

The fading identity of Burgers

- with special reference to the impact of Sinhala culture on Burgers in Kurunegala region

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Abstract- This research deeply discusses how Sinhala culture makes an impact on the culture of the Burghers. There are few studies in Sri Lanka based on Burghers but finding split identity of Burghers in Kurunegala region is a new research topic in the academic field of Sri Lanka, especially when it is focused with the cultural differences. There are number of researchers written about the influence of Sinhala language, the major language of Sri Lanka on English which is used by people as a second language. But no research has been done to examine the influence of Sinhala on Burghers whose L1 is basically English. So, this research might be a very effective and interesting product for the linguistic field, as it will open an area which is hardly spoken by the Sri Lankans. There are 4 major races in Sri Lanka, among four races, this particular race is one of documentary written major races. Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and even Veddas community struggle to gain their rights through various ways, but there is no any sound voice for this particular race so far in the state, therefore a certain prestigious identity should be build up in order to protect this race at least through these types of researches.

Index Terms- split identity, cultural influences, L1 influence, new area for the linguistic field.

I. INTRODUCTION

B Back ground and justification.

When the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505 they brought soldiers and other supporting staff. Those who settled down in Sri Lanka got married to local women and a new ethnic group was emerged as a result. Soon, the Dutch and the British followed. The descendants of the union between the colonizers and the locals came to be known as Burghers. The term Burgher was defined by Chief Justice of Ceylon, Sir Richard Ottley, in an authoritative pronouncement, when he gave evidence before the Commission which was appointed in connection with the establishment of a Legislative Council in Ceylon in 1883. He stated, "The name Burgher belongs to the descendants of the Dutch, Portuguese and other Europeans born in Ceylon, and the right to distinction must not be decided by the Country from which their father or paternal ancestor came. So whatever the number of generations through which the family has passed in this

Island, if the male ancestors were Dutch, Portuguese and or other Europeans, whoever may have been the female parents, if the parents were married, the offspring would be Burgher. If the parents were not married, the country of the mother would decide the question. If the right to be denominated Burgher be once lost by the legitimate father being a cingalese or other Indian, it cannot be recovered."

Burgher culture is a mixture of east and west which reflects their ancestry. They are the most westernized of the ethnic group in Sri Lanka. As a result certain elements in Burgher culture have reflected in the culture of Sinhala culture. For example baila, Lacemaking, certain foods like love cake, layere d cake, savory meatballs, lamprais etc. There is a huge interest of Burghers on their family histories. Many old Burgher families maintain "clan Books" There, they record mot important events of happened in their lives. It is mentioned Burghers of Dutch origin at certain times celebrate the "Feast of Saint Nicholas" in December. Those of Portuguese Jewish origin performs customs such as the separation time of women after child birth, The redemption of the first born, and the purification bath after a daughter's first birth etc. However to protect their prestigious identity they have already established an association, the Burgher Association at Union place – Sri Lanka.

The Portuguese and Dutch Burghers have been a major influence on Sri Lankan culture and society for hundreds of years. A Eurasian ethnic group, descended not only from the Portuguese and Dutch, but also from the British and other Europeans who settled in the island, most Burghers still hold on to their predominantly western customs, traditions, and even their language and religion. They are themselves are a glorious mix of the west and east, and have contributed to Sri Lankan society and culture in numerous ways.

People often expect Burghers to have a fair or moderately fair complexion and eyes and hair that are light in colour in comparison to the people of the other races present at the country. But some Burgher people are not that much different from the Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim people. They possess a dark skin tone, and dark hair and eyes as a result of their mixed ancestry. This happens specially due to the intermarriage between the different races.

The word 'Burgher' came into the English language after being derived from the Dutch word 'Burger' which refers to a

citizen of a 'berg', a borough or town. This is somewhat similar to the French and English word 'bourgeois'. It is somewhat similar to middle class. Originally, there is no any connection with this word to whatsoever to race or ethnicity; it was a sign of civil status. This type of people are town-dwelling inhabitants grew in size and number.

The Sinhalese are the largest ethnic group in the country, they comprise of 11 million people or 74 percent of the population. There is a great impact of Sinhala culture on the culture of Burghers as they are living and interacting with a Sinhala speaking speech community, though the community of Burghers struggles to maintain their identity as a pure prestigious group.

The history of Sri Lanka records number of reasons as to why the ethnic started in Sri Lanka during the 20th Century however; there are a few evidences that can be singled out. The difference in languages that people talk and use can be mentioned to be one of the most important reasons. The official language policy which came into effect in 1958 under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) highlighted Sinhalese as the official language of Sri Lanka. This meant increasing rates of unemployment for the Burgher minority who weren't familiar with Sinhalese. At that time many Burghers identified themselves being singled out by the Sinhalese. Hence many Burghers found themselves as isolated and as a result some migrated to different countries.

During the British government, Burghers were given more importance and acceptance to the English Medium education that Sri Lanka followed at that time. Because of the language many Burghers employed with higher ranking jobs and their lives were much more sophisticated and affluent. But when the official language policy was introduced, there was a big turning point in the lives of the Burghers. As a result, many Burghers turned in to different ways in order to survive in the country. Due to the inter marriages, and other political influences they mixed with the Sinhalese and with other races. Because of this interaction, there were many cultural, political, religious social, economic changes in their community.

Among them the variety of the language that the Burghers have used is important. Until the early 20th century, many Burghers spoke English and a form of Portuguese Creole. [Portuguese Creole had been the language of trade and communication with indigenous people. It is now only spoken in parts of the coastal towns of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.] But after the 20th century, there has been a great threat to the variety of English, spoken by Burghers due to many influences. As a language develops according to the particular needs of the people who live in a certain location at a certain period of time, who share a way of life and culture, it is clear that language is strongly intertwined with culture and identity. If someone is unable to speak the language of his or her ancestors, richness of communication and connection is lost. Further it provides a sense of grounding and belonging, when knowing the language of one's ancestors. Thus, this becomes a great threat to the Burghers who live in Sri Lanka because of the great influence on the Burghers by the Sinhala culture. So one of purposes of this research is to find out how the ancestors' language and culture of the Burghers gradually changes due to the influence of Sinhala language and culture. As a result at present there is a big tendency of using codes

in their day today conversation." In [linguistics](#), code-switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more [languages](#), or language [varieties](#), in the context of a single conversation. [Multilinguals](#), speakers of more than one language, sometimes use elements of multiple languages when conversing with each other. Thus, "code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the [syntax](#) and [phonology](#) of each variety."<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code-switching>) Thus in this research it has been deeply studied the variety of language which is by the Burghers currently targeting how the Burghers prestigious identity becomes vanished due to the influences of cultural changes.

As this research has been studied using different human aspects, within past and present societies, the research is based on social anthropology cultural anthropology and linguistic anthropology (study of norms, value and language of societies). "Anthropology is the systematic study of humanity, with the goal of understanding our evolutionary origins, our distinctiveness as a species, and the great diversity in our forms of social existence across the world and through time." So from anthropological point of view it is interesting to compare and contrast the past and present life styles of the Burghers in different perspectives and analyze their current state as Sri Lankans.

Problem Statement Burghers try to maintain their high social status as they belong to Eurasian ethnic group in Sri Lanka descended from Portuguese, Dutch, British. Also during the 19th century, they occupied a highly important place in Sri Lankan social and economic life styles. Most Burghers still try to maintain their western culture customs, traditions, and even their language and religion. They are known and recognized as a glorious mix of the west and east, and they have influenced to Sri Lankan society and culture in numerous ways.

Though in 1981, there were 3% of Burghers in Sri Lanka, from the total population, the statistics proved it decreased basically to 0.04% at present. Their social and economical religious lives are also varied. The variety of language that they speak presently is not the language variety their ancestors spoke. Thus, in this research, it has been deeply discussed this special community in detail with the hypothesis that the Burghers who live in Kurunegala region consist of a split identity due to different forces and there are different features of the Burghers who live at present from the Burghers who lived in 19th century.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main objective

- To find out the split identity of Burghers, investigating whether their culture differs from their ancestors' culture presently, or richness of their ancestor's culture is still prevailing among them.

General objectives

- To investigate the other factors which will affect for the split identity of Burghers such as marriages with different races, education, gender,

generation gaps, social status, political influences, occupations etc.

- To examine different aspects of damages occurring in Burgher culture due to transculturation.\

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term Burghers was applied during the period of Dutch rule to European nationals living in Sri Lanka. They can trace ancestry back to Europe. There are basically different types of Burghers in Sri Lanka.

The term "Burghers" comes from the Dutch/ German word "burger", meaning "citizen" or "town dweller". Until the early 20th century, many Burghers spoke English and a form of Portuguese Creole, even those of Dutch descent. Many Burghers in Sri Lanka try to keep their prestige and reputation, as they have come from the ancestors in Europe.

"At this time in Europe, there had emerged a middle class, consisting of people who were neither aristocrats nor serfs. These were the traders and businessmen who lived in towns and were considered free citizens.... They were encouraged to migrate to the colonies in order to expand business horizons"(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burgher_people)

At the 1981 Census, the Burghers (Dutch and Portuguese) were almost 40,000(0.3 % of the population of Sri Lanka. Many Burghers immigrated to other countries. Those who remain still in Sri Lanka try to keep up their identity as Burghers. They were highly proud of their race and always considered themselves as 'modern' especially due to the European culture that they associated and the language they used. For them Sinhalese are "godayo" (not modern) Any how they tried to maintain their class as superior and did not like to mingle with other races. But, due to inter marriages and other different influences they can't exit as a single, pure speech community. So there is a large influence of Sinhala culture on the culture of Burghers whose 1st language is English.

The English spoken by the Burghers has been influenced by the indigenous language. For instance it evolved to incorporate more Sinhala vocabulary and grammatical conventions such as the use of "no?" as a tag question at the end of a sentence.

Further, though the very old Burghers use European accents, some of young Burghers use a variety close to Sri Lankan English as their mother tongue due to the Sinhala Language influence. One example of typical Sri Lankan English is posing questions by changing the information- e.g. "you are going". But it should be investigated whether they are using standard Sri Lankan English. There are 3 languages in Sri Lanka Sinhala, English, Tamil, and among bilinguals, code switching is common. As many Burghers mix with Sinhalese especially through intermarriages, education jobs etc there is a big tendency among the Burghers using code. So it is interesting to find out the current states of the burghers and their split identity due to various types of influences.

During the Colonial period, there was high status possessed by the Burghers. In the article story behind Burghers, It has been mentioned, Burghers are "the proud descendants of the Dutch and Portuguese colonies of the 16th and 17th centuries ...' Most Burghers still try to hold their western customs, language,

traditions and religion etc. The following is the list of burghers, mentioned in the article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Burgher_people

Academics

- [E.F.C. Ludowyk](#) - Professor of English, Dean of the School of Arts, University of Ceylon
- Prof. [E.O.E. Pereira](#) (1907–1988) - founding Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, University of Ceylon; Vice Chancellor Peradeniya

Civil servants

- [Major General Bertram Heyn](#) - Commander of Ceylon Army; cricket, field hockey and rugby star
- [Neville Jansz](#) - Sri Lankan diplomat
- [M. C. Sansoni](#) - Puisne Judge and then Chief Justice
- [Sir Francis Soertsz](#) - Supreme Court Judge
- [Wilhelm Woutersz](#) - Sri Lankan diplomat

Professionals

- [Cecil Balmond](#) - structural engineer and architectural theoretician
- [Louis Edmund Blaze](#) - educator and founder of Kingswood College, Kandy
- [Frederick Dornhorst](#) - lawyer

Artists

- [Jean Arasanayagam](#) (1931-) - poet and painter
- [William Wright Beling](#) (1867-1928) - painter and father of [Geoffrey Beling](#)
- [George Keyt](#) (1901-1993) - painter and founding member of Colombo '43 Group
- [J. L. K. van Dort](#) (1831-1898) - 19th-century artist
- [Lionel Wendt](#) (1900-1944) - photographer and founder of the [Colombo '43 Group](#)

Authors

- [David Blacker](#) - author and blogger, winner of the State Literary Award for Best Novel in 2006
- [Carl Muller](#) - prolific author of many books including *The Jam Fruit Tree*, *The Yakada Yaka*, *Once Upon a Tender Time* and *Children of the Lion*
- [Michael Ondaatje](#) (born 1943) - Canadian poet and author of numerous novels, including [The English Patient](#)
- [Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha](#) - poet and activist
- [Rosemary Rogers](#) - best-selling author of romance novels in the USA; has been on the New York Times best-sellers list
- [Vivimarie Vanderpoorten](#) - poet, winner of [Gratiaen Prize](#) 2009

Journalists

- [Frederica Jansz](#) - Sri Lanka journalist, editor of [The Sunday Leader](#)

Politics

- [Dr. P.D. Anthonisz](#) - first President of the Ceylon Branch of [British Medical Association](#); member of the Legislative Council
- [Professor David de Kretser](#) (born 1939) - professor and Director for the Institute of Reproduction and Development, [Monash University](#); former [Governor of Victoria](#), Australia

- [Pieter Keuneman](#) - Sri Lankan politician
- [Quint Ondaatje](#) - Dutch patriot and politician
- [Beverley Pinder](#) (born 1955)- former Councillor, City of Melbourne, Australia; former Miss Australia

Business people

- [Charles Henry de Soysa](#) - 19th-century Sri Lankan philanthropist

Chefs

- [Geoff Jansz](#) (born 1958) - Australian TV chef
- [Charmaine Solomon](#) (born 1930) - Australian resident chef and well-known writer of Asian cookbooks

Musicians and entertainers

- [Wally Bastian](#) - Sri Lankan [baila](#) vocalist, instrumentalist, composer
- [Elaine Cole](#) - baila dancer
- [Danielle de Niese](#) - Australian-American opera singer based in the UK
- [Stuart de Silva](#) - Sri Lankan jazz pianist and actor
- [Jamie Durie](#) (born 1970) - Australian media personality
- [Cliff Foenander](#) (born before 1940's-2000) - Sri Lankan leading musician
- [Anton Jones](#) - Sri Lankan baila singer
- [Desmond Kelly](#) (born 1936) - musician & actor in Australia
- [Alston Koch](#) - Australian musician
- [Douglas Meerwald](#) (born before 1940's-2003) - Sri Lankan big-band singer
- [Keith Potger](#) (born 1941) - musician; member of Australian folk group [The Seekers](#); founder of [The New Seekers](#)^[1]
- [Gresha Schuilling](#) - rising Sri Lankan musician
- [Guy Sebastian](#) (born 1981) - Australian singer born in [Malaysia](#) of Burgher parents
- [Gina Zamparelli](#) - [Los Angeles](#)-based concert promoter; daughter of [Maureen Hingert](#)

Fashion and Models

- [Nigel Barker](#) - fashion photographer
- [Ramani Bartholomeusz](#) - actress and model, represented Sri Lanka in the [Miss Universe 1985](#) pageant
- [Rozanne Diasz](#) - represented Sri Lanka in the [Miss Universe 2005](#) pageant; model and TV presenter
- [Jacqueline Fernandez](#) - represented Sri Lanka in the [Miss Universe 2006](#) pageant; actor in [Bollywood](#) films
- [Sabrina Herft](#) - Miss Sri Lanka for Miss Universe 2012
- [Maureen Hingert](#) - represented Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) when Ceylon took part for the first time at the 1954 [Miss Universe](#) pageant; second runner-up
- [Rapthi Kerkoven](#) - model
- [Sachini Ayendra Stanley](#) - Sri Lankan film actress, model

Athletes

- [Graeme Labrooy](#) - former Sri Lankan cricketer
- [Sir Christopher Ondaatje](#) - former athlete; philanthropist
- [Laddie Outschoorn](#) - England cricketer ([Worcestershire County Cricket Club](#), 1946-1959); Cap 1948
- [Angelo Mathews](#) - Sri Lanka test and ODI cricket captain
- [Michael Vandort](#) - Sri Lankan cricketer

- [Duncan White](#) - Sri Lankan (then Ceylonese) 440m silver medalist at the [London Olympics in 1948](#); gold medalist [1950 Empire games](#)

The above different categories it very clearly proves that the Burghers in the past as well as in the present appeared in society in a glorious way. To support this idea in the article "The story behind the Burghers" it has been mentioned about the Burghers in a very positive way and there it has not been mentioned about their fading identity due to the hybrid culture. "Throughout the centuries, the Burghers have carved out a place for themselves in Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. The Dutch Burghers have been at the centre of development during the colonial eras, while their Portuguese counterparts have done their best to protect the legacy left behind by their ancestors. Although small in number, it is safe to say that both the communities have contributed, and continue to contribute to Sri Lankan society"

Though they have appeared as a prestigious group, the present status of the burghers can be categorized in different ways. When it is analyzed through social, cultural and linguistic anthropology, there will be considerable differences at present. Anthropology is defined in the article <https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk> > *About Anthropology* "Anthropology is the study of what makes us human. Anthropologists take a broad approach to understanding the many different aspects of the human experience, which we call holism. They consider the past, through archaeology, to see how human groups lived hundreds or thousands of years ago and what was important to them. They consider what makes up our biological bodies and genetics, as well as our bones, diet, and health. Anthropologists also compare humans with other animals (most often, other primates like monkeys and chimpanzees) to see what we have in common with them and what makes us unique. Even though nearly all humans need the same things to survive, like food, water, and companionship, the ways people meet these needs can be very different. For example, everyone needs to eat, but people eat different foods and get food in different ways. So anthropologists look at how different groups of people get food, prepare it, and share it." So it will be able to find out much information about the Burghers: their present way of life, food system, religion, education, employments, etc and thereby it enables to compare and contrast their status in the present with the past.

Adoring to the article "https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk," Anthropology is divided into three subfields: sociocultural, biological, and archaeology. This study also becomes important here, as it is able to study the status of Burghers in different perspectives. In the above mentioned article, sociocultural anthropology is defined as follows "Sociocultural anthropologists interpret the content of particular cultures, explain variation among cultures, and study processes of cultural change and social transformation. UC Davis sociocultural anthropologists conduct research on most areas of the world, focusing on topics that include: human ecology; gender relations; culture and ideology; demography and family systems; race, class and gender inequality; resistance movements; colonialism, neocolonialism, and development; and cultural politics in the West" similarly, in this research too, the Burgher community is analyzed under sociocultural perspective. There, it

finds out the culture of Burghers, the processes of cultural changes, social transformations due to different courses etc.

The other sub field is biological anthropology. "Biological anthropologists study a variety of aspects of human evolutionary biology. Some examine fossils and apply their observations to understanding human evolution; others compare morphological, biochemical and physiological adaptations of living humans to their environments; still others observe behavior of nonhuman primates (monkeys and apes) to understand the roots of human behavior." (<https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk>) It is expected to study a variety of aspects of human evolutionary biology in this regard using biological differences of the Burghers in the past with present Burghers.

The other field is archeology. Archaeologists study the material remains of present and past cultural systems to understand the technical, social and political organization of those systems and the larger culture evolutionary process that stand behind them. The UC Davis program in archaeology emphasizes research in California and the Great Basin, but also supports the study of hunter-gatherer systems in general, and is engaged in such research in Australia and Asia. (<https://www.discoveranthropology.org.uk>) Here it is expected to study certain material remains of past and present cultural systems of the Burgher community to analyze this community in detail.

It is interesting to study what hybrid culture is when analyzing the Burgher community in detail. The article in the web site "<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybridity>" mentions "Hybridity, in its most basic sense, refers to mixture. The term originates from biology and was subsequently employed in [linguistics](#) and in racial theory in the nineteenth century.^[2] Its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic disciplines and is salient in [popular culture](#) Hybridity is used in discourses about race, [post-colonialism](#), [identity](#), [anti-racism](#) and [multiculturalism](#), and [globalization](#), developed from its roots as a biological term" As the culture that we study in this research too has undergone to a lot of transitions due to many influences, it is interesting to identify the hybrid features in the Burgher community. Hybridity can be viewed in different perspectives. When it is considered through racial point of view, it can be applied to analysed the present Sri Lankan Burgher community to check whether there is a split-identity due to hybrid influences. When it is viewed as a racial mixing "Hybridity is a cross between two separate races, plants or cultures A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture. Hybridity is not a new cultural or historical phenomenon. It has been a feature of all civilizations since time immemorial, from the Sumerians through the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to the present. Both ancient and modern civilizations have, through trade and conquests, borrowed foreign ideas, philosophies, and sciences, thus producing hybrid cultures and societies. The term hybridity itself is not a modern coinage. It was common among the Greeks and Romans-In Latin hybrida or ibrida refers to "the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, child of a free man and a slave," and by extension to the progeny of a Roman man and a non-Roman woman ..." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hybridity>) Even the Burgher culture today is a cross between different races today therefore it seems a lot of different cultural features have been invaded in this culture now thus there is a new hybrid culture and society within the Burgher society.

Thus, all the above facts prove the idea that studding the split identity of Burghers to identify the current status of Burghers is a new approach as so, far no one has done a deep research study on Burgher community. There, the Burgher community is analyzed in different perspectives.

Methodology: Place and time period, Materials, Sampling techniques, Research design, Methods of data collection

There are primary and secondary data which have been collected to gather information to analyze and find out the Split identity of the Burghers in Kurunegala region.

As this research is based on Anthropology, the research has been done with the humans as samples. Primary data have been collected from the samples of Burghers who are living in Kurunegala region. There, data have been collected by associating with them, participating in their functions, arranging different types of interweaves, having discussions with them, recording, listening to live conversations etc. These methods will assist the researcher to obtain a sound knowledge about the Burghers and to find and obviously whether they are an ethnic group which has been gradually overpower by the dominant culture- Sinhala.

The research has investigated the other factors which have t affected the split identity of Burghers such as marriages with different races, education, gender, generation gaps, social status, political influences, religious influences, attitudes etc. Therefore gathering information through interaction has been a very effective method.

For the research. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have to be used. For the qualitative method, both participant observation and direct observation have been highly necessary. Then it is able to gather data at both formal and informal settings. Also, interviewing certain samples have been benefitted for the research a lot to collect actual data of the community. Having in-depth interview with the sample enabled to gather information at a natural set up. Also conducting group interviews with homogeneous groups directed to gather information in an authentic way. As Burghers are one of major races in Sri Lanka, it is important to hold Elite interviews. There, the political elites, business elites, and other important Elites have been interviewed to find out data to the condition of the state with regard to the research area.

Apart from the qualitative method, quantitative method has also been needed, to find out the condition of the Burghers: rates of the population, no of families, their educational level, occupations, the religion that they observe etc

Finally, all the collected have been examined and analyzed to come to a conclusion about the areas which I want to analyze in the purpose of study.

IV. RESULT & DISCUSSION

- This research is based on the Burghers who live in Kurunegala region. Burghers in Sri Lanka are one of minor ethnic groups and it is hard to find "pure" Burghers who are still descendants of original Burgher families. As it is needed some samples of such families, it is doubtful whether it is possible to find out Burghers who still

maintain their ancestors' culture, therefore clan books, historical references had to be used.

- In society, most of the Burghers try a tremendous effort to appear still as a prestigious group, so gathering true information found little bit hard.
- There are fewer articles written about the past of the Burghers, and only few about the present conditions, so all information had been collected mostly associating them.
- Among four races, this particular race is one of documentary written a major race. Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and even Veddas community struggle to gain their rights through various ways, but there is no any sound voice for this particular race so far in the state, therefore a certain prestigious identity should be build up in order to protect this race at least through these types of researches as their original identity is being split.

V. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS & LIMITATIONS

Under British rule, Burghers were given a big opportunity to the English Medium education that Sri Lanka followed at that time. Due to the language many Burghers were able to do their education and as a result many Burghers did higher ranking jobs and their lives were much more sophisticated, when comparing with the Sinhalese. As a result, they were able to hold different high rank jobs especially in privet sectors. Both male and female Burghers were able to do jobs and their life styles were much more like Europeans. As they have a good social status and financially at a good condition, both male and female Burghers led enjoyable life styles. At their leisure times, they loved to spend their times by involving in fun activities. But after the official language policy there was a big turning point in the lives of the Burghers. Consequently, many turned in to different ways in order to survive in the country. Due to the inter marriages, and other political influences they mixed with the Sinhalese. Because of this interaction many cultural, political, religious social, economical changes occurred in their community. So, it in this research, it is interesting to compare and contrast the past and present life styles of the Burghers in different perspectives and analyze their current status as Sri Lankans.

There are few studies in Sri Lanka based on Burghers, but finding split identity of Burghers in Kurunegala region is a new research approach in the academic field of Sri Lanka. In this research, it has deeply discussed how Sinhala culture makes an impact on the culture of the Burghers. Due to the transculturation, many Burghers appeared like Sinhalese. As Free education has been implemented in Sri Lanka for all nations. The Sinhalese who belonged to the classes at different level were able to get the free education. As a result another class was appeared as

educationalists in Sri Lanka whose roots were not that much sophisticated but were able to started an educated platform which was a much more challenging for the Burghers who did higher ranking jobs. Because the Sinhalese later appeared as hard and dedicated people who later on were able to surpassed the Burghers in all aspects like financially economically, socially, politically etc. There are number of researchers written about the influence of Sinhala culture on different races, but no research has been done to examine the influence of Sinhala culture on Burghers who live in Kurunegala regi. So, this research might be a very effective and interesting product for the Sri Lankan academic field, as it will open an area which is hardly spoken by the Sri Lankans.

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So far in Sri Lanka a research has not been deeply discussed about the present status of Burgher community. It is true of the fact that a number of elements in Burgher culture have become a part of the culture of Sinhala. For example baila, Lace making, certain foods like love cake, layered cake, savory meatballs, lamprais etc. But rather than that, unavoidably, there is a great influence of Sinhala culture on the life styles of the Burghers at present. For instance, earlier though they were more a westernized group, who followed the western traditions, at present the Burgher community has been mixed with local customs and traditions as well. There are some burghers who are Buddhist. Until the early 20th century, many Burghers spoke English and a form of Portuguese Creole. [Portuguese Creole had been the language of trade and communication with indigenous people. It is now only spoken in parts of the coastal towns of in parts of Trincomalee and Batticaloa.] But now the language that they speak is different from the above creole. So, the unique identity of Burghers is gradually fading due to the great influence or interference of Sinhala which is the dominated culture in Sri Lanka. Though the Burghers try to maintain their own identity as Burghers, there is a split identity instead. People often expect Burghers to have a fair or moderately fair complexion and eyes and hair that are light in colour, in comparison to the people of the other races present within the country. But some Burgher people are indistinguishable from their fellow Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim citizens, and may have an olive or even dark skin tone, and dark hair and eyes as a result of their mixed ancestry, and due to the intermarriage between the races. After making Sinhala language as the state language in 1956, many Burghers faced a lot of problems. They happened to be mixed with Sinhala race. Especially they had to learn the language. Due to the different exposures, their culture mixed with local favour. Children had to study with the children of Sinhala race, religious activities were held in Sinhala medium and there is a local touch to the rituals at the church. At the working place, they had to learn a lot of Sinhala customs and traditions As a result of all, there is a great contrast of the Burghers at present from the Burghers of the colonial period. Therefore, It is worthwhile to find out the Burgher community in Sri Lanka at present and come to a conclusion whether the Burgher community penetrates some sort of a hybrid culture.