



## **Towards a Self-sufficient Economy in The Colonial Commercial Economy, The Impact of Land Reforms in the 1930s**

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### **Abstract**

The Land Act, introduced by the British rulers in 1840, declared that all uncultivated land belonged to the government. With this, it was inevitable that most ordinary people would become landless. The Land Act of 1897 exacerbated this situation. In addition, large-scale land acquisition for plantation cultivation disrupted local farming activities and caused severe economic hardship to the country's people. The Land Act introduced in 1927 did not relieve the local people. The proposals of the Land Commission, appointed in 1928, were instrumental in alleviating this situation to some extent. The purpose of the study was to examine what economic reforms the Land Acts of the 1930s brought about for the welfare of the people. The study used primary and secondary sources based on the qualitative data collection methodology. Primary and secondary sources such as Land Ordinances, Dispatches, Administration Reports, Hansards Records, Sessional Papers, Blue Books, Ceylon Census Reports, and Furguson's Directory were used. The Land Acts of 1931 and 1935, introduced in the 1930s, are optimistic compared to those implemented during the colonial economic reforms to promote commercial crop cultivation and plantation expansion. However, these new land reforms introduced by the British did not create the previous self-sufficient economic pattern.

**Keywords:** *Land Acts, Economic Reforms, Commercial economy, People's Welfare, Plantation*

## Introduction

With the Land Act (Ordinance, No. 12 of 1840) introduced by the British rulers in 1840, the government acquired a large amount of land maintained as farmland by local farmers. In addition, the British worked to use the government's reserved forests for plantations. Under this situation, the amount of land used by the British for plantations increased rapidly from 1840 to 1886.

By this time, coffee cultivation was expanding rapidly as the main plantation crop in Sri Lanka (Ferguson's Directory, 1887: 82). With the high price of coffee in Europe, the British also wanted to increase the cultivated land in Sri Lanka. Hercules Robinson, who served as the British Governor of Sri Lanka from AD 1866 - 1872, was a person who showed great interest in the expansion of coffee cultivation in Sri Lanka. He arranged to clear and use large tracts of forest, which planters had not used for plantation till then. Constructing roads and bridges was adopted to encourage entrepreneurs to cultivate in high mountains like Samanala Kanda. In 1874, cultivation activities spread rapidly in places like Dimbula, Dik Oya, and Maskeliya (Fredrik Lewis, 1923: 45).

In 1869, an outbreak of *Hemileia Vastatrix*, also known as coffee leaf disease, damaged cultivation. With this, the government focused on new crops. For that reason, tea cultivation underwent a rapid expansion.

Development of tea cultivation from 1889 to 1897

Year	Cultivated Amount (Acres)
1889	205,000
1890	220,000
1891	250,000
1892	262,000

1893	273,000
1894	289,000
1895	305,000
1896	330,000
1897	350,000

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With the expansion of tea and rubber cultivation in Sri Lanka, the government realized the importance of cultivating them in large plantations. For that, the government had to give more land to the investors. The low-lying areas were also suitable for tea cultivation, so the government focused on acquiring those lands.

By Land Act No. 12 of 1840, the British acquired more land in the upland areas. But by 1897, measures were taken to acquire land in the lowland areas. Accordingly, under Land Act No. 01 of 1897, there was a significant increase in land acquisition in Sri Lanka. Compared to this, the number of ordinary people who lost their land because they could not confirm their land rights also increased. Moreover, the large-scale acquisition of land for plantations disrupted local farming activities. And the previous self-sufficient economic pattern also collapsed. The people of the country were also in great difficulty economically. In this background, it became clear to them that some changes should be made in the land policy implemented by the British. Some relief should be given to the people, and a program should be implemented to uplift local agriculture. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Local Government, established under the Donoughmore government, can be introduced as a helpful focus on land and agricultural affairs in the country (Nandadeva, 1962: 62). Accordingly, the Sri Lankan ministers focused on identifying the weaknesses of the land policy followed by the British, avoiding them, and implementing a new approach. The British government, interested in commercial crops like tea and rubber, paid more attention to the country's central hills and lowland areas and had forgotten the dry regions of Sri Lanka. But after the Land Settlement Act of 1931, attention was also given to agriculture while providing land to the people. After that, the government focused on giving land to the people in the dry zone.

With the introduction of the Land Act of 1931, the policy followed by the government regarding land changed, and it was better for the local people. In the role of government land settlement, no strict policy was followed in 1840 or 1897 land acquisition. Efforts have been made by this Act to settle the people's lands and give them their rights. On the other hand, it can be mentioned as an essential matter to provide ground for agricultural activities, which the people were used to till then.

### **Literature review**

A lot of research has been done on plantations during British rule. However, very few in-depth studies have been done regarding the land policy and land laws they introduced to establish a commercial economy in this country.

Colonialism in Sri Lanka - The Political Economy of the Kandyan Highlands 1833-1886, written by Ashoka Bandara in 1950, discusses in depth the expansion of plantations during British rule and how the colonial political authority affected the highlands of Sri Lanka. The Socio-Economic organizations of the kingdom of Upland, the establishment of the British Government in Lanka, the introduction of the plantation economy, and how the conflict between the European landowners and the upland villagers became a severe issue have been discussed in this work. Ashoka Bandarage has explained that one of the main problems investors had to face with the launch of the plantation business was the creation of a workforce and the refusal of Sri Lankans to provide labor on plantations. In this work, some information about land tenure and taxation of land, as well as the effect of plantation cultivation on traditional agriculture, has been discussed in the book. However, this article will not cover the land laws introduced to create the background for the commercial economy. Kulatunga has translated this work into Sinhala under the Colonialism of Sri Lanka. Kumari Jayawardena's book titled *The Rise of the Labor Movement in Ceylon*, published in 1972, is a valuable source for studying the British land policy in Sri Lanka. This work was translated into Sinhala in 1989 by Premalal Kumarasiri. Due to the establishment of the capitalist economy based on plantations in this country, the changes in all fields, such as economic, social, political, and religious, have been analyzed here. The social injustices and class disparities caused by plantations can be pointed out as the root cause of the development of the labor movement in Sri Lanka. The author has focused on aspects such as the birth of the nationalist labor movement, the militant trade union era and the economic

background of the time, the plantation labor movement, etc. Not enough attention was paid to the land policy adopted by the British, which was a strong reason for the social disparities and labor struggles.

In the book by Tissa Eriyagama in the year 2007 titled *Modern Economic History*, it was mentioned that the economy of Sri Lanka, which existed for many centuries, underwent a fundamental transformation during British rule. The author has focused on several areas, such as the development of the capitalist economy with the Colebrook reforms, the beginning, and expansion of the plantation economy, the rural economy, etc. His attention must be focused on the land laws that are the background of the commercial economy. In addition, 20th-century economic decline, colonialism, and neo-colonial concepts have been presented with special attention. The impact of the British land policy on Sri Lanka's self-sustaining economy has not been discussed in depth.

Indrani Munasinghe also has written a research book titled *Wathu Vaga Arthikaya ha Velunu Sri Lankawe Marga Sanwardanaya* 2017, focusing on plantation cultivation during British rule. This research has been focused on particular aspects such as the history of the plantation economy, the socio-economic transformation caused by the spread of the plantation economy, the development and expansion of highways, the compulsory service system, and the Road Ordinance. This book focuses more on the actions taken by the British rulers to create the necessary infrastructure for the plantation.

In 1995, Sunanda Maddumabandara published a research book titled "Economy of Sri Lanka during the British Colonial Period." The people's struggles against British rule, the beginning and expansion of coffee plantations, the establishment of financial institutions, the socio-economic background of the plantation economy, etc., have been discussed in this book. Special attention has been paid to the exploitation of resources during colonial rule. The British introduced several land laws to transition from a commercial economy to a self-sufficient economy.

## **Objectives**

The main objective of this research was to study the impact of the Land Acts introduced in the 1930s to establish a self-sufficient economic system by altering the commercial economy created during the British colonial rule in Sri Lanka.

Another objective of the research was to identify how the British introduced land laws between 1840 and 1897 affected the emergence of a commercial economy in Sri Lanka.

The British rulers worked to maximize profits by establishing a commercial economic system in Sri Lanka. This research aimed to identify the effect of neglecting local agriculture on the country's economy.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study was conducted entirely based on literature sources. Library surveys were conducted using qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Primary sources like Land Ordinances, Dispatches, Administration Reports, Hansards Records, Sessional Reports, Blue Books, Ceylon Census Reports, Ferguson's Directory, and News Papers were studied in depth. In addition, previous research related to British land policy and economic policy were also used as secondary sources. These sources provide a robust basis for studying the impact of British land reforms on the transition of the colonial commercial economy to self-sufficiency.

### **Discussion and analysis**

In the 1930s, local representatives under the Donmore government in 1931 considered how colonial economic policy had affected Sri Lanka. Accordingly, they emphasized the importance of implementing public welfare policies. They focused their attention on the solutions that could be applied to that. Under their powers, they focused on solving these problems by changing and adapting the British land policy to the local people. Mr. DS Senanayake, the Agriculture Minister of the State Council at that time, took the lead in this regard.

### **Introducing new land reforms**

An Ordinance was introduced in 1931 to amend and consolidate the law relating to land and the provision of public welfare services.

Ordinance No. 20 of 1931, An Ordinance to Amend and Consolidate the Land Settlement Law, was first introduced under the New Land Reforms. After the implementation of this Act, the distribution of land to the people was carried out promptly. The landless farmers were given

land and encouraged to produce food crops, and the farmer ownership system was made more systematic to provide them with clear ownership of the land. Under the Land Act of 1931, when the village expansion campaign was started by dividing the forest and grasslands first if any injustice was done to the landowners, they could file a petition against the Land Settlement Officer within 12 months. If the ownership of the land of the petitioner is proved, he had the right to get compensation through the district agent for the land acquired by the Government (Ordinance No.20 of 1931, clause 16). This can be pointed out as a relief given to the landowners by this Act. While paying the compensation, the price will be determined according to the value prevailing in the market at that time. Such payment was paid only if the property had been used as government property. Otherwise, the land is returned to the owner without compensation. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Local Government, established under the Donoughmore Government in 1931, can also be introduced as a more auspicious activity to focus on the land and agricultural affairs of the country (Nandadeva Wijesekara, 1962: 62).

With the establishment of the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, the powers to formulate policies related to land were transferred to local M.P.s. Accordingly, the Sri Lankan ministers focused on identifying the weaknesses of the land policy followed by the British, avoiding them, and implementing a new approach. The British Government, which was particularly interested in commercial crops such as tea and rubber, paid more attention to the country's central hills and lowland areas and had forgotten the dry regions of Sri Lanka. But after the Land Settlement Act of 1931, attention was also given to agriculture while providing land to the people. After that, the government also focused on giving land to the people in the dry zone.

With the introduction of the Land Act of 1931, the policy followed by the government regarding land changed, and it was better for the local people. In the role of government land settlement, no stricter policy was adopted than that followed in the land acquisition of 1840 or 1897. Efforts have been made by this Act to settle the people's lands and give them their rights. On the other hand, it can be mentioned as an essential activity to provide land for agricultural activities, which the people were used to till then. After that, a movement was started to settle the landless surplus population in colonies. This process, initiated under the Land Settlement Act of 1931, can be referred to as the initial phase of the colonization movement implemented by the Land Development Act of 1935.

The expansion of peasant colonies implemented in 1931 was not very successful. One of the reasons for giving land to anyone who presented their grievances without paying attention to the farmer's cultivation ability, skill, traditional knowledge, etc. was one of the reasons for that. Under the government's land policy, the people facing an acute land shortage were encouraged to acquire it even though they could not cultivate it. Although the Government provided Land as a remedy for the increase in landless people, there was no formal work order to select the right person. Here, all the landless people got a piece of land, but they were not used to cultivating land before, so they could not use the land given to them. In this situation, a section of the landless population got land but failed to change their living conditions. On the other hand, the government's expectation of increasing food production was also not fulfilled. Meanwhile, some people took full advantage of the land given.

Thus, from 1931 to 1935, the government failed to provide land for colonization and to get the desired results. Commenting on this, the then Minister of Agriculture, Mr. D.S. Senanayake, mentioned that this first colonization program was only an experiment. Accordingly, the idea presented by the minister as a solution was that the land acquired without allotment at once should be checked whether it is successfully used for cultivation, and the rest of the land should be given. If the land use failed, the land was not redistributed. But there was injustice in this system as well. Because in the distribution of land, regardless of the interest or skill of the person receiving the land, even if he fails in giving the land, the next person who should own the land cannot be viewed with the same attitude. In this system, there was a waste of more productive land for experimental work. When the allotment of land was suspended, the most skilled farmers lost their land. Accordingly, the rich people who could come forward to get land were more advantaged in providing land than the poor peasants based on need. Due to this, giving land according to the market was not successfully implemented, and the people transferred the land they owned as tax.

The Land Settlement Act of 1931 allowed the leasing of land. However, there was no answer to the problems arising after the lease. Moreover, another section of the Land Act of 1931 gave the right to sell land. As the relevant conditions were not fixed in land sales, wealthy business people with financial ability offered to buy land from these ordinary people. At this time, the price of land was very competitive, so it was tough for ordinary people to buy land. A poor person with a real need for cultivation did not have enough income to purchase land, so the land was bought at high interest. Real farmers could not buy land as they had to pay



18% to 30% interest. Accordingly, most of the land in the colonies was owned by a wealthy business class with no interest in agriculture.

From the Land Settlement Act of 1931 to the enactment of the Land Development Act of 1935, the land sold by farmers was over 10,500 acres. Due to this sale, they have lost about 20% of the land allotted to the farmers. Thus, due to the failure of the effort to increase the country's income when the farmers' poverty was removed, the government also lost the amount of land that belonged to the government until now. The Land Settlement Act does not specify how many lands should belong to a person. Because of this, the government could not take legal steps to take over the acquired land.

### **Introduction of Ordinance No.19 of 1935, An Ordinance to provide for the Systematic Development and Alienation of Crown Land in Ceylon**

#### **Welfare services are provided by Land Development Ordinance.**

This Act, introduced on October 15, 1935, was briefly called the Land Development Ordinance of 1935. This Act was more favorable to Sri Lanka than the colonial policy implemented. A Land Commissioner was appointed as the person responsible for this Act. The Land Commissioner was bound to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to him by the Act. In addition, the commissioner was to give duties to all land officers and persons administering land and inspecting them. He was ultimately responsible to the Executive Committee on Agriculture and Lands for all land-related matters. A Deputy Land Commissioner was appointed to assist the Land Commissioner, and the Governor could select more than one such officer if required. All the officers appointed were bound to perform duty in any district of the government. All these officers were recognized as government servants under the Institutions Code. This committee had the power to investigate all the lands in the country and plan the necessary activities.

To implement the Land Development Ordinance of 1935, under the instructions of the Land Commissioner, the government agent had to prepare plans for all the lands in the country systematically. While preparing these plans, attention was paid to the following points. Village expansion, rural forests, rural pastures, hay farming, unspecified rural activities, colonization, protection of springs and small waterways, prevention of soil erosion, forest allotment, government building roads or allotment of land for government purposes, and

historical and Land allocations were made for the needs of the local governing authority, protecting sites of archaeological value. Also, the regulation act was able to implement the necessary regulations for land allocation for urban development, land allocation for the Sri Lankan middle class, allocation of land for neglected ethnic groups and castes, and other matter. An essential feature of this Act is the provision of land rights, limited to a privileged group, to any person regardless of class. Under the Land Development Act of 1935, the transfer of government land was prohibited without the permission of the Land Kachcheri. It should be announced in a public announcement that the land will be handed over by the Land Commission, and the application form required for applying for land should be displayed along with it. The agent had to hand over the application forms on the date fixed, and he was allowed to reject the application forms received after that. If the notification is issued without a date, all the applications received regarding the land can be checked, and the land can be given. The final authority in this regard rests with the government agent.

All land licenses granted under this Act became private property. The person who received the permit had to nominate someone for the subsequent ownership of the land, and after the concerned person's death, no one other than the person appointed by him will get the right to the land. Also, any land that has not been adequately surveyed and registered in the Land Registry cannot be transferred. The landowner could get the land's registration and plan free of cost.

The Executive Committee on Agriculture and Lands of the Council of State was empowered to make the relevant regulations regarding the 1935 Act. While making the regulations, they had to be made in favor of the general public. These are some areas that have been focused on while preparing the rules. Under the Land Act of 1935, land was distributed to the middle class. Apart from this, the opportunity was provided to give loans to the landowners. The executive council had the power to prepare the necessary rules and regulations. The terms and conditions of granting the loan, the procedures to be followed in case of default, the nature of the interest charged, the process for recovering the money, etc., had to be decided here.

The Land Development Act of 1935 is more successful than the previous Land Acts. Due to the policy followed in the allotment of land, many people could acquire land. The

development of colonization, primarily through land grants, can be introduced as an essential course of action.

One of the primary problems that arose during the Land Act of 1931 was the significant increase in the problem of landless peasants. But the 1935 Act made it possible to reduce this problem. The primary objective of this Act was to develop the dry zone. So far, the land policy followed by the British focused more on the Upland and lowland wet zone areas that were more suitable for commercial crop cultivation. Therefore, for the first time, the Land Development Act of 1935 can be called Land Act, was prepared to encourage the farming people to uplift local agriculture in Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, land could be retained among the peasantry as it eliminated opportunities to sell or lease land privately. Also, leasing the government land to the people, giving land to the people during colonization, and keeping the government land among the farmers motivated them to use it for economic development. Also, since the land distribution was done only by the government, the people did not have to bear any land survey costs. The land was also systematically surveyed and handed over to the people.

An essential idea in the Act is to provide land to the middle-class population. From 1935 to 1939, arrangements were made to distribute 14860 acres of land among 1033 Middle-class people. This can be considered a special privilege for Middle-class people. In the 1930s, local representatives in the Rajya Sabha first raised their voices regarding providing land to the Middle class. Mr. D. S. Senanayake, who was the Minister of Agriculture and Lands in the first State Council, pioneered in this regard. He said that giving land to the middle-class people would create a better relationship between the middle-class people and the peasant class people.

The provision of land for the middle classes under the Land Development Act 1935 can be appreciated as a perfect thing. However, the rulers failed to maintain the necessary balance in land distribution in this system. The government, which paid more attention to the middle classes, sacrificed the needs of the poor peasants. While a middle-class farmer acquired 14 to 15 acres of land, the average farmer owned a tiny piece. Approximately 60,000 acres of land were distributed among 44,000 farmers, and one small farmer got as little as one and a half acres. Although the government hoped that giving more land to the middle

classes would lead to more development, the attention of the middle classes towards such development was shallow. Although the government hoped they would engage in cultivation activities more efficiently, focusing on crops was an unfamiliar action for the middle classes. The middle class is a privileged person. Being a group of people who concentrated on commercial activities and government jobs rather than cultivating land, they had little understanding of the agricultural sector. After such persons became landowners, the land remained uncultivated for some time. However, the 1935 Land Act stated that uncultivated or barren land would be taken over by the government, so the middle classes made sure that the peasants cultivated the land. However, by giving land to the middle classes, the government could not achieve the agricultural development it had hoped for.

According to how local land ownership and enjoyment were implemented, it was traditionally accepted that the king owned the country's land, and the land was given free of charge for the service rendered to the government and for the needs of the people, such as cultivating villages. The people enjoyed the lands and rendered the prescribed service to the government or paid taxes. The land policy of the British rulers, which started with Land Act No. 12 of 1840, completely changed that indigenous system. Accepting the view that all the lands in the country belonged to the government, they started a policy of selling those lands for money to those who needed them. How this policy was implemented to earn a lot of money from the sale of land and to provide land, which was an essential element for capitalist entrepreneurs to maintain their businesses efficiently and in sufficient quantity, is clear from the land laws enacted in Act No. 12 of 1840 to Act No. 19 of 1931. Even so, by 1935, it had become clear that such a policy did not suit the people of this country and that many serious problems had arisen in society. As a remedy, it is clear that the Land Development Act of 1935 implemented a policy of providing free land to the people, which was the old traditional system.

### **Development of dry zone and establishment of farming colonies**

British rulers worked to establish a commercial economy by expanding plantations. The land laws introduced from 1840 to 1931 were designed to achieve this goal. But no attention was paid to developing traditional agriculture. In this situation, the peasants fell to a shallow level economically. When the Land Acts of 1931 and 1935 were introduced, the rulers focused

on uplifting the local agricultural economy. In particular, the state council's local representatives made an extraordinary intervention.

The Rajya Sabha approved financial assistance for establishing farming colonies in dry zone areas and their cultivation activities. By this time, the government had realized that the temporary measures adopted for food production had failed. Therefore, the government realized the importance of focusing on long-term agricultural development activities. Due to the neglect of rural agriculture in the land policy followed by the British rulers, increasing the country's food production was challenging, and nothing could be done immediately to improve it. Since the best solution for this was the development of the dry zone, the government focused on taking the necessary steps for that.

Amount of Land used for colonization from 1931 to 1935

<b>Year</b>	<b>States</b>	<b>Land Size (Acres)</b>
1932	Dancer	582
	Art Lake	1014
	The left bank of the pit	840
1933	The left bank of the pit	282
	Tabboa	229
1934	Tabboa	200

Some of the colonization campaigns started thus failed. The people who settled in Ratmale Colony had left it. Finally, the land was acquired by the merchants of Anuradhapura City. The farmers' interest loss cannot be said to be the only valid reason for selling or leasing these lands. Not getting enough income from the lands they owned was also a crucial factor. Four similar colonies failed in the Batticaloa district.

The failure of colonization further weakened the economic strength of the government, and the peasantry spiraled into poverty. When the goal of protecting the colonies could not be

reached, the government focused on evicting the people from those lands and settling other farmers. But the situation only made the problem more serious. Accordingly, Mr.D.S.Senanayaka attention of about other method that can make the colonization successful. He thought it was not enough to assist the farmers settled in the colonies and that they should be given all the facilities.

Since 1930, the amount of land planted with coconut remained at the same level as in 1936, and the prolonged increase in paddy cultivation shows the failure here. The amount of land devoted to hay and additional crop cultivation also remained unchanged; by 1939, the cultivated paddy acres had grown to one lakh. But the number of cultivated paddy acres was not enough for the country's rice needs, said Mr. D. S. Senanayake has stated that the farmers of the dry zone do not only need assistance but also a colony equipped with all facilities. Thus, following a new policy in 1939, all other infrastructure facilities were provided by the government, except for cultivation. Construction of canals, roads, and soil research services was maintained as the Government's public services. In addition, subsidies were provided for obtaining agricultural implements and clearing forests. Seeds were provided free of cost, and steps were taken to offer credit facilities for cultivation activities. Public buildings such as hospitals, shopping centers, and cooperatives were constructed by the Government for the colonies. The Government hoped that after providing all the facilities, the farmers would engage in cultivation activities. But the government could not succeed in those activities as expected.

How the cost incurred from 1939 to 1947-1948 was calculated

<b>Colony</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Land allocated (acres)</b>	<b>Cost (Rs.)</b>
Chinipe	346	2766	3,666,540
cried out	32	226	2,708,796
Kheragama	142	1962	1,240,548

Daranadu, Kilinochchi	62	443	3,445,607
Silver Karachi Bond	21	272	11,024,301
Tabboa	183	1728	1,115,449
Kagama (old)	300	1120	3,156,449
Kagama (New)	261	2088	3,156,449
Dancer	800	2894	1,818,751
Minnery	600	4700	5,448,352

Sessional Paper Kandyan Peasantry Commission Report 1951

Under the New Economic Policy of 1939, the government had to bear enormous costs for the upliftment of the colonies. To set up a settlement and provide irrigation facilities for one farmer, RS. 12750 has been spent (Pamer, 1957: 181). This shows that the government hoped to provide better living conditions to the people, but it was unsuccessful; it is clear from the growing poverty in the rural sector. Thus, the government concluded that the assistance provided for the development of colony lands should be reduced. Despite this, monetary subsidies continued to be given during the expansion and colonization of villages. Although the towns in the dry region were developed during the new colonization of the land, there was a change in the country's economy with the changes in the traditional agriculture and cultivation methods.

The government's only hope was that the people would focus on production because of the provision of all welfare facilities. But in providing facilities like this, the attitude that all facilities should be received from the government spread among the people. Still, it was inevitable that the laziness of getting everything done by the government without using

one's labor was unavoidable. In this situation, the government had to bear a cost for the work done by the farmers using their labor so far. A survey conducted by the Ministry of Industries and Commerce in Puttalam in 1936 revealed that after 1935, the government could not get any support from the villagers for the reconstruction works (Ministry of Industries and Commerce, 1936: 32).

How the cost incurred from 1939 to 1947-1948 was calculated

<b>States</b>	<b>Residents</b>	<b>Land distributed (Acres)</b>	<b>Cost (Rupees)</b>
Minipe	346	2766	3,666,540
Alahara	32	226	2,708,796
Beragama	142	1962	1,240,548
Iranadu, Kilinochchi	62	443	3,445,607
Ridikarachi bandi Wava	21	272	11,024,301
Tabboa	183	1728	1,115,449
Kagama (old)	300	1120	3,156,449
Kagama (New)	261	2088	3,156,449
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should be reduced. Despite this, monetary subsidies continued to be provided during the expansion and colonization of villages. Although the villages in the dry region were not developed when the land was distributed and the new colonization spread, there was a change in the economy of this country with the changes in the traditional agriculture and cultivation methods.

## **Conclusion**

This research discussed how the land laws introduced to create a commercial and economic background in Sri Lanka during British rule affected the self-sufficient economy of the country.

The British land policy had a strong influence in changing the self-sustaining economic system in Sri Lanka. The Land Acts from 1840 to 1927 were entirely in favor of European planters. However, by the early 20th century, the British had to make some changes in this situation. Due to the implementation of the British land policy, the problems faced by the people of this country became impossible to ignore. And by this time, local leaders also presented their views on these issues. Accordingly, to find solutions to this situation, the commission appointed in 1929 proposed the policy of village expansion and improving colony lands. Although the British rulers did not want the welfare of the people, it was a decision based on the difficulty of continuing the administration in the existing situation.

With the promulgation of the Donoughmore Constitution of 1931, the government focused on labor welfare policies. Since there were local members in the State Council then, their focus on local agriculture was a positive feature for Sri Lanka. They tried to solve these problems by giving free land and introducing the colony scheme as it existed in the pre-colonial era. The Land Act No. 19 of 1931 laid some ground to resolve these issues.

The Land Development Ordinance 1935 was one of the most influential and positive laws introduced during British rule. Attempts were made to solve several crises arising from the land laws introduced. The Act focused on fundamental issues like village expansion campaigns, expansion of agricultural colonies, reducing the problem of tenant farmers, etc. Prohibition of private land sales and leases enabled the retention of government land among the peasantry, enabling growth in agriculture. It was also essential to focus on the middle class that developed as a side effect of the British land policy through this Act.

The colonization program implemented to uplift the local farmers was also a vital welfare service. Both the Land Acts of 1931 and 1935 provided for the establishment of peasant colonies. This facilitated agricultural activities. But since the aim could not be achieved as expected, attention was focused on implementing a new policy in 1939. Accordingly, apart from the cultivation work, all other facilities were provided to the colonists. Assistance was given to the farmers to clear the forests and the cultivation equipment needed for agriculture. In addition, free seedlings and fertilizers were also provided. For the farmers to successfully engage in farming, they must become a healthy group, so to provide adequate health facilities, health centers where they could receive free treatment were set up in every colony. Market centers were built to sell the product of the farmers. Activities were planned for the proper running of the cooperative service, and public institutions such as schools and community halls were also established. The government's only hope was that the people would focus on production because of the provision of all welfare facilities.

It is clear that by the 1930s, many steps had been taken to re-establish a self-sustaining economy. But the government could not get the desired results. In this way, the attitude that all the facilities should be received from the government spread among the people. Still, it was inevitable that a group of lazy people would get everything done by the government without using their labor. In this situation, the government had to bear the cost for the work done by the farmers till then.

This welfare policy of the government was criticized even by economic analysts. In the provision of unnecessary subsidies, the country's economy could not even get the labor provided by the people, which led to a complete change in the existing system. It is clear that even though the Minister of Agriculture, D.S. Senanayake, who thought more optimistically towards the people, managed to fill the carts beyond the capacity, the horses needed to pull them were not prepared. One of the reasons for this situation is the lack of unity among the people from different areas.

Although the welfare services implemented by the government did not provide as much relief as the government had hoped, some positive features were seen. The attention of the British to uplift the local agricultural economy can be considered very important. Also, in imposing certain restrictions on the sale of land for money, the obstacles for the rural people to continue their farming activities were minimized.

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