

Notes on Tamil Interviews

No.	Summary	Comments
1	<p>Raja in his 30s, newly wed, employed in an architecture firm. Came to Canada in 1984. Went to US to study but did not continue. All of his immediate family is here. Things are different here than in Sri Lanka because people are independent. When he first came here worked long hours as a cook. Sri Lankan identity. Seventy percent of his friends are Sri Lankan. His wife who he just got married to is still in Sri Lanka. He had issues about getting married. Adjustment is the meaning of life. Divorce not an option for him. Wants two kids, doesn't care about the sex. He'll be very strict to his kids in the matter of education. US wasn't a good influence on him. He wanted to study something else but his parents pushed him into this. He still feels like he is living in another country.</p>	<p>His way of thinking is Sri Lankan. He doesn't want to say that he is Tamil and fight for the Tamils. Having a dispute with his Sri Lankan neighbour regarding a marriage proposal. His wife has to go to school to learn English when she comes here. Didn't ask for dowry because its value is low here. Didn't care about the caste of his wife (they are the same caste). He wants his kids to be well known in the community when they grow up.</p>
2	<p>Thava and Jothi, both 37, married, one daughter age 4. Came in 1986. Came here for safety. Some family members came by an agent with illegal documents. Wife did not know as many people when she first arrived. Identity, first Sri Lankan, then Tamil. Even here its important to know what village you are from. Its important for people to know what caste you are. Most of their friends are Tamil. They follow all the Sri Lankan traditions. Arranged marriage. He said that people come here with wrong expectations. The divorce is high here because of the independence. They want to have two more children and the sex doesn't matter. Its hard to raise boys here in Scarborough because of the violence. They want their daughter to be educated and have a happy life. They would like to stay here.</p>	<p>Members of a low cast group. Wife came through an agent. Caste is the most important thing for marriage. Caste is divided by a person's work. He didn't ask for a dowry because his mom didn't want to. Girls are expected to be virgins when they marry.</p>
3	<p>Vaani is 33, married and has a 3 year old son. Vaani is Hindu and her husband is Catholic. Doesn't have much contact with siblings. Came in 1986. She came here because of the problems and for employment. At the beginning she applied for welfare and then got a job. Identity- Sri Lankan. They speak Tamil at home. She teaches her son Tamil so he could communicate with the elders. She dresses in Sri Lankan way. She had a hard life. Doesn't eat meat on Fridays. They had a love marriage. Her coming alone was a big problem in the community because families don't sent young girls alone. She doesn't</p>	<p>She doesn't have a thali (a chain the men put on women when they get married). The husband didn't ask Vaani to change religion. Some girls are not married because they have financial problems. When she was young she didn't want to get married because her family had so many problems. They seem like supporters of the LTTE.</p>

	believe in arranged marriages. She wants to have a daughter. Education is important for her and her children. She doesn't want to depend on her children when she gets old. Has some relatives back home. She would like to go back to Sri Lanka.	
4	Thevi, female, 36, married and has a son who is 7. Her husband opened a new grocery store. She went to Germany first and then came to Canada in 1988. came to Canada because of the freedom. They went through a lot of trouble when they first came here. Identity- Sri Lankan and Tamil. Most of her friends are Tamil. Doesn't see a difference in Sinhalese and Tamils. She follows all Hindu customs. When a girl gets her period for the first time, it is celebrated. She had a love marriage. Divorcing and re-marrying is rare in Sri Lankan culture. Wants her son to marry and get a good job.	Her niece and her husband were kidnapped by the LTTE, and release just before the interview. Most widows don't re-marry.
5	Bala, male 50 years old, married and has two daughters. Formerly a lecturer. Came here in 1985 after the riots to live peacefully. Got to know about Canada through friends and newspapers. Came to Montreal first. Identity- Canadian citizen and Tamil as well. Most of his friends are Tamil. Follows cultural rituals. Admits that he misses his homeland at the same time he is getting to think Canada as his own. Daughter feels that only the language changed but nothing else did. Had an arranged marriage. Caste is a big problem in marriages. When he studied he had to sit in the back bench because he was a lower caste. His first daughter is having a love marriage. Gives freedom to daughters. When he is old wants his daughter to live close to him. He doesn't think that he will go back to Sri Lanka.	His second daughter participated in the interview, and expressed her opinions like her multicultural High school. They speak Tamil at home. Mentions Tamil organizations such as Tamil Eelam Society and World Tamil Movement. He learned to do housework because wife goes to work. He got dowry too. Marriage brokers. Talks in detail about the process of what happens when choosing a bride. Horoscopes have to match in order to marry. If you have a divorce its hard to re-marry again.
6	Joseph, male, 31, newly married. Wife was present for the interview. Came in 1985 due to the military problems. Went to Germany first. Wants to be known as Sri Lankan Tamil not Jaffna Tamil. Wife is Indian Tamil. Many of their friends are writers from overseas. Wife always had a fear of marriages. He had a failed love story. They want to have three children, two boys and one girl. Wants his children to go back to Sri Lanka and see where they came from. His father was a drunk and an abuser.	Wife came here with illegal documents. They are from a lower caste.
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