

# Arunachalam Waddulla Neighbourhood Colombo SRI LANKA

YAWN!

My name is Arunachalam and this is my wife Letchumi. We run a stand where we sell snacks and refreshments - wada, dosa and chutney, tea and malt drinks

Letchumi gets up at One AM to prepare all the food...

I'm responsible for having the stand open by 5:30 each morning

We serve about 200 people every day. It's hard work

But that doesn't trouble me

I come from the hills of central Sri Lanka. Since the late 1800s, tea growers have exploited the climate there...

Generations of Tamils have lived, worked and died on those plantations

Most originated from South India. Even if born right on the plantation, beyond the estate most people considered them foreign

I was born in 1951 on such a plantation.

All day my parents picked tea on the hills, but never could afford a drop themselves. We were poor and always hungry.

My mother gave birth thirteen times but only six of us survived

Despite being Tamil, I attended Sinhala school, which was the only option on the estate. There was never time for us kids to play.

HURRY UP!

WE'RE LATE!

In the evenings my father made extra money selling betel outside our room

Why are you so late? Where have you been?

Only to school and I came straight home

Sometimes after school I would go into the forest with friends and we would steal jackfruit...

...We would eat quickly in the trees then wash away the sticky juice in the waterfall so we wouldn't be found out