



**North America's Largest Sri Lankan
Communities in Canada: Toronto and Montreal
Continents Major Centres; Canada Principal
Home to Sri Lankan Refugees; Communities
economically vulnerable in much of Canada;
United States admits far more immigrants from
Indonesia than does Canada**

Jack Jedwab
Executive
Director
Association
for Canadian
Studies
January 11,
2005

Introduction

One of Canada's fastest growing communities, the Sri Lankan population has been one of the top ten sources of immigration to this country in through the late 1990's and in the past few years. Indeed Canada is home to the largest Tamil community in the world outside of Sri Lanka. This contrasts with the United States that has admitted far fewer immigrants from that country than its northern neighbor. Moreover while Canada admitted more than 2 000 refugees from Sri Lanka in 2003, the United States took in a mere 43. For its part, the US but has received considerably more immigrants from Indonesia than has Canada (admitting over 10 000 during the 1990's which is nearly as much as the entire Canadian population from that part of the world).

According to the 2001 census, there are some 91 670 Sri Lankan born Canadians the vast majority-some 84%-in the province of Ontario with more than 10% in Quebec (on the basis of ethnic origin the numbers surpassed 100 000 with 61 315 Sri Lankan and 39 075 Tamil). Toronto is by far home to the largest Sri Lankan community on the continent with nearly 72 000 persons born in that country (on the basis of ethnic origins 45 240 reported Sri Lankan and 33 145 Tamil) and Montreal with just over 10 000 persons born in that country (on the basis of ethnic origin 8 465 Sri Lankan and 2 920 Tamil). As such it would likely be those two cities most likely best situated to receive any immigrants from that country that would be admitted through the family reunification program.

Immigrants to Canada born in Sri Lanka by period of arrival and current residence in Canada and selected provinces, 2001 census

	Canada	Quebec	Ontario	British
Total- Immigrants and Non-	91670	10245	76250	2830
Immigrant Population	87310	9 390	72990	2660
Before 1961	140	20	95	20
1961-1970	815	35	600	85
1971-1980	2 665	125	1865	320
1981-1990	21090	2 195	17520	610
1991-2001	62 585	7 010	52910	1625
1991-1995	37 345	3 345	32580	900
1996-2001	25 245	3 665	20330	725
Non-permanent residents	4 360	850	3 260	170

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001



Other cities have considerably fewer migrants from Sri Lanka with Vancouver at 2 500 and Ottawa at approximately 2 100 followed Calgary with 700, and Edmonton and Winnipeg with over 500 each.

Much of the Sri Lankan migration to Canada took place over the course of the 1990's and hence its establishment is relatively recent. In contrast to the United States while Canada admitted roughly 63 000 immigrants from that part of the world over the course of the 1990's the United States admitted about 12 000.

Total Immigration admitted to Canada and the United States from Sri Lanka, 1991-2003

Immigrant-	Canada	United States
1991-1995	37 345	6 492
1996-2000-1	25 245	5 516
2001	5 514	1 507
2002	4 961	1 534
2003	4 442	1 246

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001 and Facts and Figures, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002 and Annual Report on Immigration, 2004 , Immigration Statistics, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

As observed below much of the immigration admitted from Sri Lanka is either in the refugee or family reunification category.

Numbers of Refugees and Family Reunification of persons born in Sri Lanka, 2000-2002

	Refugee	Family Reunification
2002	2 207	1 779
2001	2 504	1 781
2000	3 235	1 625

Source: Facts and Figures, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002

Economic Integration of Canada's Sri Lankans and Tamils

The economic condition of communities is frequently associated with the ability to integrate immigrants into society. A community that is vulnerable economically may, in the absence of state support, encounter heightened challenges in assisting the process of adaptation of community members to their new home. Clearly in the



case of persons of Sri Lankan and Tamil origin their economic capacity varies somewhat on the basis of their region of residence. In the case of persons of Sri Lankan descent, such cities as Edmonton, Calgary and Toronto appear less vulnerable with lower rates of unemployment than communities elsewhere in the country and thus likely better situated to support adaptation efforts. In the case of Tamils it is Ottawa and Toronto that appear strongest in this regard.

Rate of Unemployment amongst persons reporting Sri Lankan and Tamil ethnic origins in Canada, 2001

Ethnic Origin	Sri Lankan	Tamil
Canada	11.9	13.0
Montréal	19.7	25.6
Ottawa	30.6	19.4
Toronto	10.1	11.7
Winnipeg	6.7	-
Calgary	9.4	-
Edmonton	4.4	33.3
Vancouver	8.8	14.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

When it comes to instances of low- income persons of Tamil origin fare better in Ottawa while the Sri Lankan population does better in Alberta.

Incidence of low income in 2000 % amongst persons reporting Sri Lankan and Tamil ethnic origins, 2001

Incidence of low income in 2000 %	Selected Ethnic: Tamil	Sri Lankan
Canada	33.3	36.4
Quebec - Québec	60.0	63.9
Montréal	59.3	64.1
Ontario	31.4	32.4
Ottawa	21.3	36.7
Toronto	31.9	32.7
Manitoba	0.0	45.7
Winnipeg	0.0	44.4
Alberta	25.9	16.7
Calgary	30.8	15.6
Edmonton	-	20.8
British Columbia	31.5	29.8
Vancouver	37.4	32.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

It is in Quebec that one observes a higher than average share of persons on government transfer payments that are of Sri Lankan and Tamil populations. In effect rates of dependence on the state amongst members of these two communities in Quebec is much higher than is the case elsewhere in Canada.

The rates of persons of both Sri Lankan and Tamil descent that are on government transfer payments and of working age is particularly high in Montreal.

Rate of Government transfer payments amongst persons reporting Sri Lankan ethnic origins between the ages of 25 and 64, 2001

	Selected Ethnic Sri Lankan	
	25-44 years	45-64 years
Canada	11.5	9.1
Quebec	28.4	19.0
Montréal	28.4	19.1
Ontario	10.0	8.7
Ottawa	4.6	8.2
Toronto	10.3	9.0
Winnipeg	12.3	13.4
Regina	9.0	0.0
Alberta	5.2	6.4
Calgary	5.7	9.1
Edmonton	4.0	3.7
British Columbia	5.7	4.1
Vancouver	6.0	4.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Rate of Government transfer payments amongst persons reporting Tamil ethnic origins, 2001

Government transfer	Selected Ethnic: Tamil	
	25-44 years	45-64 years
Canada	11.7	11.1
Quebec - Québec	26.5	15.6
Montréal	26.5	15.6
Ontario	11.1	10.9
Ottawa	6.4	6.7
Toronto	11.4	11.1
Manitoba	1.3	0.0
Winnipeg	1.1	0.0
Alberta	3.1	5.7
Calgary	5.6	17.4
British Columbia	8.2	13.2
Vancouver	10.0	11.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

As to average employment income it is Ottawa and Alberta where incomes are greatest amongst the Sri lankin group in the 25-44 age category although the situation in the next age cohort is more even across the country.

Average employment income \$ Sri Lankan-Ethnic origin, 2001

	25-44 years	45-64 years
Canada	32472.0	39663.0
Quebec	23937.0	33053.0
Montréal	23937.0	33032.0
Ontario	32867.0	39651.0
Ottawa	47074.0	32445.0
Toronto	32143.0	38926.0
Alberta	47905.0	-
British Columbia	37143.0	43073.0
Vancouver	36452.0	41362.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

In the case of the Tamil population it is in Montreal where average employment incomes are lowest with Ottawa and Vancouver providing the highest average income in the 25-44 group.

Average employment income \$ amongst persons reporting Tamil ethnic origins, 2001

	Ethnic: Tamil	
	25-44 years	45-64 years
Canada	31635.0	34637.0
Quebec	24917.0	26690.0
Montréal	24917.0	26690.0
Ontario	31640.0	34161.0
Ottawa	52366.0	-
Toronto	30845.0	33998.0
British Columbia	40817.0	39912.0
Vancouver	40437.0	-

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Appendix

Place of Birth: Sri Lanka

Montréal Total - Immigrants and non- permanent residents	10220
Immigrant population	9375
Before 1961	20
1961-1970	35
1971-1980	130
1981-1990	2190
1991-2001	7005
1991-1995	3340
1996-2001	3660
Non-permanent residents	845

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Toronto

Place of Birth: Sri Lanka Toronto

Total - Immigrants and non- permanent residents	71925
Immigrant population	68790
Before 1961	40
1961-1970	400
1971-1980	1495
1981-1990	16435
1991-2001	50425
1991-1995	31030
1996-2001	19395
Non-permanent residents	3130

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Place of Birth: Sri Lanka Ottawa - Hull (Ont. part - Partie Ont.)

Total - Immigrants and non- permanent residents	2120
Immigrant population	2065
Before 1961	30
1961-1970	45
1971-1980	135
1981-1990	470
1991-2001	1380
1991-1995	900
1996-2001	475
Non-permanent residents	60

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Place of Birth: Sri Lanka

Vancouver Total - Immigrants and non- permanent residents	2515
Immigrant population	2350
Before 1961	10
1961-1970	25
1971-1980	235
1981-1990	510
1991-2001	1570
1991-1995	870
1996-2001	700
Non-permanent residents	170

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Ethnic Origin (: Sr	Sex (3): Total - Sex	Single responses	Multiple responses
	Total - Single and multiple		
Canada (01)	61315	45485	15825
Quebec - Québec (24) 20000	8475	7125	1350
Montréal (24462) 20001	8465	7120	1345
Ontario (35)	48660	35715	12945
Ottawa - Hull (Ont. part - Partie Ont.) (3550535) 00001	1675	1205	475
Toronto (35535) 00001	45240	33290	11950
Manitoba (46)	430	315	115
Winnipeg (46602)	430	315	115
Alberta (48)	995	640	350
Calgary (48825) 00000	505	310	195
Edmonton (48835)	415	310	105
British Columbia - Colombie-Britannique (59) 20000	2295	1500	795
Vancouver (59933)	2025	1395	630

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Ethnic Origin (: Tamil	Sex (3): Total - Sex		
	Total - Single and multiple	Single responses	Multiple responses
Canada (01)	39075	26935	12135
Quebec - Québec (24) 20000	2955	1980	965
Montréal (24462) 20001	2920	1970	955
Ontario (35)	34535	23860	10675
Ottawa - Hull (35505) 00001	820	355	460
Toronto (35535) 00001	33145	23170	9975
Alberta (48)	260	195	70
Calgary (48825) 00000	155	130	15
Edmonton (48835)	110	60	50
British Columbia - Colombie- Britannique (59) 20000	1185	825	365
Vancouver	975	690	280

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Indonesian

Population Canada

(01) 20000

Total - Immigrants and non-permanent residents	10455
Immigrant population	9375
Before 1961	1280
1961-1970	1405
1971-1980	1890
1981-1990	1770
1991-2001	3025
1991-1995	1100
1996-2001	1925
Non-permanent residents	1080

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Ethnic Origin	Sex (3): Total - Sex		
Indonesian			
	Total - Single and multiple responses	Single responses	Multiple responses
Canada (01) 20000	9700	2080	7620
Quebec - Québec (24) 20000	375	145	225
Québec (24421) 00000	10	0	10
Montréal (24462) 20001	290	120	160
Ontario (35) 20000	4365	1105	3260
Ottawa - Hull (Ont. part - Partie Ont.) (3550535) 00001	435	125	310
Toronto (35535) 00001	2680	760	1920
Winnipeg (46602) 00001	275	35	240
Alberta (48) 20000	1145	135	1005
Calgary (48825) 00000	540	60	485
Edmonton (48835) 00000	330	40	285
British Columbia - Colombie-Britannique (59) 20000	3320	585	2730

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Place of Birth:

Indonesi
 a Toronto (35535)
 00001

Total - Immigrants and non-permanent residents	3520
Immigrant population	3320
Before 1961	190
1961-1970	375
1971-1980	820
1981-1990	755
1991-2001	1180
1991-1995	415



1996-2001	765
Non-permanent residents	195

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001



Place of Birth: Indonesia
 Vancouver (59933)
 00000

Total - Immigrants and non-permanent residents	2940
Immigrant population	2510
Before 1961	185
1961-1970	395
1971-1980	430
1981-1990	475
1991-2001	1025
1991-1995	320
1996-2001	705
Non-permanent residents	430

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001