general. However, this situation has now changed. I found in my research in 2017-18 that village youths (landowner castes) had more knowledge of their village – knowledge which they used to compete with other village members in terms of their village's development and popularity. However, their *ūr* projection was not framed in terms of the Sri Lankan national state, but at a regional level as a more a local projection of their place.

Further, according to David (1972), each *kuricci* included a cluster of compounds, which contained houses, garden lands, and sometimes ward temples. I saw a similar thing in the way Inuvil and Naguleswaram were structured. The similarity meant that the residents were settled in a way purely connected to ward formation, naming the wards, and temples establishments with different deities. Also, Banks (1957) did not clearly explain the ward system how David explained it through the local term, *kuricci*. In Inuvil and Naguleswaram, there were many temples; some big and many small, within these village clusters. There were no distinct *kuricci* boundaries, and so *kuricci* formation there was in terms of collections of patrilineal descent categories (*cantati* or lineage).

In general, in Jaffna, land is transmitted through dowry from mother to daughter. This is one form of property transaction according to the "*Thesawalamai* [*Tēcavaḻmai*] law", which literally means, "customs prevailing in the country" (H.W. Tambiah 2004:2); this is a traditional law of the Sri Lankan Tamil inhabitants of the Jaffna Peninsula, which was codified as a law during the Dutch period based on the customs of Tamil inhabitants. According to the *Tēcavaḻmai*, movable and immovable property could be passed on to the next generation in three ways; as

458

dowry, *mutucam* (ancestral property), and *tēṭiyatēṭṭam* (acquired property). According to H.W. Tambiah, "the *Tēcavaḻmai* distinguished between hereditary property brought by husband or wife (*mutucam*), dowry property brought by the wife (*cītaṉam*), and acquired property (*tēṭiyatēṭṭam*)" (2004:150). I have already explained dowry; and merely note again, here, that dowry in Jaffna is passed from mothers to daughters and remains exclusively the property of the daughter.

According to the Jaffna Matrimonial Rights and Inheritance Ordinance (Section 15 of Cap, 48), "property devolving on a person by descent, at the death of his or her parent or any other ancestor in the ascending line is called *mutucam*" (H.W. Tambiah 2004:151). "*Tēṭiyatēṭṭam* of any husband and wife is defined as (a) property acquired for valuable consideration by either husband or wife during the subsistence of marriage, (b) profits arising during the subsistence of marriage from the property of any husband and wife" (H. W. Tambiah 2004: 151). Under *Tēcavaḻmai*, which is still in effect, land can be passed on from one generation to another through any of these three routes. Even after the war, the land transmission from mother to daughter is still being practiced through the dowry system when a daughter gets married. In this transaction, the mother's land is not only transferred to the daughter, but *mutucam* (ancestral property) and *tēṭiyatēṭṭam* (acquired property) also get converted as dowry to be given to her if necessary.

Altogether, Jaffna villages have long been structured based on this native theory of spatial organization. Some of the names of *kuṟicci* are mentioned on land deeds. As previously stated, Grama Niladhari (GN) Divisions are prominently known as legalized divisions within the village. One village may have many GN divisions and each GN division of the village may have many *kuṟicci* or *vaṭṭāram* or *pakuti*. For instance, in my village, Inuvil, there are four distinct GN divisions: J/188, J/189, J/190 and J/191, where "J" refers to the Jaffna District and the numbers refer to the particular territorial divisions. Each such GN division contains many *kuṟicci* or *vaṭṭāram* or *pakuti*. Also, one village may be addressed as one GN division with many sub-villages and *kuricci* or *vaṭṭāram* or *pakuti* within it. For instance, in Naguleswaram, there is one GN division (J/226), which has sub-villages and *kuricci* and *pakuti*. While *pakuti* are based on

lineage, because land can be passed from father to son or mother to daughter, such areas can be either patrilineal or matrilineal. Hence, all in all, Jaffna village spatial organization must be understood in terms of caste and kinship/kin relations (i.e., lineage), and hence, in terms of *kuṟicci*, *vaṭṭāram, pakuti*, and temples.

It is convenient to address the issues/conflicts/disputes emerging between *kuṟicci*, *vaṭṭāram,* and *pakuti*, in terms of land ownership, the distribution of resources, social roles, ritual rights, festival rights, temple patron eights, and *kouvravam* (publicly recognized status/honour)*.* In the past, such conflict situations affected marriage selection between families in these spatial organizations. Such conflict circumstances are formed by an imbalance of sociological and economic background of segments within the same caste. Accordingly, structural differences promote disputes/conflicts among temple trustee members, and such disputes include administrative disputes, problems related to temple patrons, disagreement between trustee members and non-trustee people in the village.

Caste is also part of the spatial organization of villages, and in the past, low caste people were settled in different wards from high caste people to prevent mixing. But the former structure of *kuṟicci*, *vaṭṭāram,* and *pakuti* have been changed in both villages due to the war and displacement. Those spatial segments are still found, but their members have often moved to other villages in Jaffna, or to elsewhere in the rest of the country, while many people have migrated abroad. Also, by 2017-2018, low caste people were buying Veḷḷāḷar's land (not in a large scale, but in a minor scale) which was not the practice in the past. Hence, caste geography and demography have changed in post-war Inuvil and Naguleswaram in ways that challenge the old moral-social- patial ordering of daily village life. I will move on to discuss these changes in the following section.

9.3.2 Caste, caste geography, and caste demography in post-war Jaffna: Past and present

Although a prolonged civil war, internal displacement, migration, and the LTTE's past administration and eventual defeat altered social life in the Jaffna Peninsula in many ways, during my research in 2017-18, caste consciousness still played a pivotal role in creating and maintaining religious space and religious power under the leadership of the 'dominant castes' (i.e., the Veḷḷāḷar) in Jaffna. Caste identity is a powerful repressive form of "cultural marker", which socially, politically, culturally, economically, and morally affects the life of Tamils in the Jaffna community. Jaffna Tamil Hindus are highly dominated by the high caste Veḷḷāḷar community. Consequently, exclusion and domination continue to be a factor, directly or indirectly, in everyday life. Even though the province's past social rigidity has been changed within its so-called caste system, caste consciousness has not vanished. In addition, both caste consciousness and caste identity still exist and shape social structure, and caste remains a hidden social phenomenon in other social, cultural, economic and political spheres of the Jaffna Tamils' lives.

In Jaffna, *sāti* is the local word for caste. Although caste is defined as a core element of social organization in Jaffna, it became a modern phenomenon during the British colonialism (Dirks 2001). Later, it formalized and systematized Jaffna's social structure and identity. Generally, I agree with Dirks (2001) that the caste system in South Asia is a system of social stratification which had pre-modern origins and was transformed by the British colonial rulers into its current form. Although Dirks (2001) claims that caste is not really a traditional social reality but rather a colonial one, it is a postcolonial construct and modern phenomenon that was produced out of the colonial encounter, and so one cannot simply omit caste in relation to current caste-related issues of subordination in South Asia.

When one hears the word caste, it is the idea of hierarchy or social ranking that comes to mind. For the last five decades, these aspects have been reiterated by many scholars studying caste distinctions in South Asia (Dumont, 1981; David, 1972; Banks, 1957; Marriot, 1955). In contemporary Jaffna, however, particularly from Veḷḷāḷar point of view, the caste system no longer displays the rigid hierarchical, hereditary characteristics, involving social order fixing traditional "service" (*katimai*) occupations, that it did in the first half of the 20th century and, to a certain extent, up till the civil war. This is why, by 2017-18, direct talk about caste, such as saying the name of a person's caste or even referring to a caste groups by that group's name, was considered inpolite – or, at least, politically incorrect. Nonetheless, even though the rigidity of hereditary practices and caste-based occupations have been changed, caste consciousness has not vanished. Hence, the need to discuss it here.

The Jaffna caste system has certain features which are different from the South Indian caste system; for instance, the Brahmin caste is at the top of the caste hierarchy in South India, while the Veḷḷāḷar caste is at the top of the caste hierarchy in Jaffna. In addition, the Veḷḷāḷar caste is widely known as landlords and occupies the dominant caste position in Jaffna in many ways and generates practices and notions of ritual purity and social, economic, and political condition consonant with that position (Pfaffenberger, 1982; Arumainayagam, 1979; Banks, 1960, 1957). In line with this, the Veḷḷāḷar caste holds the most powerful position in Jaffna in terms of land ownership, temple ownership, and the ownership of ritual authority; in other words, they are the dominant caste in Srinivas' sense (cite Srinivas here). All this stands in relation to the ways the Veḷḷāḷar were already advantaged by the strength of past caste inequalities and the solidification of the caste system by colonial power and benefits (Pfaffenberger, 1982, 1990).

People are closely connected to their caste consciousness, which is experienced as a perception of distinction between high caste and low-caste people. Such caste-based categorizations create a particular identity created by Veḷḷāḷar people-based categories of purity and pollution. However, these categories are growing ambiguous because, by 2017-18 in

contemporary Jaffna, many low-caste people were constructing their own identities through social mobility, which I found among the low-caste people in Jaffna. In present-day Jaffna, the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar use the term *maṟṟa āṭkal* (other person or outcaste) to indirectly symbolize low-caste people. Kaveri (from a low caste background), one of my informants, explained to me that "these days, high-caste people use it as a pejorative term to discuss low-caste people without using their caste names." Veḷḷāḷar caste people perceive Ampaṭṭar (barbers) Naḷavar (toddy tappers), Paḷḷar (laborers) Paṟaiyar (funeral drummers), and Vaṇṇār (washermen) as low caste. The above five castes are also known as the *Pañcamar*[126] and they are discriminated by untouchable status (Geetha, 2011; Paramsothy, 2008; Silva at.al, 2009).

As a fellow scholar, Thanges Paramsothy[127] mentions in his recent Ph.D. thesis, *Conflict-induced Migration and Shifting Caste Relations: Resisting and Reproducing Hierarchies in Post War Sri Lankan Tamil Space* (2020), the above castes do not accept such derogative caste identitifications, and, indeed, claim that they are also high caste and the equals of the Veḷḷāḷar. Paramsothy found further that changes have occurred at three different levels in relation to caste in Jaffna. First, after the 1990s, when the low caste people went to foreign countries and sent remittances back home to they built their own temples and renovate small shrines into larger temples, this changed their social and economic level. This social process of upward group social mobility is, of course, Sanskritization (M.N. Srinivas 1952). Second, after the war, inter-caste marriages have increased among the different castes with and without the consideration of class (economic) variation. Inter-caste marriages were strictly prohibited before the war. However, a few such marriages occurred during the war, and now they have increased after the war. Third,

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[126] The People of Jaffna, however, do not use the term *Pañcamar* in their daily conversation, but it is referred to as a literary term. There is a triggering novel, written by Pañcamar K. Daniel (1982) who discusses the struggles of the low-caste people in Jaffna.

[127] I have interviewed Thanges Paramsothy who has recently completed his Ph.D. on Conflict-induced Migration and Shifting Caste Relations: Resisting and Reproducing Hierarchies in Post War Sri Lankan Tamil Space. He received his Ph.D. from the University of East London, United Kingdom.

since the war ended in 2009, there has been a re-emergence and reorganization of caste distinction related practices in Jaffna because of the absence of the LTTE. The LTTE was against casteism, sometimes violently. So, the caste related practices and discriminations continue to exist, and perhaps are even subtly re-asserting themselves, in contemporary post-war Jaffna.

There is a promising shared narrative among the high-caste people that many Veḷḷāḷar people have left the peninsula and migrated abroad or to other parts of the country. Subsequently, this story goes, low-caste people have become a social majority in Jaffna. In contrast, I have recorded different views from other people (non Veḷḷāḷar people) who claim that though the Veḷḷāḷar are less "invisible" in the Peninsula, their power is still quite visible through their Tamil diaspora connectivity and governmentality (for the Veḷḷāḷar majority still occupy most of the higher positions in the civil and educational service sectors of Jaffna). Malan (from a low caste background) one of my informant, told me that whenever the low-caste people try to buy a piece of land from a Veḷḷāḷar family, people in the particular neighborhood resists and tell the Veḷḷāḷar family not to sell their land to low-caste people. This results in Veḷḷāḷar people not allowing low caste people to live in their neighborhood, not because of caste purity and impurity problems, but because they do not want to alter their neighborhood landscape and neighborhood caste demography by including the low-caste people in their neighborhood.

Malan, continued, saying that these kinds of crises were being sorted out in two ways. First, by a family from the neighborhood buying the land, and if they could not afford the land, then by bringing relatives from other villages or from the same village to buy that land. Second, by having relatives who are in diaspora buying the land through their relatives' networks who are in Jaffna. I found a similar practice with temple festival rights. That is, when Veḷḷāḷar families left the villages, their festival rights were never passed on to low-caste people. Instead, they were passed on to a relative family who lived in the village or were conducted with money sent by relatives in diaspora.

Though once caste might have been claimed to be an "identity", today post-modern anthropology has deconstructed the debate and redefined caste's relations using other notions of power, dominance, western imperialism, and colonialism. Of course, caste is an identity, but at the same time, the caste system is a hierarchy too. But, such a hierarchical system (with different castes having been brought into a hierarchy over time) was created by a dominant caste (Brahmin). In this hierarchy, each caste has its own caste identity and hierarchical position. Whereas, in the past, caste identities were thought to be fixed, today the boundaries and positions of castes are understood to be more fluid by some. At the same time, high caste people strategically practice a subtle form of casteism that re-constructs caste along different lines among subjects in different contexts. But here, what I am claiming, is that caste continues to shape the physical landscape of the Jaffna Peninsula and still controls space there in terms of religious and ritual contexts. For instance, temple space in Jaffna is predominantly occupied by the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar community that strictly maintains the rhythm of ritual action within the same caste, which still discriminate the low-caste people to mingle at the rituals space in temples in Jaffna.

Furthermore, I have used the notion of caste consciousness as a primary tool to understand the shaping of public and private religious spaces. Post-war Jaffna social structure is reconstructed through caste consciousness at two levels in the religious context: (1) How high caste people still control their temples' landscapes, ritual authority, festival rights, and temple management rights; (2) How low-caste people also reconstruct their religious spaces (within their limited territories) through their new middle class formations, Sanskritization, and their own kind of modernization. I found that new Jaffna class formations (among the low-caste people as well as high caste people) involved the re-territorializing of caste boundaries, and a re-constituted caste geography of Jaffna. Two primary effects are shown. On the one hand, low or oppressed caste people continue to be excluded from some religious spaces, which shows the continuity of the dominant caste consciousness in controlling and manipulating religious spaces. On the other

hand, a new middle-class caste formation, creating new religious spaces, has produced a new caste consciousness in Jaffna among low caste people to compete with the Veḷḷāḷar. Ultimately, this new form of caste consciousness has reshaped the caste landscape and religious space of Jaffna.

By 2017-18, in terms of the caste geography and demography of the two villages of Inuvil and Naguleswaram there were difference that occurred after the war, but a great deal of similarity before it. In Inuvil, the Veḷḷāḷar were the majority and dominant caste before the war, and this is still the case in Inuvil. Also, caste-coded geography was, and remains, strictly practiced within Inuvil's settlement pattern. For, as I said earlier in this chapter, village spatial organization there were structured in terms of caste as well. That is, village "wards were organized in terms of caste within the village; for example, low caste settlements were never mixed up with high caste Veḷḷāḷar settlements. In Inuvil's geography, low caste settlements were settled in their own wards and these wards were separated from others in the village by small lanes or roads. One of the more striking features include a system of caste ranking, general to Jaffna, that is interesting to view in contrast to what has been found in Tanjore, Tamil Nadu (Gough, 1970). Castes in the two cases differ in their internal organization; for example, Jaffna Brahmins, most often employees of Jaffna Vellālar, differ from Tanjore Brahmins, who generally occupy the position of the dominant land owning caste.[128] Inuvil village also can be characterized as a "type three village" according to Bank's typology of village types (1969); that is, as a village containing several castes and several wards of each caste.

In a typical type three village, a ward is a distinct residential area demarcated from other neighbouring wards by fairly precise boundaries (small lanes or roads). The inhabitants of wards are all members of one caste. Inuvil and Naguleswaram villages are territories which include both residential and agricultural areas. Historically, Inuvil was populated by Vellālar and their *aṭimai*

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128. See for more details, Michael Banks, 'Caste in Jaffna', in E.R. Leach (ed), *Aspects of Caste in South Indian, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan,* (Cambridge: 1969), p. 69

(slaves) and *kuṭimai* (domestic servants)[129] during the Āriyacakaravartti period (13th century AD), which belonged to the Jaffna Kingdom. In such a context, Tirukōvalūre Pērayiramuṭaiyōn (name of the person) from Tamil Nadu, South India, was settled at Inaiyilee (today known as Inuvil) (Rasanayagam, 1926 and 1999; Muthuthampipillai, 2001). An extreme caste consciousness is thus a prominent factor in this village. Today, some low caste people in Inuvil have bought Veḷḷāḷar's farming land (*tōṭṭakkāṉi*), but not land in residential areas because Veḷḷāḷar still control the caste geography of residence.

On the other hand, Naguleswaram has more dramatically changed in terms of caste geography and demography. Many Veḷḷāḷar people have migrated to foreign countries and settled in other villages in Jaffna. For instance, Karukampanai village was mostly populated by Veḷḷaḷar caste and Kōviyar caste people before the war. At that time, 58 Veḷḷaḷar families and 6 Kōviyar families were residing there. But this caste demography has now changed so that nine Veḷḷaḷar families and six Kōviyar families currently reside in Karukampanai. I obtained these numeric details from an individual who lived in Karukampanai before the war and displacement. However, village administrative officers do not maintain statistics about families or persons in the village in terms of caste. So, it was difficult to figure this out in an explicit way. Instead, I had to rely on what people spoke about regarding this demographic change. Now, it is mostly Kōviyar, Paḷḷar and Naḷavar caste people who are remaining in Naguleswaram and who form the majority of the population of Keerimalai and Karukampanai villages within post-war Naguleswaram. Keerimalai's caste geography and demography have also changed after the war, for there were

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[129] Obligations mean domestic services of *kuṭimai* and *aṭimai* which are traditionally performed for generations and so-called low castes of *kuṭimai* and *aṭimai* services were attached to the high caste of Vellāḷar somewhat like Jajmani system in North India as I prefer to consider. According to David (1974) and Pfaffenberger (1982), *aṭimai* chattel slaves and comprised in addition to now existing Kōviyars, Naḷvar and Pallar and *kuṭimai* castes consisting of gold smith, black smith, carpenters, barbers, washermen and paṟaiyar. See also, S. Pathmanesan, *The Impact of War on Obligations and Rights of So-Called Low Castes in Jaffna,* a research paper presented at the Peradeniya University Annual Research Session (PURSE), Proceedings and Abstracts (Peradeniya:2006), p. 41

many Vīracaiva families in Keerimalai before the war. Vīracaivam is another sect of Saivism, which was more popular in Karnataka, in India. Some Paṇṭāram caste people followed this religious tradition and thus became Vīracaivar. However, there was an identity issue between Paṇṭāram caste people and the Vīracaivar in terms of hierarchy before and after the war. Some people claimed that both groups were the same while others claimed they were different. On the other hand, Vīracaivar themselves argued that they were Paṇṭāram. Now Paṇṭāram is a caste name, whereas the term Vīracaivar technically refers to people who believe and follow the Vīracaivam religion, which is also known as Lingayatism in India. Among the Paṇṭāram, this divide has emerged, and some say that people who follow the Vīracaiva tradition are superior to the Paṇṭāram.

In Jaffna, I found there are "veg" meal eaters (pure vegetarians) and "non-veg" meal eaters (people who eat some meats) among the Paṇṭāram, but that people called Vīracaivar strictly observed pure vegetarianism. These samenesses and differences have emerged due to the purity and pollution hierarchy. The symbolic configuration of purity and pollution practices reinforce the local valorization of "pure vegetarianism." A Hindu, Saivite, Vīracaivar, Vaishnavite or the devotee of human god, is expected to observe strict vegetarianism, although this is often not the case in practice. Nonetheless, having vegetarianism associated with Vīracaivar identity is a marker of that groups relatively higher status.

In any case, many Vīracaivar families were in Keerimalai before the war and displacement. They were displaced in 1990 and many of them did not come back to Keerimalai. Some families migrated, some settled their lives in neighboring villages, and some moved on to Colombo and rest of the country. Of this later groups, some sold their land and properties outright, but others have kept their houses and lands in Keerimalai even though they have not returned, and many still visit the village to remain in contact with their old houses and lands. For example, I met one professional from the Vīracaivar community, who I call Karunakaran, who lives in Colombo, but often visits Keerimalai to keep contact with his land and properties.

468

Unlike in South India, the landscape and caste-geography of Jaffna are dominated by the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar. That is, the farmland and other land of Jaffna are dominantly occupied by Veḷḷāḷar. Jaffna Brahmins do not own much lands other than their houses, which are mainly located close to the temples where they are employed to do ritual services, *purōhitam* (i.e., priestcraft). This term is what people in Jaffna call the acts of Brahmin priests engaging in ritual services such as conducting weddings, housewarming ceremonies, puberty rituals, and almsgiving (*ṭāṉa* for deceased family members). Thus, the Veḷḷāḷar not only occupy the highest position in the caste hierarchy, but also own most of the land and properties involved in holding power and authority (Gunasingam, 2016; Sivathampy, 2000). But Brahmin priest services have become very complex in post-war Jaffna because different types of priests have emerged, and ritual and priesthood rankings/hierarchies have altered or reshaped the priesthood-scape in post-war Jaffna.

The first divide is among the Hindu priests in terms of *ākama* and non-*ākama* variations in ritual practice. Brahmin priests follow both Vedic and *ākama* prescriptions about who are the dominant priests in the priestly hierarchy. *caiva kurukkaḷ* is the second category of priest that has emerged. *Caiva kurukkaḷ* was originally Saiva Veḷḷāḷar (pure vegetarian) for many generations who became priests after receiving *camayatīkṣai* (initiation by Guru). But there is a further hierarchical distinction among the *caiva kurukkaḷ* between priests that perform temple ritual services, and who regard themselves as superior, and those, who are seen by other priests as lower, who conduct funerals and post-funerary rituals. This kind of priestly hierarchy is defined in relation to the purity of temple and religious rituals versus the pollution involved with conducting funeral rituals and is found among Brahmin priests as well. That is, Brahmin priests, who only conduct the *ṭāṉa* rituals for the dead, are not allowed to perform other religious rituals at temples.

A third category of priest are *vīracaiva kurrukkaḷ*. Some Paṇṭāram became Vīracaivar after wearing the Lingam around their neck, and they strictly follow the Vīracaiva ritual practice.

469

This third category of priest claims to be superior to other priests from their own Paṇṭāram caste. Paṇṭāram caste people have also become priests who are like other *caiva kurukkaḷ* in that they received *camayatīkṣai* and took priesthood training to become priests. They are mostly hired at non- *ākama* temples. I found that *vīracaiva kurrukkaḷ* and Paṇṭāram who became *caiva kurukkaḷ* are the kinds of priests offering ritual services in most of the temples (which were non-*ākama* temples before Sanskritization) in Naguleswaram and Inuvil. In addition, Brahmin priests will not hire priests of other sorts to perform ritual services at *ākama* temples.

In any case, one of my informants pointed out that it is difficult to separate *caiva kurukkaḷ, vīracaivar,* and Paṇṭāram in postwar Jaffna because now they have intermixed through marriage. But another informant from the Paṇṭāram caste argued that the Veḷḷāḷar can be *caiva kurukkaḷ* because some Veḷḷāḷar families have been pure vegetarians for many generations, so they can easily become *caiva kurukkaḷ* if they wish to. His claim was exactly similar to Arumuka Navalar's 19th century Caiva reform position, wherein he encouraged Veḷḷāḷar to became pure Saivite by mainly giving up eating non-veg meals (Ambalavanar 2006). Navalar thought, further, that some Paṇṭāram could also became either *caiva kurukkaḷ* or Vīracaivar after giving up eating non-veg meals, but some Paṇṭāram strongly claimed that they were already Vīracaivar. Navalar pointed out, however, that Vīracaivar priests do not recognize other Paṇṭāram as Vīracaivar if the Paṇṭāram did not wear a Lingam, and also that some Paṇṭāram eat non-veg meals, and therefore, the Vīracaivar do not include them into their group.

Another new group of young Tamil priests too have been associated with the Gnana Lingeswarar Temple in Inuvil. These young men (mostly from Veḷḷāḷar caste) are basically professionals and academics who have given up eating non-vegetarian meals and who perform priesthood duties on a part time basis in this temple, but they do not want to wear *pūṇūl* (a sacred thread) to appear as standard Brahmin priest do with a scared thread, because they are anti-Brahmin and against Brahmanical rituals. They have received basic training in priest-craft, which has been conducted by the founder of the temple who is from Switzerland. Thus, I found that

470

understanding the priest-scape and priest hierarchy of post-war Jaffna is most complex and will require more exploration in future research. So far, I have discussed how villages and temples are important units in Jaffna Tamil culture and how they have been reorganized in post-war circumstances. But in anthropology, villages, temples, and houses are the kind of locations people often use to "place" themselves. Therefore, I will briefly talk about place with reference to Jaffna's villages, temples, and houses.

9.4   Analysis and Conclusion

9.4.1   Why villages, temples, and houses as places?

Cultural geographers say that place has three components: location, locale and sense of place. However, these words can be interchangeably used by cultural anthropologists. As an ethnographer, or even more as an anthropologist, I want to learn about a place through human consciousness. So, I coined the term, "village/village-temple consciousness" for use in this study of post-war reconstruction of villages, places, houses, and temples in postwar Jaffna. In this dissertation, I have paid more attention to how phenomenological and existential terms have shaped current thinking in the anthropology of consciousness, which provides in my opinion the most relevant perspective for understanding the everyday experience of place in Tamil Sri Lanka's post-war villages. When I coined the term "village-temple consciousness", what I meant to capture was Tamil people's sense of what, for them, constituted a 'home place', or *ur,* which is what people of Jaffna in Sri Lanka refer to their daily life and speech. That is, I am arguing that in the daily life and speech of people in Jaffna the compound term, "village-temple consciousness", best captures the mix of local models and practices -- related to both the village as a complex assemblage of spaces and to Jaffna Hinduism as an equally complex assemblage of spaces and group-related religious practices and temples -- that, altogether, are involved in people's place and community-making. This term reflects, as I said, the Tamil word, *ūr*, in its meaning, at once, a physical village of origin and a sacred landscape fixed in their location by temples that organize

such places into social and physical spaces. Thus, this study argues that understanding the conjoined village-temple sense of place that underlies social life and its reconstruction in Jaffna requires recognizing the conjunction of the physical and the sacred implied by this compound term.

9.4.2   The value of *iṭam* (place) and *conta iṭam* (natal/own place) in Jaffna Tamil life

How do we study or perceive a landscape? Basso (1996) describes that "as the idea of home, of 'our' territory opposed 'their' territory, of entire regions and landscape where groups of men and women have invested themselves (their thoughts, their values, their collective sensibilities) and to which they feel they belong" (Basso, 1996: xiii) therefore, a sense of place is complex, because everybody is attached to it, and place is part of us as much as we are part of place. Therefore, senses of place also partake in culture, in shared bodies of "local knowledge" as Clifford Geertz says (Basso, 1996). So, how is a place perceived? How is the sense of attachment to place built?

I think we must understand that place making is always a socially and culturally significant activity. That is, while it varies from culture to culture, "place-making is a universal tool of the historical imagination" (Basso, 1996:5). Thus, "place making involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways" (Ibid). For instance, in Jaffna Tamil culture, the belonginess or owning of a place is expressed through the term *conta iṭam* (our place). Owning land or a place does not only show one's identity or ownership (*urimai*) or belongingness, but also displays one's *kouvravam,* one's publicly acknowledged status. That is why, Jaffna Tamils always demand a house or a piece of land when they talk about dowry in marriage proposals. Also, I found many ethnographic cases during my fieldwork, and even before fieldwork, in which Sri Lankan Tamil people in diaspora were investing, and are still investing, their money into buying houses or lands in Jaffna. Though it is mostly the Jaffna Veḷḷāḷar mostly

472

who do this, my informants of other castes confirmed that non- Veḷḷāḷar other Jaffna people in diaspora do this as well.

However, people have different perceptions of place; therefore, may have more than one version of experience towards a place. Further, place making is not just the construction of a place, but also the construction of its history and the reinvention of a place. For example, in Naguleswaram and Keerimalai, I observed young children learning about the historical background and mythological narratives associated with Keerimalai and Naguleswaram and saw them transfer this knowledge to others who visited their villages. In Inovil, when I was a child, I did the same. But the current generation of both villages were also aware of those stories even though their families were uprooted from their original places for more than two decades. Hence, to grasp the meaning of a place it is also important to see how local knowledge is interwoven with the place-making process.

In Jaffna, the name of a place has a close connection to ancestors, but it also changes from time to time. Sometimes, too, the names of flora and fauna are too given to a place. For example, the Karukampanai village name has originated from the palmyra tree; *paṉai* refers to the palmyra tree in Tamil. In Keerimalai; k*eeri* (*kīri*) means mongoose and *malai* refers to mountain in Tamil. There was a sage called Nagulamuṉvar with the face of mongoose who lived in a cave which was located in this place (the place is still under HSZ and the military does not allow people to visit there). People believe Lord Shiva was restored there to his older human form after his constant meditation and devotional offerings. The Sanskrit word Nagulam referred to mongoose, which is equivalent to *kīri* in Tamil. *Muṉvar* means sage. Hence, people named this place (a long time ago) Keerimalai after the divine miracle of restoring a mongoose head into a human form. As Nagulamuṉvar worshiped at the Shiva temple, the temple was named as Naguleswaram, and later this temple's name was given to the larger landscape of Naguleswaram (J/226 Grama Niladhar Division), including Keerimalai, Karukampanai, old and new colonies.

473

Thus, the origination of place and the survival of place are strongly associated with a number of stories and beliefs. Peoples' ancestors create the name of a place. How did they make those places habitable? For instance, by planting trees, or place arrangements or even, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, how *kuṟicci* or *vaṭṭāram* were named by using either the founder's name or local plants or many other things. I found there are many land names in Inuvil and Naguleswaram within the village.

But this native theory of spatial organization, naming, and interaction were left out of the post-war literature on Jaffna. Each parcel of land in Jaffna villages has a name that would be found on a land deed, but people sometimes have transformed the meaning of these land names over time. Some even have even tried to characterize people by manipulating their image through their own interpretation of the names of a place. Interestingly, I realized this when I went to see my family's own house and land deed, which defines the boundaries of our land. Those boundaries are adjoined by neighboring lands. This land deed gives the name, *kamaṭṭaṉ*, of our land, and also mentions the neighboring land's name as well, because our land boundaries are adjacent to our neighbor's land. In this way, I found out that my neighbor's land is called *Pākutēvan pulam*. In fact, *Pākutēvan* denotes the founder's name (or some argue that it could be the founder's name because it is a person's name) of that *kuṟicci*, but now village people call people from there "*pātakaṉ pulattār*," that is, people who are from this *Pākutēvan pulam*. Also, by "*pātakaṉ pulattār*" is meant a derogatory characterization of them.

However, it is by imaginative activity that people make their place through their ancestor's words or story. This shows that placing is displacing altogether. Basso (1996), thus, attempts to show us how a place's history is created through the engagement of ancestors. As Basso (1996) says, we will have to go beyond the Anglo-American way of constructing a dominant history of place, and thus he prefers studying a place through using its 'oral history' over any 'literate tradition' (Basso, 1996). This is what I mostly employed in my own research. However, while there are multiple ways of perceiving and writing about a place, all should go hand in hand with

474

local knowledge. Therefore, rather than applying topographic imagination/stereotypes to identify a place, we need to rely on the local narratives people use to understand their everyday life in a place. For instance, for Eck (2012), by "imagined landscape," one is not referring to an imaginary landscape, but rather a lived landscape, and she considers places such as particular temples, hillocks, or shrines as sacred landscapes. As Eck (2012) says, "sacred landscape not only connects places to the lore of gods, heroes, and saints, but it connects places to one another through local, regional and transregional practices of pilgrimage." I entirely agree with her claim that to understand sacred landscapes we anthropologists must go beyond merely using notions of religiousness and holiness.

So, this "imagined landscape is constituted not by priests and their literature, but by countless pilgrims who have generated a powerful sense of land, location, and belonging through journeys to their hearts' destinations" (Eck 2012:5). I agree, as I have said, with her view of sacred landscapes. But so far as I have also understood such landscapes through my life experiences in Tamil Nadu visiting more than twenty five famous pilgrim sites, and also by visiting Hindu temples in other Indian states such as Hyderabad, Kerala, Gujarat, and West Bengal, sacred landscapes should be seen not only in connection with sacred rivers, gods, goddess, hills, myths, and the stories and practices of pilgrims, but also with regard to the people who actually live in those areas.

In a similar vein, many people visit Naguleswaram and Keerimalai because these two places are very important historical, mythological, and pilgrimage sites in Northern Sri Lanka. Yet, at the same time, war and displacement have devastated many civilians' places, temples, village deities, kinship networks, local practices, and pre-war life. Hence, while these places are also sacred landscapes to visitors and pilgrims, they cannot be places in the same way for outsiders as they are for those how live in those places – even though this, too, is not always true, since local people also sometimes perceive their living places as a sacred landscapes in the pilgrimage sense.

I say this because I once wanted to visit the famous Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple (a temple to the Hindu goddess) at Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Since I was there in my friend, Manavalan's, house, I asked him to take me to that temple, and he agreed to do so. First, we reached the main city of Madurai where this temple was located. Suddenly he told me that he did not know where this temple was located, and then he started asking other people who were around us in the city, "Where is the temple?". I was surprised because he had lived in the city of Madurai since his birth, but he did not know how to reach that temple, the most famous in his city. Finally, we had to reach the temple and return home through someone else's guidance.

Then, I noticed that he ate a non-veg meal after visiting the temple, but I did not follow him in this as Tamil Hindus from Jaffna do not eat non-veg meals either before or after visiting temples. Or so I learned from my mother in my own village of Inuvil. Then, Manavalan's mother told me, "our male children don't follow this practice, but all the women in our village do so." But she was surprised as I did not eat non-veg meals. Here, my main point is that Manavalan perceived what for me was a sacred landscape and place of religious practice as *his* living place, and that construed for him a more secular sense of belonging to his landscape than the religious or spiritual sense of belonging that I felt (although both can be possible). Again, of course, my interpretation may be wrong because even his version of thinking and practice could be held as his notion of a sacred landscape. My whole argument is about how an individual can make a sacred landscape through their real life rather than by interpreting them into existence as a mythological or religious point of view, or even as a dominant Hindu textual point of view or dominant caste person's point of view.

Also, I would like to make another point, which is that even though Manavalan and I are from Tamil ethnic groups who live in two different Tamil geographies, both of us were socialized through different cultural practices. That is, our vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism were constructed in relation to a more Brahminical hegemony and a Navalar *caiva* public consciousness respectively. Furthermore, people, of course, can have their own perceptions of

476

these sacred landscapes, but I will still argue that sacred landscape is still more than its religious or spiritual or sacred value.

Hence, for Eck (2012), a "sacred landscape" is defined in terms of religiosity, holiness, divinity, and the practices of pilgrims, and this definition only includes the spiritual sense of belonging. But by "landscape", Basso (1996) demonstrates that people invest themselves in a place through "collective sensibilities." So, a sense of place is complex because everybody attached to it shares bodies of "local knowledge" (Clifford Geertz, 1973).

Thus, "place making involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways." (Basso, 1996: 5). However, in my dissertation, I wanted to take a slightly different view of sacred landscapes since this project's central focus is on village-temple consciousness – and thus goes beyond the just the spiritual or religious sense of belonging involved in remaking places in Jaffna. Therefore, I looked at how secular senses of belonging were also invested into the land by people and thus how a sacred landscape also evokes emotional attachments of many sorts in peoples' living place. However, this does not mean that people make their temples as irreligious places; instead, that they attempt to expand their temple-centered sacred landscapes to include their ordinary life as well.

Consequently, "village temple consciousness" intends to erase the line between the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, 1955; Douglas, 2002). For a sacred landscape includes not only devotees and pilgrims, but also ordinary people -- businessmen, traders, and laborers -- who also invest themselves in that sacred landscape, and who also, show how the scared landscape is invested not only in religious practices but also in daily life. Eck (2012) did not talk about the people who run their day-to-day lives in these places. For people in Naguleswaram, these sacred landscapes are, of course, religious sites or they have the sense of religious belonging for these places. However, their perceptions are also based on how they make those places work for their daily lives. For instance, people often have to imagine their lived sacred landscape from a distance -- Jaffna people who live in Colombo or elsewhere in Sri Lanka, or people who live in

477

diaspora). As a Tamil from Jaffna now living mostly in Colombo, I have observed on many occasions that Jaffna Tamils make the *kōvil* (temple) the sacred landscape of their daily lives and that they use those places as gathering or meeting places where they can interact with other relatives, kin and friends to share their stories and discuss their family issues.

So, as Basso (1996), Muzaini (2012), and (Riaño-Alcalá 2002) examined, memories are bound to places, dwellings, houses, and temples. Hence, for the residents of Medellin, Colombia whom Riaño-Alcalá describes (2002), as for the people of Jaffna, the experience of violence has affected their everyday lives. According to Riaño-Alcalá places, for them, are marked by memories of death, destruction, and fighting. Practices of memory, in this context, restore a sense of place to those who have had experiences of the displacement, discontinuity and fragmentation that violence inflicts on people's lives. People encounter and make places by remembering and reconstructing what happened in their life through storytelling.

Further, soundscapes, images, and the natural environment become important elements for use when remembering a place. For instance, Kokulan told me that, during the time period of 1986-1995 in Jaffna, the LTTE songs were often broadcasted on the roads of the Jaffna Peninsula. Now people would remember those songs and their lives during war as bounded to their place and life at a particular time. In this way past memories construct the experience of remembering a place where people have lived, suffered, and survived. For this, people had stories, which were not created, but simply experienced. These kinds of life experience narratives and memories carry fear, emotions, sensitiveness, and the bitter experiences of a place at a given time.

Therefore, I would say that, as Rodman (1992) says, place is like voice and time and conceptual knowledge of place understood using multilocality and mulitvocality. It is also a complex social construction of spatial meaning. Hence, the "flow of everyday life" in places are dynamically flavored by the feelings, sentiments, memories, awareness, experiences, language and networks of post-war Jaffna. The sensing of place expresses a kind of possessive

478

relationality. For instance, an *ūr* usually continues to claim a Jaffna Tamil person's mutual and emotional attachments to it as their *conta iṭam* (own place) even after a person has long left it. Here the Tamil term '*conta*' indicates not only a 'possessive' meaning but also a 'relation' meaning that explain how an individual has a sense of an image of their *ūr*. For instance, when I visited Chennai, in Tamil Nadu, at the house of my Aunt Suseela's (who was originally from Inuvil) in 2018, she spoke to me about her place, her village deity, her past life, and her temple in Inuvil. She shared lots of old stories of her place and her lived experience there, and for me it like watching a movie because she used a particular tones of voice, language, songs, and poems (rhythmic soundscapes of her past memory) to map out her memory of our place.

Hence, Jaffna Tamils do not perceive *iṭam* just as a physical setting, but look beyond any soil, wood, and other commodities to their own primordial sentiments of attachment to the place where they have lived, remember experiences, created past memories, and told family stories (*kuṭumpa kataikaḷ*; what Suseela aunt shared with me), and to where new stories are being imported and circulating from the diaspora. So, I discovered how Jaffna Tamils construct the cultural meanings of places and people, and how local (and non-local) knowledge is interwoven with this place-making process in post-war Jaffna. Thus, were people strongly connected to their own places; connections which, I think, they later brought to a national level to fight for their lands and rights during the civil war in Sri Lanka. A person's natal/birthplace is very important in his/her lifetime, and they do not want to give that up even though they have been displaced within the region or have migrated to foreign countries.

For example, Tharmaligam Balachandran's *kalveṭṭu* (death book)[130] was published to commemorate his death, which occurred on 25.12.1995. The front page of the death book mentioned that Balachandran's birthplace as Keerimalai though he was displaced to many other villages during the war, and actually lived in Nelliyadi when he died. This reveals how Tamils pay more attention to their *conta ūr* than to their actual place of residence. The sense of Tamil *ūr* in post-war Jaffna is not only about one's geographical identity, then, but also outlines one's selfhood through experiential, emotional, and affectional ties to the particular locale of their *ūr*.

However, there are no fixed definitions of place or memory. There is a possibility of multiple meanings and multiple dimensions about the sense of village, temple and place. For example, I found many multi-dimensional views about *ūr* during fieldwork. To define *conta ūr* my informant Arumugam in Inuvil, for example, claimed a genealogical historical tied to their land because his grandparents and parents had owned their house and many more properties. Vageesvari, a retired teacher at Keerimalai, connected her *conta ūr* with her destroyed house and its kitchen-garden during the war. Renukar from Keerimalai, but displaced to Alaveddy in 1990, had finally gone abroad during the war. Now, Renukar has returned to Keerimalai and started rebuilding his destroyed temple and his father's *samathi* (place of graveyard) doing so, he told me, due to his belief in Vīracaiva religious faith and the rituals connected to this place where he had lived with his father, who was a great teacher of Vīracaiva religious beliefs in Keerimalai.

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[130] Once middle class and wealthy Jaffna Tamils (mostly high caste people) published a *kalveṭṭu* (death book) and many people now publish this death book to commemorate the deceased. This death book follows a standard format that it praises the accomplishments of the deceased and includes his or her short or long-life history and genealogy of the deceased to prove his kin connections. In these genealogical charts, all agnatic connections are indicated, and in marrying women's parentage is not necessarily shown. Further, women of the upper generations of the agnatic line tend not to be shown. However, this inclusion and exclusion of this information in this book varies from one to other. Although the death book was written in a standard format in the past (30 years ago), people innovatively write this today. Also, people still follow the standard format, and some have given up publishing a death book, but they have adopted various other practices of publishing a calendar, religious musical album, religious book, and so on.

Furthermore, a place's unique characteristics might contribute to the notion of locale, wherein material artifacts and non-material practices would represent one's place (John Anderson, 2010); for instance, Pathmanthan and Krishnaraja (2013) point out that Inuvil received a high income from tobacco cultivation and the cigar industry from 1625 to 1975. People therefore could build many Hindu temples in Inuvil. "Inuvil *pukaiyilai*" (Inuvil tobacco leaf) is a popular phrase among other villagers in the Jaffna Peninsula. In addition, my informant Mahesan from Inuvil was worried that their village cigar was quite popular among the Sinhalese in Galle, in southern Sri Lanka, and that they lost that business network during war time.

Likewise, the Inuvil *Mancham* (a temple car of the Inuvil Kanthaswami Temple) is a very famous work of art by people in the surrounding region and among people from other villages who visit this temple to witness the temple car festival. People related the oral history of this temple car whenever others ask about it, and that it also contains beautiful carvings and sculptures. At the same time, non-material practices can also represent one's place; for instance, people's senses of Naguleswaram and Keerimalai are ritualized through the *Mahā Sivarathri* and *Āti Amavasai* rituals which take place in Naguleswaram and are viewed by many tourists and pilgrims.

When I visited Koovil, which is partly connected to Keerimalai though it belongs to a different village administrative division, my informant Velan was emotional about Koovil *kaḷḷu* (toddy), which was popular among the people of Keerimalai and people who visited Keerimalai beach who also had had toddy from Koovil. The place, Koovil, is identified as a low-caste locale where the older generation from the Paḷḷar caste community still remember their place as involving the tapping of toddy which was their 'traditional' caste occupation. Many Veḷḷāḷar informants shared this narrative about this place, but some low-caste women were reluctant to talk of toddy because, in Jaffna, people do not respect toddy as it is a type of liquor (hence, considered 'polluting').

In contrast, some low-caste men happily told me they regard the taste of toddy as a unique characteristic of Koovil. However, today they do not produce toddy as much as they did in the past. Indeed, many people have given up this traditional occupation for two reasons: (1) During the war, many palmyra trees (the source of toddy) were destroyed. (2) People consider toddy tapping as a lower-grade job and an index of one's low caste status. Yet, once people have pressed toddy from palmyra fruit, they not only produced toddy but also jaggery (a kind of sugar) and other material artifacts, which were important and well valued parts of their local economy before the war. Thus, their celebration of toddy and other local cultural practices appear in an intangible sense through words like Koovil *kaḷḷu* (Koovil toddy)*,* which obviously illuminates the connection between people and places.

So, their being is known by the meaning of local knowledge conveyed through oral history rather than through written text. This local knowledge is oral because nobody has ever written it down or documented it since, as a low caste group, they are a minority among the Tamil minority. Their discoveries us show their world of daily life. No one there needed to be taught or given training to discover their model of being in their village or to rebuild their village and life; they had a particular model of being in the world, which they constructed by interacting with the different global flows of today. Even though those global flows influenced their thinking and acting, it is very important to see how people constructed meaning for themselves based on their local knowledge.

Heidegger's notion of dwelling brings us closer than anything else I can think of to my project, where I have intended to investigate how people make their place of mere existence into a home. Dwelling denotes a certain culturally and emotionally organized set of practices, which I have defined as village-consciousness. That is the notion I have used to examine how post-war Tamils in Sri Lanka portray their way of life to themselves in a phenomenological fashion. In phenomenological terms, then, this dissertation designed its theoretical argument to show how

people look and think in their own fashion and style rather than when being intentionally motivated to perceive their world of being.

Furthermore, by dwelling, as Heidegger put it, in being he meant something occurring in three stages: "to-be-there" (*Dasein*), "being," and "person-in-world." *Dasein* can be referred to as human-being-in-the-world by virtue of their technical actions and stuff, being is rather self-explanatory; but the third stage, "person-in-world", is more about daily living (Seamon, 1984). It is this kind of being that has been the focus of this dissertation. Moreover, beyond this, dwelling in being comprises "a sense of continuity, community, and homeness" (Seamon, 1984: 4) which, I would argue, precisely what the efforts of postwar Jaffna Tamils having been trying the achieve. For instance, temples, schools, houses, shops, as well as all the little named spaces in Jaffna villages, and any other forms of building or spaces are concrete examples of places for dwelling. However, neither a building nor a named space such as a *kuricci* is meaningful by itself alone, and is not, thus, just its physical structure. Instead, we need to look at how people bear those buildings in their senses and dwell there as a "person-in-the-world" in those places.

In terms of dwelling architecture in Naguleswaram, in most cases, people who have lost the complete form of their former houses could not build their houses back in the old fashion due to the limited compensation granted by either the Government of Sri Lanka or the Indian Housing Scheme. That is, some of their houses have been rebuilt funded under the Indian Housing Scheme while the reconstruction of others was funded under the Sri Lankan Government's Scheme, and the rest according to people's own design and wish. But aside from such self-funded rebuilding, rebuilding occurring under both schemes had to follow according to model houses provided by the schemes, with no deviation allowed. However, a dwelling contains a certain emotional state of being that is attached to it as a lived place.

To elaborate this further, I again invoke Heidegger's notion of dwelling as concerned with "rootedness, uprootedness, and transrootedness" (Cighi, 2008) to examine my case study of the villages of Inuvil and Naguleswaram. This ethnography shows, I think, that people there have

inhabited a place which they call *ūr* and have been rooted as their natal village by birth, regional history, their own family's story, their village temple, their village or village section deity or *kulateiyvam,* and by many other attributes. At the same time, after more than two decades of civil war, people have been uprooted from their original habitations. About uprootedness, people have war-stories, war memories, displacement-stories, individual narratives and shared or collective narratives about their both various and collective dispersal. Their bodies have been moving with their nostalgia of *ūr*.

Although the post-war scenario has changed their places in Jaffna, people have not obliterated their pre-war life and practices which were indubitably rooted in their lived places. Memories of lived places or narratives of places are invaluable contributions for the project of rebuilding village communities in Jaffna. In this exercise, many informants were narrating stories about lived places. These were very sensitive and touching stories regarding the decades of displacement and war. They featured narratives of individual and collective traumas about their lived places, which all also described their *ūr* and *iṭam* belonging. At the same time, people also experienced themselves as dwelling in non-places and non-*ūr* (Augé, 1997) during their protracted displacement and encampments in alien places. Such dwelling in non-places or non-*ūr* revealed the relationship between alienation and *ūr* belonging.

What is *ūr* belonging? One's *ūr* belonging is not simply connected with a physical boundary or material things (although it also can be) but something concerned with home ownership, land ownership, temple ownership, accessibility to temples for worship and rituals, membership at village community centers, and belonging to social relationships. Drawing considerable attention to former internally displaced persons' (IDPs), [my informant's] boundaries of belonging were a matter of scholarly concern since the community or the given social structure at issue were completely different from what they enjoyed and inherited in their original villages – especially those which fell under the High Security Zones (HSZ) for more than two decades. What were the different social structures (and places) that were given to displaced persons during their long-term

displacements? This is the broader question of investigating the form of belonging during displacement, which is also a part of my discussion of this chapter. First, I will briefly discuss an anthropological conception of places and non-places (Augé, 1997), which is very important in understanding both dwellings and belongings in non-places during displacement.

Marc Augé's Anthropological theory of place holds that there are not only "places" but also "nonplaces". For him, that is, places are locations that are significant to a particular group of people – such as cities, ports, and obviously temples – because of the life lived round them and through them. But, precisely because of this, the existential meaning of such places is quite changeable in relation to different times, contexts (social, economic, and political), and analytical levels. For Augé, this conception of place, and hence the "placeness" of a place, is deployed by individuals, "through complicities of language, local references, [and] the unformulated rules of living know-how". In other words: what I would call cultural practices. But non-places, as Augé defines them, are the opposite of places in this sense. Nonplaces are the kind of locations "created [by] the shared identity of passengers, customers or [people out for a] Sunday drive" (1997: 101). That is, locations where place-significance is erased, or never developed, in favor of a kind of transitory, stupefyingly iterative, nothingness: the spatial equivalent of Muzak or corporate spam. The difference he is gesturing at here is that, perhaps, between Notre Dame Cathedral or Madurai's Meenakshi Ammon *Kōvil* and, say, (any) McDonalds with their identical plastic seats and golden arches; and, I might add, any of the many refugee encampments and neighborhoods, all equal in their nonplaceness, that Jaffna's displaced involuntarily occupied during their many years in exile.

In addition to defining non-places in opposition to places, Augé asserted, further, that places and nonplaces must be seen in the context of supermodernity – that is, as spatial features of the peculiar hypermodernity that Augé believed characterized the late 20th century – a period, according to him, during which modernity was not so much superseded as ridiculously overdeveloped. Augé was looking at places people pass through for capitalist reasons – waiting

room, bus stops, but also the 'Sunday Drive' as places of conventional, anonymous middle-class activity. A grocery store like Kroger (in the USA) or Cargills (in Sri Lanka) – as opposed to a market – is such a nonplace. I am trying to say that the encampments of the displaced were such nonplaces too created by a different aspect of modernity: nationalist civil war. Hence, "super" rather than "post" modern. Perhaps the violence, senseless destruction, and various displacements of the Sri Lankan civil war, then, should be seen in this "supermodern" way as well; that is, as a period during which "modern" nationalism, state power, and ethnicity were revved up to the point of mutual destruction.

In any case, Michel de Certeau, for his part, took a different tack than Augé, and delineated place in opposition to space. Place, he argued, is something fixed, or just seen as a "geometrical figure" (1997:81) or geographical landmark, as a curious high school student might see the outside of Lafferty Hall in a photograph of campus buildings. Seen that way, shorn of the furious activity and life that goes on within it and around it, Lafferty Hall, as a place, embodies the opposite of movement: empty geography. This notion of place is, actually, more like Augé's definition of a nonplace than his definition of a place as somewhere that "symbolized sense" fills the emptiness of mere structure with language and movement (Augé, 1997:81). Thus, for de Certau, it is all that language and movement missing from the dead, still, photographs of places like Lafferty Hall lack that makes them into "spaces" – places, that is, of anarchic possibility where almost anything can happen. Hence, since de Certeau's notion of space and Augé's notion of place complement each other, hence forth I will use both ideas.

Still there are important differences between the positions of these two thinkers that need to be teased out a bit further. Augé claims that place "can be defined as relational, historical, and concerned with identity" (p. 77). In this vein, applied to Jaffna, it makes sense to say that a place (ūr or a specific iṭam) constitutes a source of identification for the people who live there. Again, Augé, contrasts his concept of place to his notion of non-place (p.79).

A nonplace he describes as a "space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity" (p. 77-8). Hence, the difference between his distinction between places and non-places and de Certeau's opposition between place and space. However, Augé claims that Michel de Certeau "did not oppose place and pace in the way that place is opposed to non-place" (p.79). More specifically, Augé introduced the new concept of supermodernity to distinguish non-places from places while neglecting Certeau's view of modernity as the "interweaving of old and new" (1997:110). In Augé's conception, supermodernity does not interweave the old and new, but it will be new while the old remains as it is. In this case, the definition of non-place should be free from pre-defined descriptions or pre-suppositional knowledge about place. Hence, according to Augé, supermodernity composes places anew, but it does not assimilate with former identity and these places finally became non-places. Based on this background, I will have to look at individual and collective memories discussed on peoples' dwellings and belonging to non-places during displacement in Jaffna.

In Jaffna, although all people were displaced from their original places to new places at different times and periods, the high caste people had more opportunities to be accommodated in their relatives' or friends' houses or, sometimes, even in temples and schools (these are new places or non-places for the IDPs). For them, even though they were displaced, it was still sometimes possible to be what in Tamil Sri Lanka is called a "known person". In contrast, during displacement, low-caste IDPs, particularly people of the *Pañcamar* castes[131] (the five "untouchable" castes previously discussed in Chapter One), were much more vulnerable to dislocation becoming radical disidentification compared to high caste people. This is because low-caste IDPs, for a long time, were not allowed to stay either in well-known places such as public schools or temples. Instead, they had to be resettled in other places, places where they had

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[131] *Pañcamar* is a Tamil term referred to the collection of five castes namely Ampaṭṭar (barbers) Naḷavar (toddy tappers), Paḷḷar (labors) Paṟaiyar (funeral drummers), and Vaṇṇār (washermen) these castes are seen as low-castes in Jaffna society in terms of their occupational ranking and purity and pollution practices according to the high caste Veḷḷāḷar's conception.

limited or no contacts and social networks; hence, new places that, for them, were truly

nonplaces. One reason for this was that highly prevalence of caste consciousness combined with

class to be reckoned throughout the Jaffna. This situation has led low caste people to be

predominate in the IDP camps (Welfare Centers) and empty lands of the Jaffna peninsula.

   There are several reasons for the predominance of *Pañcamar* people who remained in IDP

camps for a long time. As *Pañcamar* caste IDPs were identified by their low-caste status, their

low position in Jaffna's social hierarchy often prevented their social participation in mainstream

society. Following Augé's (1995) concept of non-place, the IDPs lost their original (former)

villages and places, but they were in new places (or nonplaces), which created a number of new,

but negative, identifications for them. Hence the long term IDPs were generally identified by (a)

their caste identity (mostly by their low caste status) (b) their original village, (c) their camp

location and (d) the "status of camp people," which characterizations, altogether, excluded them

from access to employment, land, water, home ownership, land ownership, temples, festivals, and

other resources. In this way IDPs were marginalized from mainstream society and were neither

here (in the host community) nor there (their original villages/habitations).

    IDPs constructed different identities while living in host communities. For example, the

derogatory words, *iṭampeyarntōr/iṭampeyarnta āṭkaḷ* (displaced people), *mukām caṉaṅkaḷ* (camp

people) and *kaḷḷar* (thieves) were often used by people in the host communities to identify IDPs.

These identifications carried several derogatory meanings. They implied IDPs were 'low caste',

'poor', 'badly behaved', and 'aggressive'. Such identity formation expressed IDPs alienation

from the village citizenship (for village membership is determined by one's location at birth)

within the village. In addition, the roots of such derogatory constructions lie in the caste

consciousness of Jaffna society, and this took different formations within different social

contexts. I found a similar explanation of IDP alienation in a study by Thanges and Silva (2009).

They pointed out that many of the inhabitants of IDP camps disapprovingly referred to as *mukām*

caṉaṅkaḷ (camp people). This meant they were not only victims of war and/or natural disasters,

but of their 'untouchable status' combined with their extreme poverty. Their argument clearly indicates how power inequalities connected to caste consciousness plays a major role in the formation of IDP identities.

Apart from this kind of negative identity formation, we yet need some further explanation of how caste identity is connected with the formation of a separate, alienated boundary of belonging in non-places. When long-term IDPs lost their original homes, lands, temples, schools, and villages, this effectively excluded them from 'accessibility' to community belonging as people. They could not be talked to because, even if they were there, they were not known; not, that is, connected to a network of shared social activity and space-connected experience. At the same time, they were also alienated from village citizenship and participation in village temple worship (because of not having "rights" or *urimai* – hereditary rights -- to sponsor festival days and nights in temples. They were also barred from access to village assets such as water, land, employment and most other resources in most, largely higher caste, host communities by their low caste status. To sum up the exclusion process, most IDPs were uprooted from their original boundaries of belonging (their natal villages) and forced to be resettled in host communities with their own "boundaries of belonging" – boundaries that excluded them. Moreover, from the point of view of high or higher caste host communities, incoming IDP were easily seen as threatening "others". Hence, many low caste IDPs urged me to say, in my work, how they were excluded from participating in the various host communities they found themselves by the boundaries erected by the Vellalar and other high caste groups that dominated them.

Such an exclusive disposition by higher caste host communities led IDPs to decern, within themselves, two boundaries to their own "boundaries against belonging" in such IDP non-places. That is, first, a boundary based on their own attention still being focused on the villages they lost; and, second, a boundary to attachment based on their own loss of the familiar physical and geographical features that once symbolically anchored their belonging. That is, their attention was still reserved for their "original boundaries of belonging" (to their *ūr* and a specific place [*iṭam*])

489

even as they were no longer attached to such places after being displaced. Such an attachment was not simply a connection with a physical boundary or material things but was connected by powerful emotions to their land (their *kāṇi* and *vaḷavu*) that created an "imagination of boundaries of belonging." This dispossession and displacement of waves of people caused everyone, IDS and hosts alike, to question the old boundaries or territories within which they once belonged, turning much of Jaffna into nonplaces in Augé's sense, or spaces – in de Certeau's.

Further, "locality" and "accessibility" were very important determinants connected to a person or family's standard of living during the resettlement or relocation processes of displacement. By standard of living, here, I am not only referring to the physical or material aspects of a person's life and belonging but also to the non-material things, such as land rights or *urimai* (hereditary ownership), home ownership, temple ownership (again, *urimai*), and festival rights, upon which their livelihood also depends.

Generally, action-oriented researchers, social workers, and international aid agencies have only concerned themselves with basic needs rather than with such questions of *urimai* – issues that would require examining the past life histories of IDPs. Such "forgotten stories" and were simply not heard or, if heard, taken seriously by most scholars in doing research on IDPs. Yet living in long-term encampments badly affected the lives of IDP by denying them both a recognized "locality" and adequate "accessibility". Because of this post-war effort at ameliorating their condition were first direct to simply resettling them somewhere. But by completely ignoring the importance of "locality" and its link to "accessibility", such arrangements continued to hurt the displaced. This was because to settle the displaced in some any place – some nonplace -- completely different from their "original village locality" left them still alienated from the place-dependent aspects of their identities. I can feel this myself, somewhat, because of my own personal experience. Our family was displaced more than four times, but we could manage as these displacements to host communities were each for a short time, not more than six months. But such relatively manageable exile was not the case with my informants from Naguleswaram,

490

who were forced to live host communities for more than two decades. For them the harms of displacement were even more dire.

 Yet it is important to state here that as people slowly began to return to their old villages and homes after the war, this upsetting of the old certainties of belonging – this turning of many places into nonplaces in Augé's sense, or of many places into spaces in de Certeau's – was often received very differently in both villages by those who previously enjoyed high-caste and upper class positions of privilege and those who did not. That is, for those who were powerful before the war, the loss of the old boundaries of belonging and its attendant moral order (or *kaṭṭupāṭu*) aroused intense anxiety. Hence, by and large, they told me, they wanted to return to the old social order, the old boundaries of belonging, as they knew them before the war and displacement. But for those disadvantaged by those old boundaries, or who grew used to living without them, especially women, young people, and many low caste people, this same loss of the old socio-spatial-ritual certainties was often also viewed, albeit with some anxiety, as an opportunity. An opportunity, that is, to escape the oppressions built into Jaffna's pre-war Vellalar hegemony, and to try on or out the new powers offered by access to diaspora resources and globalization.

Today, their *ūr* has become a transit location, a visiting place or meeting place like a movie theatre or pilgrimage site, where diaspora members and locales can visit for participating in domestic and religious festivals. Thus, *ūr* has also become a bridge between members of the Diaspora and residents of the home country. For instance, members of diaspora who visit Inuvil to celebrate their daughter's puberty ritual and their children's weddings. And now the temple disputes are still negotiated and discussed, but often through skype meetings with members of the diaspora who hold copies of court cases in those countries. Hence, people have been uprooted from their lived places and have returned to their places, at the same time as they have been scattered in many parts of the country and the world.

It is important to discuss how belonging works in general and was, as it were, stratified in pre-war Jaffna society. In Jaffna Tamil *ūr* belonging is determined by birth to Jaffna Tamil

491

parents either in a particular *ūr* or, if in diaspora, in different countries. Further, land ownership is also another important aspect to Jaffna Tamil *ūr* belonging, which is my focus and part of this chapter. But here we need to define how belonging worked pre-war. By pre-war belonging, I mean that that pre-war having or not having land was an important aspect of belonging in Jaffna. I do not have enough information about land tenure to talk about this in any depth. What I can say, however, is that the belongingness, or lack of belongingness of many people in post-war Jaffna was connected to the reconfiguration of land ownership after the war.

Many people from Jaffna villages moved to Colombo and foreign countries during the war. This happened in Inuvil as well, and of course the entire population of Naguleswarm was uprooted for more than two decades. This meant that all of those people became both homeless and landless, which not only seriously affected their livelihoods, but also their belonging in host communities. During their long stay in the host villages, high caste people often did not have much difficulty buying either lands or houses, which was a necessary initial step in reconfiguring land ownership and neighbourhood in those villages. But even though the low caste people often mobilized to buy up property in some villages, they were not allowed to move into those neighbourhoods because, as defined by their caste status, they did not belong to those villages.

Now my ethnography of Inuvil found that during the war, high caste families who went abroad mostly only sold their houses and lands to other high caste people from Inuvil and other Jaffna villages; never, I was told, to low caste people. Vellalar owners of land in there always somehow managed to find out the caste identity of potential buyers through their personal social networks before selling the land. Yet in communication with Dr. Thanges Paramsothy, who recently read for his Ph.D. research on caste, I was told that he found, on the contrary, that many Veḷḷāḷar families sold their land and houses to the low caste people in Punkudutivu, another community in the Jaffna Peninsula. So, clearly, landownership and village neighbourhoods as these relate to caste have been reconfigured in some villages in post-war Jaffna more than others.

Now, I will move onto how Malan (from a low caste background), one of my Inuvil informants, viewed of this issue.

Malan told me that whenever low-caste people try to buy a piece of land from a Veḷḷāḷar family, the people of the Veḷḷāḷar neighborhood resist, telling the Veḷḷāḷar family that they should not sell the land to low-caste people. Malan said that these kinds of crises are being sorted out in two ways. First, sometimes, a Veḷḷāḷar family from the neighborhood would step in to buy the land, and if they did not have enough money to do it, then they would ask relatives from Inuvil or other villages to help them buy it. Second, sometimes relatives who are in diaspora will buy the land using their network of relatives back in Jaffna. I would say that this implies that Veḷḷāḷar people do not want to allow people of other castes (mostly *Pañcamar* caste people) to live in their neighborhoods not only due to issues of caste purity and impurity but also because they do not want to alter their neighborhood landscapes and caste demography by allowing low-caste people to live in them. For the Veḷḷāḷar, here, altering their neighborhoods by including low cast people as inhabitants would mean destroying or weakening the Veḷḷāḷar centered and controlled *kaṭṭupāṭu,* or social control, that organizes village and neighborhood social relations and land tenure.

Further, I found, for example, that Veḷḷāḷar people in those neighborhoods often said to each other that having low caste people owning land in their neighborhoods would destroy *kaṭṭupāṭu*. But I would add, here, that the notion of *kaṭṭupāṭu* for them was also linked to Sri Lankan Tamil notions of individual and collective honor or *kouvravam* (See also Whitaker 1999: 81 and 109). That is, since the notion of *kauravam* is premised on the idea that a person or group's honor is complexly, and precariously, tied to the status positions such people or groups are publicly seen to occupy in the wider social and cosmic order; and since such status positions are revealed, among other ways, by the people with whom one is associated, or, rather, with how significant others (such as fellow members of one's caste) perceive such people; then threats to *kaṭṭupāṭu* (such as the threat of having low caste neighbors as one's neighbors, employers, fellow land

owners and so forth), would also be felt (perhaps more than understood) as deep threats to *kouvravam* . Hence, when Veḷḷāḷar people told me that they had to exclude low caste people to preserve *kaṭṭupāṭu,* they also meant that they had to keep low caste people out in order to maintain their own *kouvravam* and that of their caste-defined neighborhoods.

Thus, Veḷḷāḷar argued to me that if they allowed low caste people to live in their neighborhoods or allowed them to buy immovable properties like land or houses, then their own *kouvravam* would drop down. This worry was displayed in what one might call collective or group *kouvravam,* representing a whole neighborhood, and, at the same time, as a problem of individual *kouvravam,* in people anxiety about themselves. Hence, just as Veḷḷāḷar people also maintained their individual *kouvravam* by prohibing inter-caste marriages between Veḷḷāḷar and low castes people, so Veḷḷāḷar people argued that their *kouvravam* continuity would be interrupted if they allowed low caste people to live in their neighborhoods. In this way, caste hierarchy, personal and collective honor (*kouvravam*), and notions of the importance of preserving the social and moral order (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) are linked together into a single cultural practice, or form of life, or *habitus,* that helps to preserve Veḷḷāḷar hegemony within the field of human activity that is the village and its neighborhoods. Now this is, as I say, different from a purity and pollution explanation of their motivation, but it is still about preserving Veḷḷāḷar exclusivity and power. Further, I found a similar pattern with regard to temple festival rights. That is, when many Veḷḷāḷar families left villages, their festival rights were never passed to low-caste people to perform in the temple. Instead, those festival rights were either passed to their relative's families who live in the village, or else those festivals were conducted through money sent from the related members of the diaspora. This was how the members of the village continued their neighborhood belonging and festival ownership at a distance.

So far, I have clearly discussed temples, villages, and places in these last two Chapters of Eight and Nine. This has been the longest section of my dissertation, but I felt I had to discuss the details of temples and villages in order to understand the post-war reconstruction of temples,

villages, and places. In this discussion, I have shown that experiencing *ūr* in the post-war context of Jaffna cannot be analyzed in terms of a set of physical properties alone. Rather, physical properties like temples, villages, and places should be analyzed through the culturally organized and placed-based memories and culturally-constructed emotions of the Jaffna people.

Further, I have argued that the post-war reconstruction of these empirical physical properties needs to be understood in light of more anthropological investigations about nostalgia and about peoples' anxiety about social control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*), and how diaspora and transnational networks have influenced temples, villages, and places in all these regards. Understanding the reconstructions of villages, temples, and places, temple disputes, animal sacrifice and temple entry issues was a very important objective of this chapter because some of the issues of *ākama* and non-*ākama* divides, pollution and purity complexes, restructuring caste hierarchy and caste geography, the restructuration of the priestly hierarchy, vegetarianism versus non-vegetarianism, and the emergence of Tamil Saiva Hindu nationalism in Jaffna are all part of, and re/emerged in, the re-construction of villages, temples, and places after the war.

CHAPTER 10. CONCLUSION: "VILLAGE" OR "VILLAGE-TEMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS" AS A FORM OF LIFE AND PRACTICE IN POST-WAR RECOVERY IN SRI LANKA

10.1   Problems and observations encountered in post-war reconstruction

The nine chapters of this dissertation have argued that "village" or "village-temple consciousness" is enacted as forms of life and practice in post-war recovery in Sri Lanka. Once again, I would repeat the overarching argument of this dissertation, which is that, in post-war Jaffna, people in Tamil Hindu communities reconstructed their villages, their *ūr* (villages of origin)*,* in the aftermath of a prolonged civil war, by using their nostalgia for, and memories of, pre-war *ūr.* In other words, the memory of or nostalgia for *ūr* as they existed in the recent pre-war past, became a form of consciousness used in the reconstruction of communities affected or destroyed by the war. I argue this as part of a larger theoretical claim that in any post-conflict society such as Tamil Sri Lanka where communities have been damaged or completely destroyed, an important part of what must be reconstructed is the 'sense of belonging and place' that people had, or at least imagine they had, before the crisis.

In particular, I have argued in the first chapter that many studies of post-conflict societies have concentrated on infrastructure development, the reconciliation process, trauma, peace-building, resilience, and many other attributes, which are all the focus of State, NGO, and INGO projects and plans for post-war reconstruction. But none of these plans, so far as I am aware, tend to address the need for village or community reconstruction from the point of view of locally cultivated cultural knowledge about what "home" or "being at home" means for the people who live, or lived, in such places. By local cultural knowledge, I mean, throughout my dissertation, the knowledge Jaffna Tamilians use to construct their *ūr;* that is, the specific cultural knowledge and practices that I have explained in terms of "village-temple consciousness" and "village consciousness." I found that Tamils in Jaffna in 2017-18 paid great attention to such specific forms of cultural knowledge and practice when they were reconstructing their villages and

496

renovating their temples, houses, and other physical dwellings. I also observed in other pre-war inhabited villages recently released from the status of High Security Zone (HSZ), that returning village residents and *ūr* members in diaspora both first turned their attention to renovating and reconstructing their destroyed Hindu temples. These temples were very important to their post-war recovery process because they anchored in place, for these people, their free-floating memories and socio-spatial imaginings, and hence became starting points of village-temple consciousness for both people recently returned and those still displaced. In this way, the post-war recovery became an ongoing, local (albeit, given the diaspora, sometimes globally local) cultural process wherein community identity construction occupied a significant position.

Here, identity construction did not only involve the Tamil ethnic identity construction, but also village or *ūr* identity construction. Hence the focus of people on specific temples. For temples provide villages identity (or, perhaps, identities). Temples are, of course, places for worship, but for Tamilians they are also more than places of worship. There are also places where people and groups (castes, priests, Saivite nationalists, and so forth) may show their *kouvravam,* their publicly acknowledged authority and power. This is hardly a new role for temples. Temples played a similar role from at least the 8th century AD onwards in South Indian Tamil history where Tamil kings tended to build larger temples than palaces. As many scholars have noted, this was because temples were how South Indian Tamil kings showed their God-sanctified power, sovereignty, and *kouvaravam* (Dirks 1993; Stein 1980).

Hence, in some Jaffna villages, people reconstructed their settlements or houses in parallel with renovating or reconstructing their temples. In other villages, people renovated their temples first, sometimes even before moving back to their original inhabitation. Yet next to the reconstruction of temples, the reconstructing or renovating of *veeṭu* (of house compounds as homes) was an equally important cultural project for post-war recovery, as I extensively discussed in Chapter Eight. Here, however, I bring *veeṭu* up again because people's post-war efforts to rebuild them reveals something important about the danger of ignoring local village-

consciousness when thinking about post-conflict rebuilding, let alone when constructing – as states and INGOs tend to do, concrete plans for how this should be done.

Now in Jaffna just as Hindu temples were rebuilt according to the prescriptions of a specific *ākama* scripture, so Tamil Hindus or Saivites there generally wanted their lost houses rebuilt using cultural and astrological knowledge derived from the *maṉaiyaṭi cāstiram* (*shastra*) or *vāstu castiram* (an ancient Hindu scientific scripture about architecture) (Kumar 2002; Arya 2000; Acharya 1978). Here, the Tamil term, *maṉai* and the Sanskrit term, *vāstu* mean house. The activity of rebuilding is locally known as *nilaiyam pārttl* in Jaffna; and people usually consult an astrologer to find out where a house should be located on any particular parcel of land. But the point, here, is that for Jaffna Tamil people the project of rebuilding either temples or houses involved a complex mixing of memory and text-guided orthodox practice -- a village temple consciousness -- that was, for the most part, completely ignored by officially sanctioned state, NGO or INGO projects of community recovery.

This was one reason why the INGO and state model house plans, which villagers accepting their aid were mandated to follow, could not compensate people, as they promised to do, for the real value of their former dwellings lost during the war. For those mandated model architectural plans ignored the *maṉaiyaṭi cāstiram,* the Hindu architectural text, which post-war Jaffna villagers, anxious to return to a remembered or imagined pre-war physical and moral order, needed to use as a guide to house design. Thus, while people in Naguleswaram still tried to have their pre-was houses rebuilt according to Hindu architectural rules, they nonetheless generally either had to accept model houses or, otherwise, rebuild within the compensation values and rules laid down by the state and the INGOs. Yet others used used their personal savings along with the housing scheme grants to build their houses according to the Hindu architectural rules. And others who accepted model houses, soon renovated them according to advice from astrologers based on Hindu architectural rules. Some claimed that they had suffered numerous problems in terms of economy and health after moving into these new model houses.

For Tamil Hindus in Jaffna strongly believe in Hindu architectural rules and pay attention to them when building their houses, mindful not only for the betterment of just one generation, but for many generations to come. Some people, however, had to accept the model houses just as they were instead of making any changes to them as per their wishes because they did not have the money to do otherwise. Another important thing I found related to some families who had never owned a house before the war received one under this system. For them too, of course, their desire to have their houses built following Hindu architectural rules and building houses were ignored by state and INGO driven housing projects and their specific rules for building houses (for more detail on this topic, see Chapter Six). All in all, then, rebuilding a house – a *veeṭu* -- in postwar Jaffna was never a simple matter of putting up a structure.

Furthermore, reconstruction and recovery have created so many other problems, like, the naming and renaming of places, shifting actual boundaries between villages, expanding and shrinking former villages, writing and rewriting the history of places, demolishing cultural monuments in some places, and many other activities controlled by the state, local politics, and also by the region's high-caste, Veḷḷāḷar elite. This kind of place transformation occurred in Jaffna history through the respective colonial regimes and the state control (after the independence from 1948).

There was the construction of eponymous Dutch Fort in Jaffna by the Dutch in 1680 (Kunarasa 1995). This Fort was originally built by the Portuguese between 1625-1637 (Ribeiro 1999 [1909]), but the Dutch demolished and rebuilt it. The fort was partly demolished by the LTTE during the LTTE's State period (1990-1995) and restored in 2015. But LTTE also tried changing the names of the by lanes and small alleys in the Jaffna Peninsula by naming them after their martyred soldiers (or *māvīrar* – big martyrs) who died during the Sri Lankan civil war. However, those nameboards were removed after the Jaffna Peninsula was captured by the Sri Lankan army in 1996. Some people also did not like the LTTE practice of changing the lane nameboards which had been existing for a long time. The LTTE, of course, is just one of many

different powers that have played a significant role in reconstructing places, temples, and villages at different historical times. A related display of outside power altering temple practice occurred recently in Tamil Nadu, South India: This was a debate regarding Tanjore Big Temple's (Tanjore Periya Kōvil or Brahdeeswarar Kōvil) consecration ceremony after its recent renovation as to whether it should be conducted in Tamil or Sanskrit. Let us look at this incident and see how it relates to my dissertation and reconstruction project.

10.2   A comparison between the Tanjore Big Temple's consecration ceremony dispute and the post-war reconstruction and renovation in Jaffna Tamil Hindu villages

 The 1,010-year-old temple of Thanjavur (Tanjore) Brahadeeswarar (Lord Shiva) (also called the Big temple, or as the Rajarajeswaram or Peruvudaiyar Kōvil) –is located in the Tanjore District of Tamil Nadu, South India. Temples in the Saiva tradition, as I discuss below, must be completely renovated every twelve years, and, once this has been completed, must have a special consecration ritual to reconvene as an active temple. The Big Temple's consecration ceremony, or *kumpāpiṣēkam* (Skt. *Kumbabishekam*) was held on February 05th, 2020. Prior to this consecration ceremony, there had been many petitions and debates directing at the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR and CE) Department (one of the Departments of Tamil Nadu, India) to conduct the consecration ceremony in Tamil only, instead of Sanskrit.

On the other hand, there were opposing appeals from the priests and Sanskrit language supporters stating that the consecration should be performed in Sanskrit alone. Then the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department made a counter proposal that the consecration ought to be conducted in both Tamil and Sanskrit. Finally, the Madras High Court (Madurai Bench) dismissed the petitions of both those asking for the rite to be conducted in Tamil alone proposal and those asking that it be conducted in Sanskrit alone, deciding, instead, that the ceremony should to be conducted in both Tamil and Sanskrit (Chandar, 2020). This was a brief

overview of the incident but looked at in more detail it is clear this debate was politically, Tamil nationalistically, and religiously motivated issue.

To look at this dispute more closely, I followed the many debates about it on social media and in the Indian newspapers (especially The Hindu and The New Indian Express) for a month. I was interested in grasping the essence of the issue of renovation and recovery from this debate about a temple's past history, Tamil Saivism philosophy, the Tamil language, Hindu agama (*ākama*) doctrines, archeology, epigraphy, Tamil sovereignty, ritual hierarchy, and casteism. This complex nature of renovation and consecration this debate revealed is the reality of Tamil Hindu Saiva villages in South Asia.

What is Hindu temple consecration? Why do temple renovation and consecration ceremonies matter? According to the Hindu agamas (*ākamam*), the consecration ceremony should be performed every twelve years, but it is not an identical practice that each temple does and that is not conducted this regularly. Even Thanjavur Brahadeeswarar Temple has conducted this ritual process after twenty-three years. Commonly, temples are renovated before the consecration is conducted; and sometimes temples are completely renovated or partly expanded with additional shrines being added within the temple. Whatever alternations are made, the *kumpāpiṣēkam* must be performed according to *ākama.* So, a temple may adopt a series of renovations, reconstructions, and or expansions before every consecration. Furthermore, many aspects of the temple will have been changed in terms of its image, history, power, (sometime name), and worship system. For instance, Brahadeeswarar is a Sanskritizized name for the Lord Shiva, who inhabits the Tanjore temple; and this name is the same as the temple's name, Brahadeeswarar., This name was implemented by Brahmins. Such *ariyanization* of Hindu Saivite temples and ritual spaces was criticized by Tamil Nationalists, political activists, and many other organizations in Tamil Nadu.

Eventually, the older name of the temple, the Thanjavur *periya kōvil* ("big temple") was brought back. People in Tamil Nadu argued that Peruvudaiyar is the Tamil Name for Lord Shiva

in this temple and should remain rather than be replaced by the Sanskrit name, Brahadeeswarar. For those troubled about the temple's name, mostly non-Brahmin Tamils, this was not just an issue of naming, but rather a question about whether temples and ritual spaces should be controlled by Brahmins. For many Tamil people in Tamil Nadu, that is, animated by Dravidian nationalism, arguments about keeping Thanjavur's Tamil temple and god names was really to make arguments against what they would call *ariyanization.* The Madras court's settlement, then, amounted to a kind of momentary truce between contending Brahmin and non-Brahmin Dravidian forces, rendering the Big Temple's rebuilding and consecration the consequence of a complex negotiation. The point, here, is that in this case, as in much of Tamil South Asia, rebuilding a temple is as much a socio-political project as it is a religious one.

Based on this background, I would like to stress a comparable complexity to reconstructions and renovations of Jaffna's Tamil Hindu villages after their multiple displacements at different times. Each post-war recovery was a different experience of reconstruction where various different models of reconstruction drawn from state, people, INGOs, and NGO sources have contended with local memories and the rules of the *ākamam* to determine the shape of temple, house, and community reconstruction or renovation. Further, recovery was not merely about the physical forms of houses, temples, villages, and other matters alone. Rather, it was about the recovery of past life, pre-war social order, pre-war history, pre-war power, pre-war moral order, and pre-war cultural practices. So, the reconstruction of villages contends at all levels with wider forces of the state, INGOs, NGOs, globalization, and the Tamil diaspora. Each of these bodies has had a hand in controlling and shaping the reconstruction process through their powers.

In this regard, since people in Inuvil were not completely, or for long, uprooted from their village, they could establish the strong diaspora and transitional ties to develop and sustain their village in various ways regardless of these other forces. But people in Naguleswaram were uprooted from their village for more than two decades and scattered everywhere. Their village, captured by the internal colonialism of the Sri Lanka army's long-term militarization of the High

Security Zone, was denuded of houses, temples, streets and all other recognizable landmarks for more than two decades, even as some other parts of the northern Sri Lanka remain, under the military control, to this day. Obviously, given this backdrop, village reconstruction for them was involved with various factors beyond its mere physical rebuilding. What is important to recognize, however, is that as people have returned to Nagelsewaran, they have started to reconstruct it by using culturally-organized sets of placed-based memories. Now many problems have emerged in tackling issues pertaining to the reconstruction and renovation of post-war Jaffna. Indeed, we always need to question what is reconstruction? And in this regard, I have discovered the problem of reorganizing villages using pre-war structure or moral order to deal with the post-war circumstances, and, thus, of from pre-war practices to post-war practices. Post-war recovery is hardly a new phenomenon to anthropology, and there are many stories about post-war recoveries (Hucklesby and Travis 2016; Anguelovski 2014; Barakat 2010; Wessells 2009; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 1999); however, they are not the same everywhere and, of course, vary in terms of the different aspirations of the people involved in reconstruction after the massive disasters.

Going back to the Thanjavur Brahadeeswarar Temple, Ramakrishnan (2020) says that according to the HR and CE Department, the temple has had *kumpāpiṣēkam* in 1010, 1729, 1843, 1980 and 1997, but R. Nagaswamy, an archeologist, argues that there must have been four more *kumpāpiṣēkam* between the 17th and 19th centuries based on inscriptions. According to his findings, three separate shrines for other Hindu deities have been built in the temple in addition to the supreme deity, Lord Shiva, who is in the main sanctum of the temple. In relations to the building of additional shrines and the expansion of the Tanjore temple, a Pandya king built a shrine for the goddess, Ammon around 1400 CE; then a Nayak king built another shrine for the deity Subrahmanya (Lord Murukan) in the 16th century; and then a Maratha king, Serforji II, built a shrine for the deity Ganesh (Ramakrishnan, 2020). The history of the expansion and

reconstruction of the temple shows how different powers and sovereigns were embedded within the Tanjore Temple's history and were associated with the supreme deity of Lord Shiva.

Although the Chola dynasty's (who built the Tanjore Temple) sovereignty was associated with the deity of Lord Shiva, later, each of the Pandya, Nayak, and Maratha dynasties established their own sovereignties, rather, through Ammon, Subrahmanya, and Ganesh deities within the Shiva temple at different times in the history of the Tanjore District. Hence, temple renovation and reconstruction are power driven, which means various powers are always involved in temple reconstruction, renovation, and expansion. Today, the remerging power to reconstruct Lord Shiva's sovereignty through the Tamil nationalistic and Tamil Saivite consciousness has demanded that the consecration ceremony be performed in Tamil alone. As a result, this discourse, too, has been embedded within Tamil Nadu *parampariyam* (traditional practices), casteism, the Vedas, the Agamas (*ākama*), the struggle for language (*moḻkkāṉa pōrāṭṭam*), the struggle for Saivism (*caivatukkāṉa pōrāṭṭam*), and Saiva Sidhanta philosophy.

Throughout my dissertation, I have discussed various issues connected to reconstructing places, temples, and village communities with similar issues of casteism, the *ākama* and non-*ākama* ritual practice divide, Tamil nationalism, Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism, anti-Tamil nationalism, Tamil feminism, the Tamil *mantra pūja* worship system, anti-Sanskrit/Brahminism, and multi-religious engagements. For instance, to list a couple of examples here; the Naguleswaram Grama Niladhari (GN) division's previous name was Keerimalai. At the same time, Naguleswaram was a name of the Lord Shiva Temple, which was located there. In 1990s, this GN division name was changed into Naguleswaram (which, as the larger village landscape, includes the other sub-villages of Keerimalai, Karukampanai, and old and new colonies). This name was changed at the request of the Chief Priest of the Naguleswaram Sivan Temple. Some people were against this because they did not like the idea that the priest alone could change the previous name of the village division. Also, destruction of the Naguleswaram village landscape was not only occasioned by the war, but also by other local and political powers through the

504

reconstruction projects, which I have discussed in detail in Chapter Six and Sevan. In addition, after the war, Veḷḷāḷar scholars in Inuvil have given it a new name, *Tiruvūr*. So, Veḷḷāḷar members of the diaspora in London, Canada, Germany, France, and Australia have formed an *ūr* association with that name, the Inuvil *Tiruvūr Onṟiyam* (see Chapter One). Thus, Veḷḷāḷar hegemony is involved in the reconstruction of villages, temples and places in post-war Jaffna. This hegemonical representation has excluded other forms of *ūr* belongingness. Indeed, multiple-*ūr* projections were both cultivated and repressed through re-emerging casteism, Veḷḷāḷar hegemony, patriarchal ideology, Tamil nationalism, Tamil Saivite ideology, Tamil diaspora orientations, and transnationalism.

More importantly, I would point out that diaspora networks and transnational ties are further intensified through the Veḷḷāḷar power and knowledge, which are reflected in many new post-war construction projects of cultural import: wedding halls, community centers, museums, computer study centers; and by the renaming of road/small lanes, and many other religious (Hinduism) centers. There are competitions and clashes between Veḷḷāḷar residents of Jaffna in the home country and the Tamils in diaspora carried out in terms of different *ūr* reconstructions and new construction projects which are often done individually.

There is much more that needs to be investigated and written about such competitive construction than I can go into here. Suffice it to say that this dissertation has been phenomenologically focused on the individual Tamil experience of people from various castes and genders, is interconnected with an orientation towards a home place (*ūr*), and how, in turn, this orientation is shaped by and is being shaped by people's encounters with the Tamil diaspora and with globalization (Cheran 2004; Tekwani 2003; Axford 2013). An existential analysis shows that *ūr* nostalgia is engaging with everyday life and the reconstruction process in post-war Jaffna villages, which could be seen operating through spatial, sensual, temporal, discursive, and moral dimensions.

10.3 "Village-temple consciousness" as a *model of* or *model for* post-war reconstruction

The argument for using "village" or "village-temple consciousness" as a model of or model for postwar reconstruction is part of a larger theoretical claim that in any post-conflict society, it is likely that destroyed or damaged communities undergoing reconstruction will be using suitably modified pre-war place-making practices (Kingsolver, 2011; Feld and Basso, 1996) as *models of* or *for* their efforts (Geertz 1973: 93). My findings about "village-temple consciousness" in two Jaffna villages, namely Inuvil and Naguleswaram, address a general anthropological problem: the reinvention of destroyed hometowns and associated senses of place in post-conflict societies. Furthermore, I argue that understanding the conjoined village-temple sense of place that underlies social life and its reconstruction in Jaffna requires recognizing the conjunction of the physical and the sacred implied by this compound term. The outcome of this study has been to show that the postwar social and communal rebuilding ongoing in these two villages depends upon people using their village-temple consciousness as *models of* or *for* such endeavors. Also, this ethnography of the role of 'place-making' in community rebuilding in Jaffna, Sri Lanka illuminates the more general issue of how communities anywhere after war reconstitute themselves not just as physical locations but as places in which people can once again truly feel at home.

In a larger context, the Tamil *ūr-* sacred landscape does not only denote a form of religious life or *bhakti* style religious devotional practices, but also the Tamil *ūr* has within it ongoing forms of social life such as violence, war, family disputes, village disputes, temple festivals, domestic rituals (rite of passage), family stories, village folk tales, village aesthetic values, village culture (in the Tamil sense, i.e., *kalāccāram*), Tamil *kalāccāram*, Tamil nationalism, Tamil *Eelam* (*īḻam*) ideology, and Tamil politics. Indeed, Tamils constructed a form of consciousness in their lived locales or *ūrs* through their religious and social lives in the prewar period and during the war in Jaffna. The Jaffna Tamil Hindus' embodied cultural practices were generated through their religious and social lives, which, when people were in exile, constituted nostalgia for their

prewar *ūr.* The unique importance of the knowledge and experience of Tamil Saivites, and their nostalgia for prewar *ūr,* is vastly neglected in studies of post-war reconstruction in Tamil Sri Lanka. For people in Naguleswaram, *ūr* consciousness was driven from a mixture of collective memory and individual memory. The collective memory is composed of historical imagination represented in two famous religious tales or myths. There are terminological problems as to whether they are part histories or religious myths, or even whether those religious myths are part of creating the sacred landscape or constructing the history of the Jaffna kingdom and Tamilness through the framework of a larger religious awakening. However, caste-politics, ethnic-politics, and Eelam ideology were all fabricated within this larger historical narrative.

Likewise, people have embedded the above attributes in many stories. As a result, a place can be defined by many versions of stories; for instance, the Jaffna Peninsula was portrayed as a war zone for three decades. Further, in the past, the Jaffna Peninsula was symbolized as a "place," which was a part of Tamil Eelam and ethnically segregated as a "place" of Tamils' land. In addition, the Jaffna Peninsula was projected as a terrorist zone full of Tamil tigers, and then as a high security zone. Many villages in Jaffna have gone through a great social transformation brought on by the war, militarization, and the global market economy. In this aspect, the war's targeted destructions (through violence, militarization, and displacement) and the global economy's "creative destruction" (Zukin 1991) have transformed the *ūr* landscape enormously. When Escobar (2008) talked about *place* in his book, *Territories of Difference: place, movements, life, redes*, he looked at the Pacific region as a place. In a similar vein, I perceive the Jaffna Peninsula as part of the larger South Asian region and Indian ocean, which has re/constructed geo-political and geo-religious spaces in Sri Lanka. In addition, along with the historical processes of political movements (the Sri Lanka government's militarization, the LTTE's freedom struggle, civil war, and postwar violence), historical processes of capital flows and accumulation have greatly transformed the post-war Jaffna Peninsula.

By *ūr* landscape, I did not only mean the usual imagination in the geographical sense of one's "physical surroundings," but I also meant an assemblage of material and cultural practices and their symbolic representations (Zukin 1991). However, in a broader sense, the dissertation has covered caste, class and gender in my analysis, which included expressions of the vernacular of the powerless in the representing the place. Rather than *meta descriptions* of places, this dissertation has addressed *local representations* of places, temples, and villages. The great social transformation that has occurred since the war has socially and culturally reconstructed spaces in post-war Jaffna. I needed to grasp the socially and culturally reconstructed spaces to understand the reconstructed places and post-war Tamil lives of Jaffna. Furthermore, I would like to place the "post-war Jaffna Peninsula" in a global context to rethink the transformation of the region. For place-based identity, history, memory, culture, and narratives have been too long left out of investigations of post-war reconstruction in the Jaffna Peninsula.

Creative destruction of village landscape was due to the war, displacement, and the global market economy. An expanded market economy and greater access to global network communication technologies have bifurcated Jaffna into two realms. Like the "postmodernism of resistance" and the "postmodernism of reaction" (Zukin 1991), which I have discussed thoroughly in Chapters Five and Eight. Place is a loci of creative destruction. However, I have already pointed out in Chapter Five that Hindu cosmology and philosophy argue that destruction and creation are part of the same universal function. So, disruption and integration have worked out throughout the historical epochs of the Jaffna Peninsula.

This transformation is obvious in any human society, but I have mainly focused in this work on the role of the Tamil conception of social control or power, *kaṭṭupāṭu,* as this is tied up with a person's everyday life. For it is people's experience of *kaṭṭupāṭu,* or sometimes their anxiety over whether it has been lost, which, of course, also shapes a Tamil person's existence in Tamil cultural society as a recognized citizen through its component practices of hierarchy,

prestige, honor and honor competition. One cannot neglect these attributes either when studying Jaffna's great social transformation.

For in the main war theatres of Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, where Tamils live in the largest numbers, village people have undergone tremendous changes.[132] In Jaffna's villages, such changes, leaving aside for the moment the obvious ones related to the violence of war, include important post-war changes related to innovations in *bhakti* (devotional) religious practices, *kaṭṭupāṭu* (social order, or assumptions about social order and discipline)*,* and, as in Inuvil's case, alterations in how people imagine their village's landscape in light of its, and their own, relationships with the world-wide Tamil diaspora.

Such changes have been received and revealed, by my informants and fellow Jaffna villagers, by the four different attitudes I found people tended to display toward them. Discovering these attitudes was, I think, another important finding of this research. (1) People were often anxious about change, and, when anxious, tended to reject those change by describing them in terms of nostalgic *kaṭṭupāṭu*. (2) As often, however, People were also accepting of, at least, certain changes – for example, my Mother liking for the more comfortable clothing she could wear when in Colombo – while yet remaining anxious about changes of ritual procedure that they saw as reflecting a deterioration in the moral order (i.e., *kaṭṭupāṭu*) (3) At the same time, People, particularly but not exclusively the young, were also accepting of changes related to global modernity, particularly those related to communication. Finally, (4) some People were reacting to change by becoming nationalist in a new way. That is, some people were, as it were, weaponizing ritual order reform as part of a new Tamil Hindu Saiva nationalism. For this last group the central ambition was to maintain nationalistic control of the postwar situation by means of a, by turns, selective acceptance and rejection of modernity.

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[132] The total Sri Lankan population is 2,270,924, in which Sri Lankan Tamils are 11.2% of the total population. The majority of the Sri Lankan Tamils are constituted in the Northern Province (987,692) and the Eastern Province (609,584) (Census Report 2012).

As I showed in the many ethnographic cases and interviews cited in this and previous chapters, these attitudes were neither mutually exclusive nor, for the most part, and with the possible exception of attitude (4), confined to a single group. Rather these were four attitudes (or, perhaps, as Bourdieu or even Geertz would say, dispositions) that people, young and old, switched between as needed in their various confrontations with the realities of post-war Jaffna.

To make this all a bit more specific, consider Chapter Five, when I discussed anxious transitions in Inuvil. There it was clear that both older and younger people talked, and worried, about the destruction of their village life due to the war, displacement, and the challenges of modern technology. Village people know that modern technological developments had changed their villages, rituals and religious lives. Further, I think they felt (rather than knew) that technological reproduction was playing a crucial role in reshaping their aesthetic values.[133] Although classical aesthetic values represent Veḷḷāḷar bourgeois ideology, in postwar Jaffna I found people engaged in multilevel aesthetic interactions through modern technology to re/construct their own images. Hence the ritual innovation occurring at Masoda's daughter's puberty ceremony that I discussed in Chapter Five. There a low caste family was creating ritual innovations in their own way without following or copying hegemonic Veḷḷāḷar practices. They could do this because for them, as for other low caste people, foreign remittances, new educational achievements, and modern information and communication technology have given them more opportunity to do so. That is, these changes enabled them to create a space for the democratization of ritual practice and religious innovation.

Hence, also, thinking about my interviews with Venthan (in Chapter 7), it is clear that photo and video albums have become important new cultural texts for the mechanical reproduction of domestic ritual performances. But here, unlike in the case of Walter Benjamin's

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[133] As Walter Benjamin predicted in his essay, "Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction: War and Fascism". In Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings. Lement, C, eds. (Philadelphia: Westview Press 2013:198-200).

(Lement 2013) thesis wherein mechanical reproduction is primarily associated with Bourgeois ideology and the violent aesthetics of fascism, such reproduction has actually freed some low caste people from Veḷḷāḷar dominated practice. Freed them, that is, since given the ability people now have to individually control the planning, design, production and distribution (online) of the video and photo albums of their own domestic rituals, they have usurped what was once a key component of Veḷḷāḷar domination.

This is also why the study of domestic and temple rituals in during post-war reconstruction is central to this study of "village" or "village-temple consciousness," which cannot be understood without discussing rituals, innovations, changes, and continuity. In any case, by 2017-2018 in Jaffna, Temple ritual-scapes and domestic ritual-capes were largely changing because they were incorporating modifications (indigenization/domestication) and innovations. These alterations were being introduced to raise the *kouvravam* (prestige), *pukaẕ* (praise), and *antasttu* (status) of temples, individuals, and families.

The majority of people, however, still try to encompass an existing Hindu religious pluralism under the Saivism (*caivism*) religious division in village. As a result, the Tamil Hindu Saivite project is widely reinforced throughout the Jaffna Peninsula. Also, this recent emphasis on Tamil Saivite ideology and a Tamil Saivite ritual-scape creation have challenged existing *ākama*-based/Brahminized ritual spaces. The absence of the Tamil language in the Sanskrit ritual-scape and Brahmin domination of the scared ritual-scape have encouraged young people to develop a Tamil Saivite ideology in post-war Inuvil. However, I do not mean to imply here that this transformation is general to the entire population of the Jaffna Peninsula. Rather, I am arguing that the conventional ritual and *bhakti* religious practices of pre-war Jaffna were altered by the new intersections of a re-emergent Tamil Saivite ideology and new religious movements. Although Arumuga Navalar had already revitalized the Tamil Saivite ideology among people in Jaffna in the 19th century, Tamil and Saivite religious awareness of his sort was created more among the Veḷḷāḷar caste people than among people of other castes. Indeed, it could be argued

511

that this was so precisely because Navalar's Saivism supported Veḷḷāḷar power in Jaffna. But unlike Arumuga Navalar's Tamil *Caiva* public (Ambalavanar 2006), however, the Tamil Hindu Saivite ideology I saw emerging in 2018 was not emphasizing caste identity; rather it had reformed Tamil Saivite ideology to encourages people of all castes and genders to participate in Tamil Hindu Saivite *bhakti* religious practices.

Thus, all of the ethnographic cases reveal the social, economic, religious, cultural and historical importance of *conta iṭam* of "our place", in post-war reconstruction. The stories of post-war returnees reveal that multiple sufferings and challenges were present throughout their war and displacement journeys. For example, many individual stories described pre-war remembrances and post-war resettlement challenges. In Naguleswaram, the daily survival of people was not only filled with livelihood challenges but also with other encounter in post-war Jaffna. Upgrading one's own, or one's groups, *kouvravam* (prestige/honor) through foreign remittances, for example, was a new phenomenon in post-war Jaffna. Likewise, many of the ethnographic case studies in this dissertation described the multiple challenges facing peoples' lives, but also the strong belief that many people had that, as one women put it to me, her *kulateiyvam* (caste's god) protected her children from the war and its violence, and that her *kulateiyvam*'s grace had supported their efforts to reconstruct life in their *conta iṭam.*

The reconstruction of *conta iṭam* also revealed other challenges. For instance, the reemergence of caste as a factor during the reconstruction of the village and scared landscapes of Naguleswaram. At some point, diaspora and transnational connections also changed the post-war reconstruction process and post-war Tamil geography. Hence, with regard to my interest in the role of village consciousness in the reconstruction of post-war Naguleswaram, the notion or practice of *conta iṭam* clearly occupies a significant position discoverable through the stories and remembrances people told me. In them, *conta iṭam* was expressed through emotional attachments to the land, houses, wells, temples, schools, farmland, festivals, kinship, neighborhoods and all else found or remembered there. Additionally, *conta iṭam* for people indicated a territory or place

512

which important to their identity construction and sense of belongingness. Moreover, *conta iṭam* denotes a 'localism' which is shaped within economic, environmental/ecological, political, cultural and moral dimensions. Furthermore, "our place" remained important to culture and identity construction and even though a 'delocalization of social life' had taken place due to displacement, diaspora, migration and movement. That is, as Escobar (2008) puts it, 'embodiment and emplacement' still could not be denied. For example, embodiment and emplacement experiences of animal sacrifice, at least as remembered, remained interconnected for people with day-to-day life in post-war Naguleswaram. Moreover, the geography of power relations is also very much described throughout this dissertation. I also want to bring it to the fore in my work, which was to show how people are being to reset power relations in post-war reconstruction. The following section will briefly discuss it.

Jaffna village communities have undergone tremendous changes, which enabled me to rethink how power relations were changing in relation to *ūr* and the new form of placing (cyberplacing) emerging through internet and social media. In this regard, Inuvil and Naguleswaram are multi-caste communities, and the Veḷḷāḷar are conventionally dominant in both these villages. Yet as I have already discussed throughout the dissertation, Naguleswaram's caste demography changed after the war. The geography of power in post-war Jaffna is closely connected to the reconfiguration of caste geography and caste demography. In terms of caste demography, people of the Kōviyar and two other castes, the Naḷavar and the Paḷḷar are now in the majority in post-war Naguleswaram, and they have cultivated some of sort of power through reestablishing their belonging in their places through their use of social capital (diaspora networks, and the networks of friends and relatives. Although these low castes are now in the majority in Naguleswaram, as I discussed elsewhere in the dissertation, remaking Naguleswaram as an *ūr* and the reconstruction of its temples have been in the hands of the high castes, the Veḷḷāḷar and Brahmins. However, compared to the *Pañcamar* caste people, the Naḷavar and Paḷḷar people, the Kōviyar, who do not fit into that category of ritually 'untouchable' people, enjoys

513

some sort of power equal to the Veḷḷāḷar. Further, pre-war social control (*kaṭṭupāṭu*) are changing after the war, and high caste people worry about the loss of social control and moral order, and so they are trying to regain their pre-war status and social order. But I have shown throughout the dissertation that many prewar things have been disestablished due to attitudinal changes, generational differences, and global flows.

High caste power was deeply established in most of the villages during the pre-war time, whereas low-caste people were not much established in villages during the pre-war time. Post-war community reconstructions and flows of opportunity have reconfigured the power relations among women, low-caste people and the younger generation in post-war villages. I have discussed an ethnographic case in Chapter Six in which Velan (an 88-year-old man), one of my low-caste informants, states "to us all towns are our own, everyone our kin." His statement explicates how he perceives different villages as his own because displacement has also taught him lessons by living in multiple houses and multiple villages throughout his displacement journey. At the same time, I will have to look at how a particular *ūr* has been more important to a person in terms of being powerful in pre-war time. The changes of *kaṭṭupāṭu* clearly demonstrates how people of the younger generation are dealing with life in post-war villages. The *kaṭṭupāṭu* (control/power) also shapes and reconstructs *ūr* consciousness in post-war villages. Due to the war and long-term displacement, there has been a substantial attitudinal change among both older and younger people, which has effectively influenced the practice of *kaṭṭupāṭu* to change.

As far as I noticed in Jaffna villages, high caste Veḷḷāḷar's power has not much changed. The notion of *matta āṭkaḷ* is a category which means "other people" was invented by the high-caste Veḷḷāḷar to label the low-caste people in a derogatory way. The ability to make such categories and to place groups in them displays high-caste power and domination over Jaffna subjects (Foucault 1979). I was very eager to investigate caste in present day Jaffna because the presence of caste is identified "as a silenced public discourse" (Rao 2003:10). In the global, national, and

democratic contexts, we need to look at how the post-war Jaffna constructs and shapes the subject positions of people through their caste identity.

What I found was a kind of re-emergence of caste or a re-invention of caste in post-war Jaffna. How is caste representation produced in post-war Jaffna? There, a shared narrative is circulated among the people that "caste related grievances have been vanished after the war in Jaffna," but I would argue that since the end of the war, remaking caste identity and a reformulation of high-caste domination have been re-discovered in different forms. Although a prolonged civil war, internal displacement, encampment, migration, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) past administration and eventual defeat have altered social life in the Jaffna Peninsula in many ways, caste consciousness still plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining religious spaces and religious power under the leadership of the 'dominant' castes. In fact, the Veḷḷāḷar caste has remained in a powerful position in Jaffna in terms of land ownership, temple ownership, and ownership of ritual authority. In other words, they continue to be the dominant caste there in Srinivas's sense. This is nothing new of course. The Veḷḷāḷar were already long advantaged by the strengthening of caste inequalities and the solidification of the caste system occasioned through colonial power and benefits (Pfaffenberger 1982, 1990).

Low-caste people are blocked from accessing many opportunities, but many of these issues and their grievances are either not properly communicated or not properly reported. For instance, Saraswathi, from the low-caste background, claimed that some low-caste people maintained a good relationship with the high-caste people for their personal reasons, and those who maintained a such mutual relationships with high-caste people control their own community's issues without revealing their high caste ties to the public. This reveals that different forms of power have emerged in present day Jaffna, and so we need to further explore the dynamics of caste-based relations and the silent form of domination that occurs within the same caste. Furthermore, as high-caste domination still exists in Jaffna, low-caste people do not have the freedom to express their opinion and are not allowed to participate in community activities. For instance, Kanthan,

my informant, pointed out that in Veḷḷāḷar caste dominated temples, low-caste people are not allowed to carry the *vākana* of the deities and cannot obtain the festival rights in Veḷḷāḷar temples. Even though there is a kind of mutual exchange services among different castes, this mutual contract is also a form of domination that leads to powerlessness. This contract-induced domination establishes caste supremacy, like Veḷḷāḷar supremacy in Jaffna, which enacts inequality and discrimination for the oppressed castes.

Anthropologists pointed out an ambiguity about power in human activities (Schultz and Lavenda 2014). Domination and hegemony can create ambiguity in terms of defining the power. So, I have blended Foucault's (1979) and Gramsci's (2013) notions of power in this paper. Gramsci (2013) restructures the society by splitting it into two levels corresponding to two different functions: hegemony and direct domination. He suggests that everybody is an intellectual but not everybody plays this role. Gramsci explains domination by coercive rule (Schultz and Lavenda 2014); once Veḷḷāḷar's domination played out as a force or in a coercive manner to force low caste people to accept Veḷḷāḷar domination as legitimate practices in Jaffna in early days (1950s and 1960s).

Though Veḷḷāḷar no longer project their domination in a coercive form, now they use schools, cultural institutions like temples, community centers, youth organizations, and other institutions in villages to disseminate Veḷḷāḷar ideology among low-caste people in Jaffna. Hence, Veḷḷāḷar's power has worked by establishing a preeminent position in Jaffna society while censoring the consciousness of low-caste people. In a Gramscian sense (2013), the persuasion of low-caste people to accept Veḷḷāḷar's ideology while preserving Vellalar's privileged position is called *hegemony*. According to him, knowledge is hegemonic because it is imposed, and one has to accept it. In this, the Veḷḷāḷar domination- possessing bundle of ideas imposes *hegemony* that limits people's ability to think further. Hence, while low-caste people of course can think, they cannot operate their ideas or make them live because the ideology and mantra of the bourgeois Veḷḷāḷar have become *hegemonic* in Jaffna society.

With regard to power relations and caste, different discourses are being addressed in post-war Jaffna. The LTTE banned the offering of ritual and domestic services by the low-caste people for high caste people during the LTTE State (1990-1995). By giving up such stigmatizing domestic and ritual services, low-caste people could slowly lift up their social status to something better than it was during the pre-war time. Although such customary practices and caste-based ritual services have been vanished or reduced, high-caste hegemony is still in place in an acute form. That hegemony may not be visible, but it invisibly manipulates the power relations of most people in their daily lives. There is a promising shared narrative among the high-caste people that many Veḷḷāḷar people have left the Peninsula and migrated abroad or to other parts of the country. Subsequently, low-caste people have become a social majority in Jaffna. In contrast to this, I have heard different views from other people claiming that though the Veḷḷāḷar are invisible in the Peninsula, their power is still visible through Tamil diaspora's connectivity and governmentality, and the Veḷḷāḷar majority still occupy the higher positions in the civil and educational service sectors in Jaffna. Since the prolonged civil war ended in Jaffna, the re-emerging of caste identity plays has played a silent or a subtle role in Jaffna. There is a Tamil metaphor, which an old man, Manikkam, once told me, that "caste is in present day Jaffna like flames under ash" (nīru pūtta neruppu pōla) Many academics assume that casteism has diminished in Jaffna as if the fire is gone away and only ashes remain. But I think that though the ashes are on top, the fire still burns underneath.

Ultimately, I would like to conclude the chapter drawing attention to the relationship between "village consciousness" and Tamil nationalistic consciousness. I believe this dissertation contributes to general anthropological questions rather than just those concerned with South Asia, Sri Lanka, or Jaffna. This study argued that an ethnographic phenomenology of place, as worked out here, makes a valuable contribution to anthropology as it struggles to make sense of the various confrontations between the local and the global that are so pertinent today, and particularly in post-conflict circumstances. More specifically, this dissertation wants to show that

although the Tamil separatist movement was defeated in the civil war, *Tamil national* identity has not weakened in post-war Jaffna, and this despite the loss of the LTTE's notion of a Tamil Elam (*īḻam*) as a separate and discrete geographical territory and homeland. That is, once Jaffna Tamils worked for a Dravidian identity and Tamil consciousness (Sivathamby 2005, 1995; Kailasapathy (1979), but for many Tamils, in the wake of the war, these forms of belonging came to be seen as too overtly political and Tamil nationalist, and too focused on thinking about a national homeland, or *īḻam*, to be discussable in post-war public circumstances.

The sense of *ūr*, however, was not central to this kind of Tamil nationalistic discourse. That is, while, in the wake of the war, such national forms of identity have become, temporarily anyway, difficult to support, the sense of *ūr* remains. It could be argued, then that the forms of village and temple-focused belonging described in this dissertation now provides a refuge, and a 'place' to be Tamil in, and thus forms of belonging alternative to ethnicity per se., at a point in time when other forms of Tamilness are temporarily too dangerous. It is possible that research on other post-conflict populations, elsewhere in the world, may also show them focusing for a time on changing their own practices of local belonging in similar ways, to handle the challenges posed by the national and the global forces confronting them – particularly in times of political weakness and danger.

But I suspect such shifts in focus from the national to the local among post-conflict people, whether in Jaffna or elsewhere, are temporary. For I want to briefly point out something else about my anthropological discussion of "village consciousness," in relation to notions of a Tamil nation state and Tamil sovereignty in post-war Sri Lanka. The Tamil word *conta iṭam* (own/natal place) refers to a form of consciousness associated with Tamil *ūr;* but at the same time, *iṭam* refers to land (*nilam*) as well. The notion of a Tamil nation state has a long history in South Asia beginning in the *Sangam* period (300 BCE-200CE) where Tamil sovereignty had its own philosophical foundations. For instance, during the *Sangam* period, a literary convention was developed in which the *Sangam* landscape was conventionally divided into five different

geographical territories: *kuṟiñci* (mountain regions), *mullai* (forest region), *marutam* (agricultural or farming land), *neiytal* (seashore region), and *pālai* (desert areas) (Balambal 1998). These five kinds of land had, in turn, five different types of sovereign deities and kings associated with them. The notion that Tamil land refers to a separate territory, which further developed to be notion of a Tamil nation state with its own philosophy, is thus of long standing.

More specifically, I want to show that although the Tamil separatist movement was defeated in the civil war, *Tamil national* identity was not really weakened in post-war Jaffna. The LTTE's Tamil *Elam* geographical territory and homeland were indeed lost at the end of the civil war. As a result, Tamils lost control over their territory. But I would argue that people have lost neither their Tamil national identity nor their Tamil nation state consciousness, for these are also still being consciously rebuilt in various ways in postwar Jaffna. For instance, Tamil historians (mostly nationalists) are rewriting the Tamil history of Sri Lanka, (Gunasingam 2016; Indrapala 2007); Tamil archeologists from Jaffna (also Tamil nationalists) are trying to prove that Tamils had the earliest settlements on the Jaffna peninsula and in the northern province of Sri Lanka (Krishnaraja 2015; Puparatnam 2002; Ragupathy 1987); and Tamil social media reinforces Tamil consciousness, and the motivation among Tamils to sustain Tamil identity. Also, Tamil young people are heavily involved in recent political movements such as "*Ponku Thamizh*" (boiling over Tamil) and "*Ezhuka Thamizh*" (Let Tamil Rise) in post-war Jaffna (Antony 2019). These political movements are continuing to give voice to Tamil to Tamil nationalist aspirations and identity, and to demands for Tamil self-determination in their traditional homeland. So even though the LTTE's Tamil *Elam* has been lost, the Transnational Government of Tamil *Eelam* (*Nādu Kadantha Thamil Eelam*), an organization that emerged shortly after the end of the civil war, has kept the idea of Tamil Eelam alive among the people of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora.

Ultimately, once resident Jaffna Tamils rallied to Dravidian identity and Tamil consciousness. But for many Tamils, in the wake of the war, these forms of belonging felt too overtly political and nationalist, and too focused on a national homeland, or Tamil Eelam, for

pursuit in post-war public circumstances. Hence, the shift to a focus on *ūrness* (one's sense of village), for *ūrness* and the national state are two separate entities, and a sense of *ūr* was not central to Tamil separatist nationalism, and thus avoids posing a reminiscent challenge to the Sri Lankan state. Moreover, this shift provided practical ways for people to respond to the tremendous changes that have accompanied postwar life. But none of this suggests that Tamil nationalist feeling have gone away.

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VITA

PATHMANESAN SANMUGESWARAN

EDUCATION
2017   M.A., Anthropology, University of Kentucky
2016   Graduate Certificate, Social Theory, University of Kentucky
2010   Certificate, Applied Anthropology, University of Rome
2005   M.A. Anthropology, University of Madras
2002   B.A. (Hones), Sociology, University of Jaffna

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
2019-2020   Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky, Department of Anthropology
2014-2017   Teaching Assistant, University of Kentucky, Department of Anthropology
2013-2014   Visiting Lecturer, University of Peradeniya, Department of Fine Arts
2009-present Senior Lecturer Grade-II, Open University of Sri Lanka, Department of
             Social Studies
2006-2007   Visiting Lecturer, University of Peradeniya, Department of Fine Arts
2005-2007   Temporary Lecturer, University of Peradeniya, Department of Sociology

AWARDS AND HONORS
2017   Margaret Lantis Award for Excellence in Original Research, Department of
            Anthropology, University of Kentucky
2015   Graduate Student Research Award, Kentucky Academy of Science
2013   Honorary Citizen of the City of Pensacola, City of Pensacola, Florida

GRANTS
2018   Cultural Anthropology Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant,
            National Science Foundation
2018   Dean's Competitive Graduate Fellowship, University of Kentucky
2016   Lambda Alpha Graduate Research Grant Award, Department of Anthropology, Ball
            State University
2016   Susan Abbott-Jamieson Pre-Dissertation Research Fund Award, Department of
            Anthropology, University of Kentucky

PUBLICATIONS
2019   Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran, Krishantha Fedricks and Justin Henry, *Reclaiming
            Ravana in Sri Lanka: Ravana's Sinhala Buddhist Apotheosis and Tamil
            Responses in* South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 42 (4): 796-812.
2017   Pathmanesan Sanmugeswaran, *The Role of Communication Strategy in Tribal
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            South India*, VISTAS- Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University
            of Sri Lanka, 10: 77-101.
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            Construction: Trans- and Interdisciplinary Routes in Music Research, epOs-Music,
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