

A STUDY OF THE SPATIAL FORM OF KALUTARA TOWN, SRI LANKA; AS A UNIQUE HISTORIC PROCESS

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Abstract

Contemporary urban planning practice often conceptualize of urban areas as static entities which could be planned towards certain end states, and devoid of social, economic, and political context, within which the spatial form is produced and reproduced. There have been many scholarly attempts to fill in this gap. The main argument put forward in this study is that the spatial form of an urban area is not a static neutral entity, as mostly seen in planning, but a dynamic process that

keeps evolving with many forces emerging from both local and global context. In addition to deliberate planning efforts, the spatial form could be changed and organized by number of external and internal agents associated with it. In view of that, this study reformulated the already known story of the evolution of Kalutara town as a historic process, intending to explain spatial form as an evolving phenomenon.

Keywords: Social Process, Planning practice, Objective positioning, Agents

Introduction

Contemporary town planning practices in Sri Lanka, similar to that of many other parts of the world, reflect two main limitations. The first is the planners' conceptualization of urban areas as static entities which could be planned towards certain end states. This conceptualization ignores the dynamics of urban space and the evolutionary nature of the spatial form. The second limitation is the so called 'objective' approaches adopted to understand urban areas compartmentalizing its contents into several empirical domains. Because of this approach the plans prepared in recent past presented urban areas as mere physical, social, economic and other entities that were culturally and politically neutral and devoid of a context. The consequences of these limitations are evident mostly at the stage of implementation, where the plans are subject to enormous pressures imposed by different forces surging from the very contexts, for which they have been prepared. In view of this situation, deviating from the common understanding seen in present day urban planning practice, this paper supports the view that the spatial extent of an urban area, usually termed the 'spatial form', is a continuous evolving process rather than a static end state: a number of internal and external agents, over and above deliberate planning attempts, are instrumental in continuing this process. In order to illustrate this view, the paper discusses the process, in which Kalutara: a small town located at the west coast of Sri Lanka, has evolved into its

present form over last three centuries, adapting, contesting and negotiating a number of socio-political moves that had affected the whole of Sri Lanka within the said period.

Background

Scholarly attempts to understand spatial forms through social processes are not new in urban planning and related fields. In early attempts, Ruskin (1853) initiated a new line of thinking towards the city with his work on *Stones of Venice*, where he implied the built environment of the city as a resemblance of elements gifted to the city throughout its growth. Inspired by the modern trends in Biology, mainly the Darwinian theories, Patrick Geddes (1947) introduced a new means of conceptualizing cities within the metaphor of a biological matter. According to Geddes, cities similar to biological matters are in a process of evolution responding to stimuli from both internal body and external environment. In the same direction, but not necessarily with the biological metaphor, Morris (1979) brought in a new perception, looking at the city's built environment as a historic legacy that is reflected in its apparent physical elements. This new direction of thinking was furthered by Mumford (1961), Doxiadis (1968), Rossi (1984), and Kostof (1991). Commonly, all of these works profound the thinking that the spatial form of every city could be well understood only by relating to the historic process through which

they have been evolving into their present state.

Making a new turn in urban studies, Lefebvre (1929) enlightened urban scholarship by highlighting the 'production of space' by different agents of 'urban' and the politics involved in producing space. Lefebvre heightened the fact that urban space that we all experience was not a neutral entity, rather it had not only been produced, but it had also been commoditized through political processes. Lefebvre's work inspired a chain of new literature that has emerged over last two decades. Harvey's (1974) work on political economy of spatial relations and the social reproduction facilitated by planning and designing the built environment, Smith's (1993) conform of a specialist politics on the production of geographical scale, specialist politics on the production of geographical scale, Low's (2000) work on politics that shapes the public space and the spaces that shaped the political and cultural practices, Yeoh's (2003) readings of the contested spaces produced by colonials and the colonized and Hosagrahar's (2000) inquiry into culturally produced 'modernity' in indigenous societies with the influence of colonial powers and its reflections in the built environments, are a few worth indicating.

Despite the growing interest throughout the world in this area of studies, similar attempts are rare in Sri Lankan context. Among the few work, a series of studies by Perera (1998, 1999, 2002), which has provided an extensive

account on colonial and post colonial national space production processes of Colombo centered Ceylon, renamed Sri Lanka, has indicated an entry to this new domain of literature in Sri Lanka. These works illustrated the agency of colonials, the colonized, native elite and post colonial hegemonies in making and remaking of the built environment of the island at different stages of its evolution. However, Perera's work has focused mainly upon Colombo, which he profound the centre of colonial power and post colonial social relations and through which Ceylon and later Sri Lanka has been reconstructed, than otherwise. At the same time, his work pays more attention to architectural legacy of the built environment. Though is not a limitation, the space formation in other urban areas in the periphery and at the locality level is not discussed adequately in his work. In a recent study, Munasinghe (2007) attempted to explain small towns of Sri Lanka as self organizing processes that have been evolving through transactions between internal and external agents. This study was a generalized account of all small towns along main arteries of Sri Lanka. Bandara & Munasinghe (2007) examined the evolution of Colombo, focusing upon the transformation of different spatial segments in an identical sequence of land use changes, as a function of changing street network configuration. However, beside the diversity in scope and new methods of inquiry, relatively fewer numbers indicate a need for more studies to fill the void apparent in urban studies literature in Sri Lanka. This

study is placed in such a context to contribute towards that purpose, and it reads the changing configuration of the spatial form of a particular urban area: Kalutara town, throughout its evolution over last three centuries.

The reading is based on a series of maps that represented sequential changes in the spatial extent of Kalutara town throughout its evolution, in the light of socio-political events occurred at different times in history. The

maps are constructed on the information revealed through historic records, formal and informal interviews with people who witnessed the changes in the past, and pictorial illustrations such as photographs, paintings and sketches. The consecutive changes in the spatial extent, expressed in maps, are the matters of observation. These changes are scrutinized referring to the corresponding historical events within the period of each pair of consecutive maps.

The Evolution of Kalutara Town

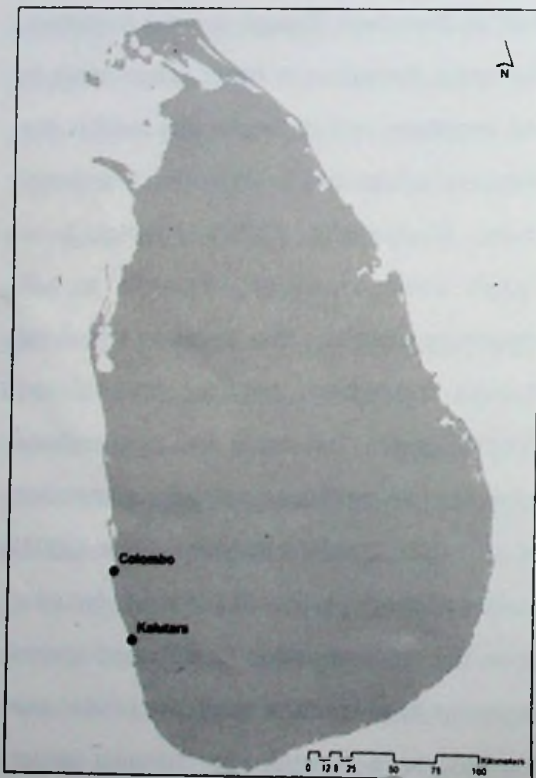


Figure 1: Location of the Kalutara

Kalutara, located forty kilometers south of Colombo in the coast, is the administrative centre of Kalutara district and for planning

purposes it has been recognized as a second order urban centre in Colombo Metropolitan Region (CMRSP, 1999). In addition to the administrative functions, it plays a vital role as a thriving commercial centre. Tourism is one of the booming industries in Kalutara which attract many local and foreign tourists for its natural serenity and the religious significance. The built environment of Kalutara town has endured many changes within last four centuries at different phases of its urban history. In the pre-colonial period, Kalutara was a small village with two isolated clusters of fishing communities, located at the northern and southern edges of the estuary. The third settlement cluster emerged at Kalutara-south with the location of Portuguese fortress on the hillock by the river. The fortress had developed into a town centre under Dutch ruling into which the access was

possible through canal, sea routes, river, & footpaths. At the early British period with the construction of the cart road leading to Galle from Colombo, the spatial form configured into two clusters; with administrative activities at the vicinity of the fortress and commercial activities at the ferry. Boutiques and other service outlets were set-up in a linear pattern along the cart road near the ferry. The construction of the new steel bridge brought in unprecedented changes to the spatial form. Commercial and administrative activities and elite houses along the old road were gradually shifted to the new road leading to the bridge, again in a linear form, mainly at Kalutara-south. Later, when the coastal railway was introduced, two more small clusters of buildings and activities emerged along the station roads at Katukurunda and Kalutara north. While the Galle road concentrating urban activities, there was a set of local roads that connected peripheral areas into main road at different locations. Residential units were apparent along them. In the post independence period, Kalutara north and Katukurunda sub centres were stretching along the main Galle road,

and the growth of the urban area led to formulate a continuous concentration along the main artery. In addition to that, Kalutara north sub centre extended to the main artery from station road. Old road and Horana road, constructed later, concentrated new developments of residential units. Two concentrations were apparent at the coasts of Kalutara-north, which was occupied mainly by poor residents and at Kalutara south, occupied by the moor community. A dispersed pattern of buildings was observed in the lands between main road and the Dutch canal. At present, the buildings and activities are concentrated in a linear pattern along the Galle road, gradually spreading in to Nagoda road. Although the changes in spatial form could be summarized in the above manner, these changes are not merely physical and instantaneous as they are apparent to be. Rather, they were geared by many forces, both internal and external, through their agents in a continuous process. At each step of the process essences of the socio-cultural, economic, and political stances were manifested in the form of the built environment.

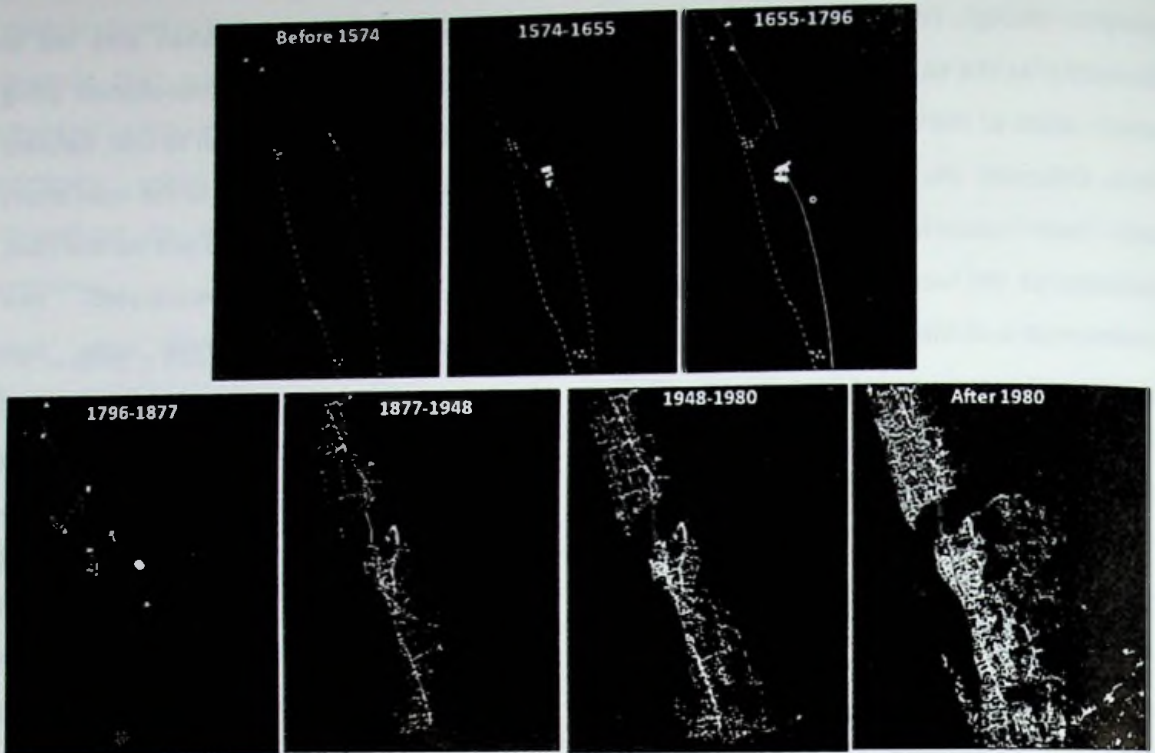


Figure 2: Evolutionary Process of Kalutara as Township

The next section of this paper reads this socio-political process highlighting the events where necessary.

Reading the Evolution

The coastal belt of Sri Lanka was marked with narrow foot paths that linked Magama provincial Kingdom to the rest of the country. Kings constructed transit temples on the way to facilitate Buddhist monks who travelled along the route. Travelers crossed the rivers either in ferries or on natural sand dunes. Smaller clusters of fishing families were settled near the lagoons and estuaries. Towards the fifteenth century Moor traders established small sea ports along the coast at the estuaries to exchange goods. *Kalutara-Totamuna* was one of these exchange points, which traded goods coming from *Sabaragamuwa* to the coast along *Kalu Ganga* (river).

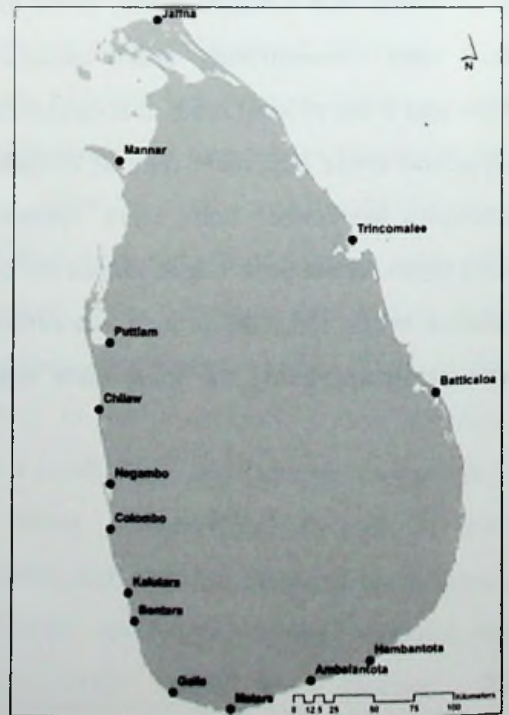


Figure 3: Portuguese Bases of Sri Lanka

Portuguese captured Moor's trading and established a fortress at the location of the port in 1505. It must be noted that Colombo was preferred as the main base in the island that had linked to Goa in India, and *Calt(ch)ura* (Kalutara) was one of several sub bases linked to Colombo. *Calt(ch)ura* was selected as a base because of its capacity to optimize military potential supported by the natural setting. The hillock at the south bank of the estuary with direct access from inland waterway and the sea port was an ideal setting for a defensive base. The fort was the first element of Portuguese *Calt(ch)ura*. At a later stage, Portuguese men who got married to native women settled in a separate enclave

adjacent to the fort. Gradually the Portuguese activities began to spread around. In 1574 they erected a building near fortress for Franciscan Church, which was patronized also by the Christianized local fishing communities. When local religious institutions, mainly Buddhist acted against the Catholic propagations, Portuguese ravaged all temples in the vicinity. Accordingly, the built environment was altered by the Portuguese by introducing new elements that served for their needs and changing the natives' environments. It was Portuguese who laid the foundation of the structure on which Kalutara town has evolved into its present state.

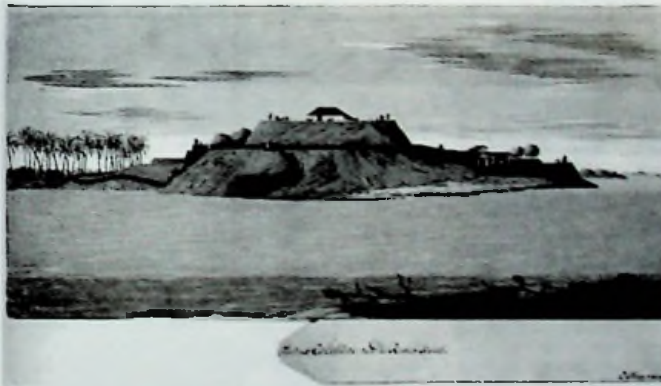
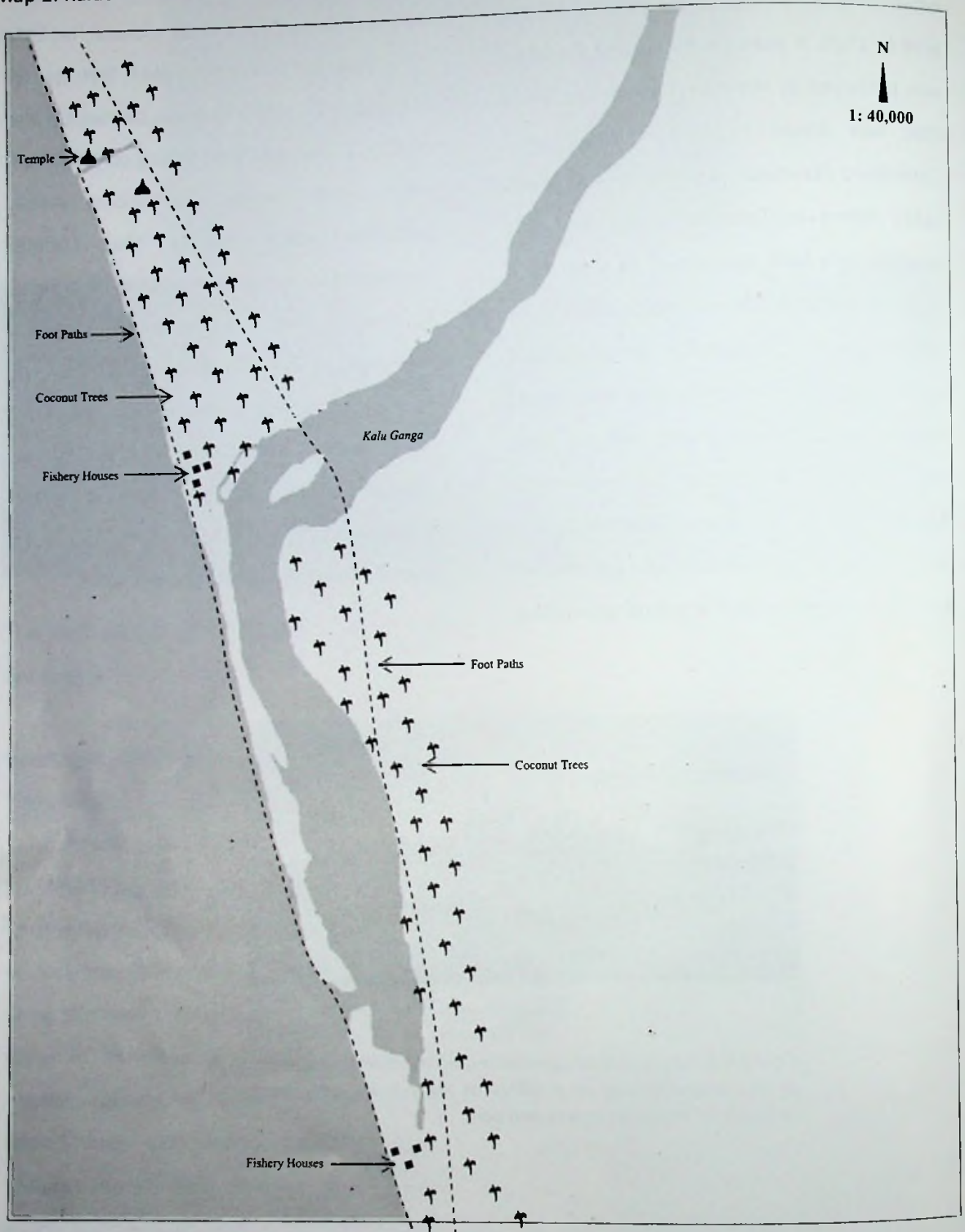


Figure 4: Kalutara fort decided optimizing the military potential of the natural setting on a hillock at the estuary with direct access from inland waterway and port.

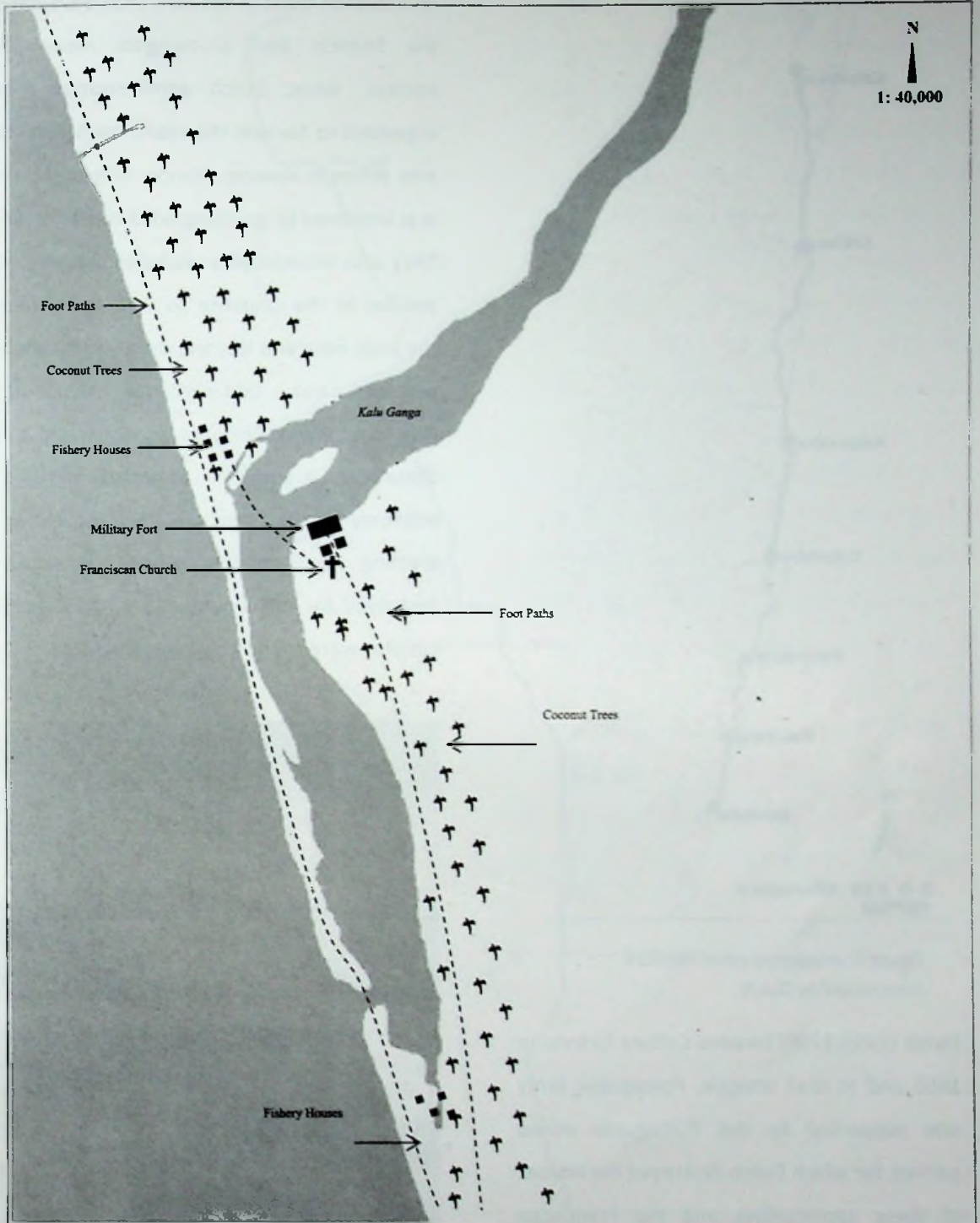
Map 1: Kalutara in Pre-Colonial Period (Before 1574)



Source: Author's construction based on...

- *Brahier, R.L. (1948). History of Kalutara. Silver jubilee souvenir-Urban council Kalutara Colombo, The associated printers, Ltd.*
- *Fernando, M. (2003). Kalutara South, Thejani publishers. pp. 1-44, 129-169.*
- *Interviews with people*

Map 2: Kalutara in Portuguese Period (1574-1655)



Source: Author's construction based on...

- Ramerini, R. (No date). *The Portuguese in Ceylon-The history of the first European power in Ceylon* [online]. Available from : <http://www.colonialvoyage.com/ceylonP.html>[Accessed 15th December 2007]
- Rev. Perera, S.G. *History of Kalutara, Kalutara in Portuguese times. Silver jubilee souvenir-Urban council Kalutara Colombo, The associated printers, Ltd.*
- *Maps-Portuguese ports of Ceylon*

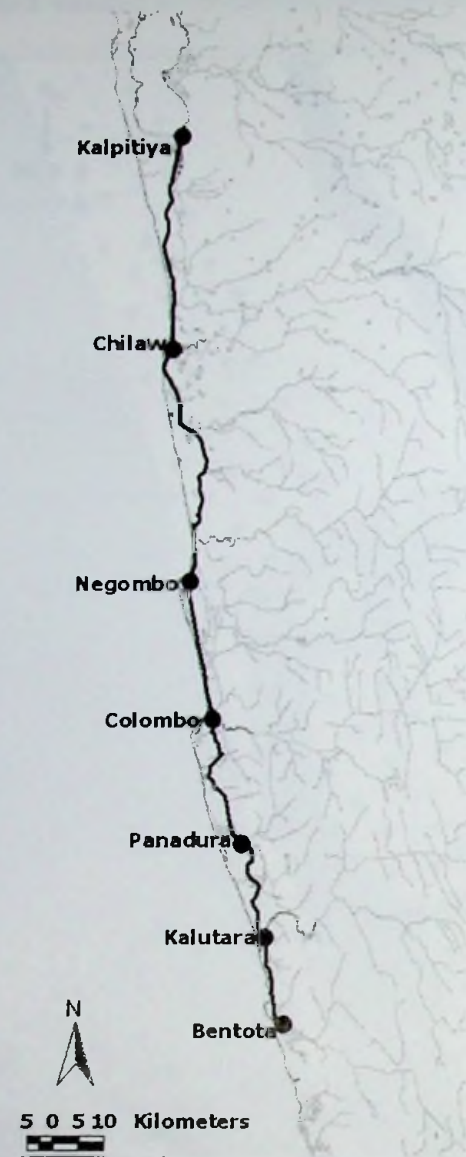


Figure 5: Integrated canal network constructed by Dutch

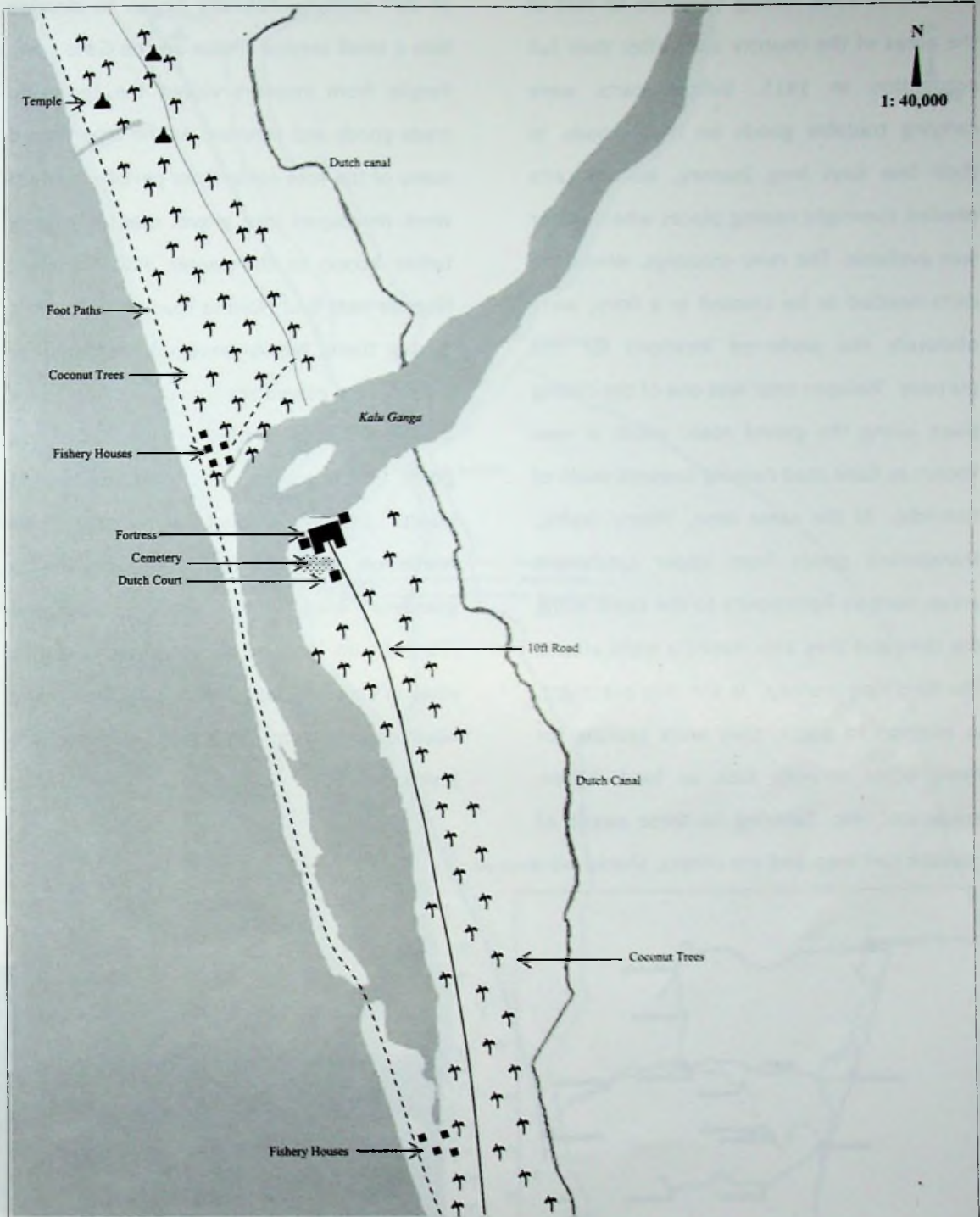
Dutch (1655-1796) invaded Caltura fortress in 1655 and at that struggle, Portuguese army was supported by the Portuguese mixed natives, for which Dutch destroyed the houses of these communities and the Franciscan church building nearby soon after capturing the fort. Dutch governed the areas under their rule with a new order of law, now known

as Roman-Dutch law and established a court at a location close to the fort. They developed the fortress into a compact residential enclave. Since, Dutch administration was organized to harness the resources by access into different sources. Hence, transportation was improved by an intergraded canal system. They also introduced a walkable gravel road parallel to the coastline to Colombo, where the main base was located, mainly to facilitate military and administrative functions. However, unlike Portuguese, Dutch did not disturb the in social life of natives and their economy to that extent. They allowed re-erecting the temples which had been destroyed by Portuguese and natives' social systems were supported to reconstruct.



Figure 6: The fort Calleture; view

Map 3: Kalutara in Dutch Period (1655-1796)



Source: Author's construction based on...:

- De Silva, R.K. and Beumer, W.G.M. (1988) *Illustrations & views of Dutch Ceylon 1602-1796*. London, Serendib Publication. pp. 66, 67, 205-2.
- De Fonseka.com (No date). 'Diyambetalawa'-Early prints from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Available from : <http://www.defonseka.com> [Accessed 15th December 2007]
- Walter, D.G.F. (1971). *In & Out of Kalutara Court: book 2. Kalutara, Kalutara Court.*
- Sanjewa, S. (2006) *The Buddhist temples in Kalutara*. Kalutara, Divisional Secretariats Office.
- Interviews with people

The British started to develop a gravel road network in 1796 linking Colombo to rest of the areas of the country soon after their full occupation in 1815. Bullock carts were carrying tradable goods on those roads. In their few days long journey, bullock carts needed overnight resting places where water was available. The river crossings, where the carts needed to be crossed in a ferry, were obviously the preferred locations for this purpose. 'Kalugan tota' was one of the resting place along the gravel road, which is now known as Galle road running towards south of Colombo. At the same time, 'Paaru' (rafts), transported goods from upper catchment areas, such as Rathnapura to the coast along the river and they also stayed a night after a few days long journey. In the stay overnight, in addition to water, they were seeking for many other services such as food, liquor, enjoyment, etc. Catering to these needs of bullock cart men and the others, shacks were

put up near the ferry point and by the dawn of 20th century, *Kalutota* began to develop into a small service centre on the Galle road. People from interiors visited the center to trade goods and services. As the time passed many of the foot paths from peripheral areas were developed into gravel roads providing better access to the center. *Palatota* road, *Nagoda* road and *Horana* road were the first among them. Newly emerged merchandiser groups, who played the role of middlemen for trading activities, settled in and around this point. These groups, who gradually earned wealth through trading, were built their residences along the Galle road, showing up grandeur with white washed decorated facades with large gardens replicating British villas in Colombo and British India with many adaptations from Victorian architectural styles.

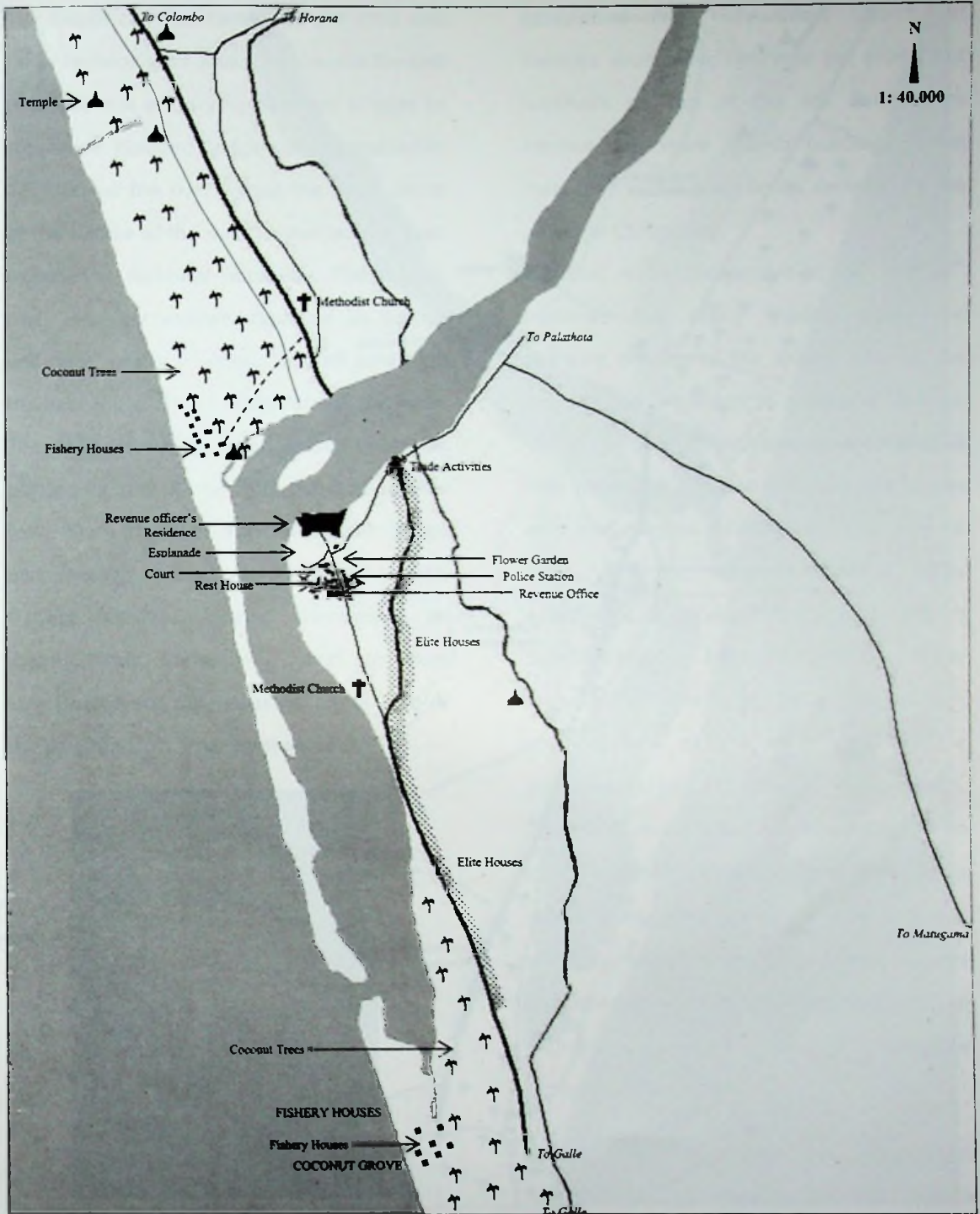


Figure 9: Inland trade routes operate at British Period



Figure 8: An elite house; Kalutara north

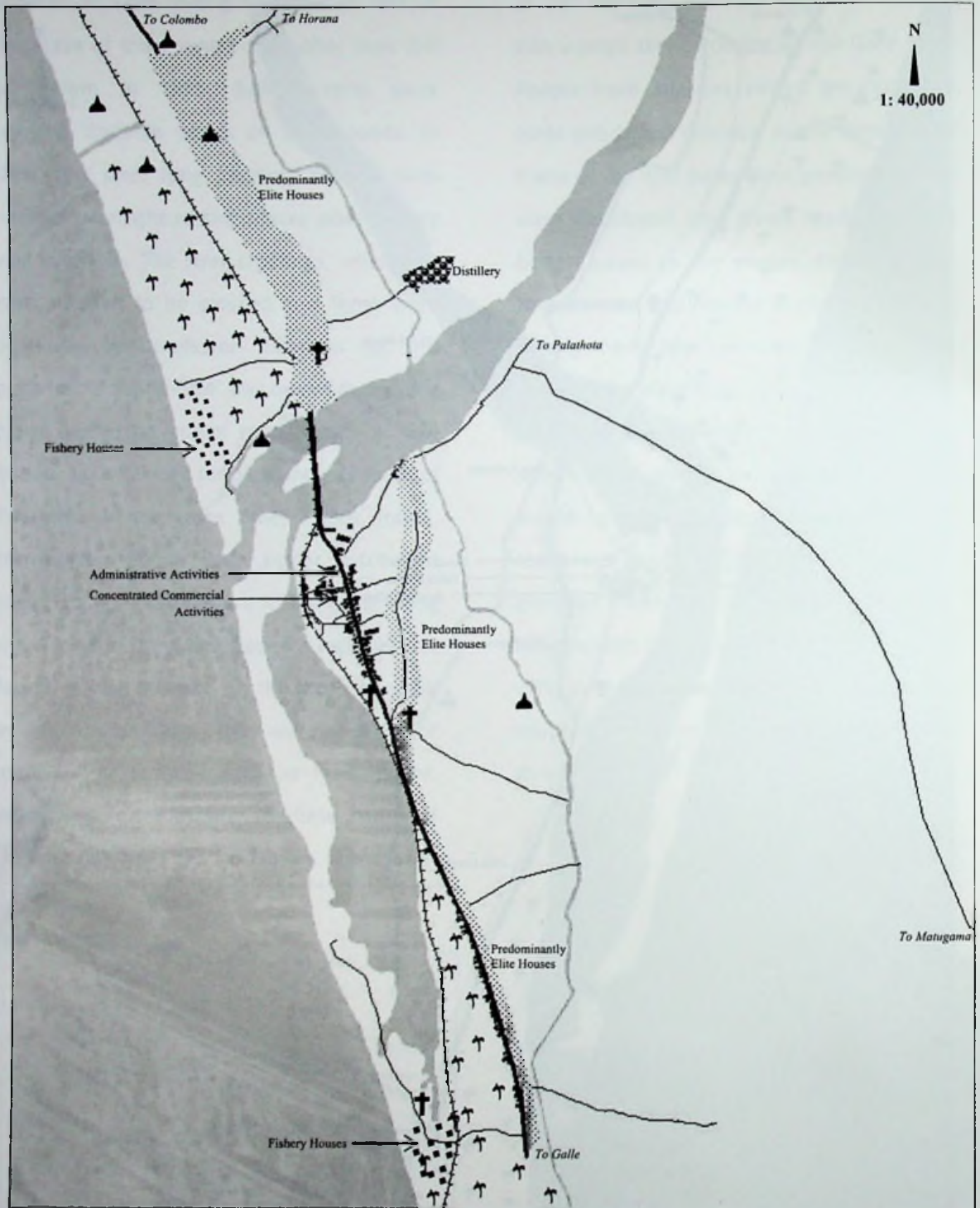
Map 4: Kalutara in Early British Period (1870)



Source: Author's construction based on...

- James, E.T. (1895). *Ceylon-an account of the island physical, historical and topographical with notices of its natural history, antiquities and productions*. Thisara Prakashakayo Ltd, Dehiwala, Sri Lanka. pp. 650-651.
- Interviews with people

Map 5: Kalutara in Late British Period (1880)



Source: Author's construction based on....:

- Fernando, M. (2002). *Bank of Ceylon super grade branch- Kalutara 50th anniversary: 2002*. Sri Lanka, Bank of Ceylon.
- Fernando, M. (2003). *Kalutara. Kalutara South, Thejani publishers. pp. 1-44, 129-169.*
- Interview with peoples

The motor car that came into the road and other technological advances towards the end of nineteenth century necessitated bridges to cross river. *Kalutara Bridge* was constructed in 1878 across the river linking the small island at the middle of the river to shorten the span considering technical feasibility. The bullock carts were increasingly replaced by Lorries and other motor vehicles. They all now took the new route on the bridge across the river. The trading activities, who targeted the traffic passing by, got shifted from old road to new road. Since the area adjacent to the bridge had already occupied by administrative uses, trading activities located themselves on vacant lands immediately next to that. Structures were put up along either side of the new road in a linier arrangement.



Figure10: Buildings beside the road in a linier arrangement

By 1870s, British built a church building at the ferry road of Kalutara north. After the construction of new bridge, British

established the 'Holy Cross Church' at Kalutara south which became the prominent landmark on top of the hill. Later, they erected two more church buildings facing main road within town limits; symbolizing the power of Christianity.

Buddhist revival movement at 19th and 20th centuries had many impacts upon the changing process of the spatial form of the town. It had originated as a reactive force to the on going Christian missionary activities all over the island. The anti-Christian polemicists who had to pass Kalutara on their way to *Galle* with the support of local elites established a branch of '*Sinhala Jathika Sanvidhanaya*' in 1911. The activities of the organization were attracting many rich entrepreneurs of the area including the distillers, planters and other business owners. They had made generous contributions to uplift Buddhist temples in the area. As a result, many new temples emerged in the area as well as many existing temples flourished into rich built environments with all elements required for a complete ecclesiastical complex.

One of the first moves the organization launched in 1910 was to protect Kalutara Bodhiya when it was in danger to be fallen by the proposed railway bridge. After several exchanges with the Governor of Ceylon and in fail, with the King of British Empire at that time (George VI), the organization managed to get the railway shifted from its original

trace to save the Bo tree. Associated around this element of victory, which is now becoming famous Bodhi temple (Gangatillake Vihara) a Trust (*Bodhi Bharakara Mandalaya*) was established by the wealthy and influential Buddhist businessmen of the area. The strong Buddhist elements in the area had concerns over the prevalent image of Kalutara dominated by the landmark Holy Cross church building standing at the hillock towards the south of the town. It is said that the tower of the church building was seen from long distances, even to the vessels passing in the sea, because of its height in addition to the higher elevation of its location. The Bodhi trust, followed by many attempts, acquired the fortress nearby, and initiated a project of building a prominent landmark at the most strategic location of Kalutara.

With the advances in trade and commerce, and the expansion of the public administration system, more people compelled to commute between peripheral areas and Colombo. In order to provide advanced transportation system, railway expanded from Moratuwa to Kalutara in 1900.

Rail attracted many commuters and as a result, the station roads had higher pedestrian movements. Business activities harnessed the economic potential by putting up shops along the station roads. In addition to Kalutara South, Kalutara North and Katukurunda were also developed into commercial areas by 1915.

When commercial activities demanded land on either sides of the main street at Kalutara-south, elite houses got shifted to Kalutara-North and set back from the main road. As a result of that fishermen and other poor groups were further confined to the coast. The railway demarcated a strong edge between the poor and the wealthy. Thriving trade activities attracted Moor community to Kalutara and many coconut lands at Kalutara-South and Katukurunda along the Galle road were converted to Moor residences.

By this time, toddy tapping was a common activity along the south western coast and distillery was a booming industry in the area. In 1924 Government introduced measures to regulate distilleries. At this instance, there were 200 small-scale producers at Kalutara whose activities



Figure 11: Station Road-
Kalutara North



Figure 12: Station Road-
Kalutara South

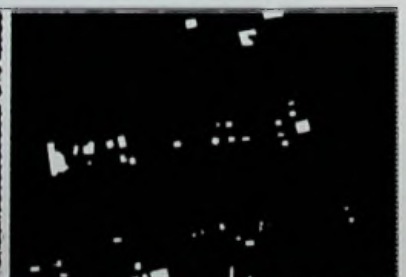


Figure 13: Station Road-
Katukurunda

were carried out in spaces, less than the standards required by the regulations. As a solution, government provided lands to them along the Dutch canal where adequate space and water were available. This benefit was grabbed by local elites and established large scale distilleries on the given lands by attracting labor from small scale industries. New gravel roads were constructed to provide access to these industries from the main road. Thereby interior areas between Galle road and Dutch canals got access from a set of perpendicular roads. Gradually houses were put up on either side of the roads.

At the beginning of twentieth century, British considered these emerging commercial centers all over the island as suitable sites for decentralized administrative functions. Accordingly, in 1915 Kalutara town become a seat for a Government Agent. Local Board of Health which established at Kalutara in 1878 had upgraded into an Urban Council in 1923.

Consequently, the urban council took steps to develop the area into a state-of-art urbanity and some elements that British administrative planning norms necessitated in a contemporary British town such as the police station, court house, rest house, hospital (1926), town hall (1930), clock tower (1936),

health office (1937), Public library(1938), etc were gradually established. Since there were no government lands available at the centre by then, the low-lying marshy land between the old and new Galle roads at Kalutara South was reclaimed to accommodate all these city elements. Parallel to those, urban utilities such as Electricity (1933) and pipe born water (1940) came in to serve the town. Since the reclamation of marshy land caused overflow of the river into built up areas, the irrigation department provided an engineering solution by a flood protection river bank development scheme. Housing and Town Improvement Ordinance (1915) and Urban Council Ordinance No. 61 of 1939 enforced within urban areas diagnosed, cadjan thatched old houses at the coast and poor worker's houses at the town as problems to an urban area. Hence, they all got relocated at Katukurunda and Kalutara north away from the main centre by 1922.

In this manner throughout British ruling, Kalutara's spatial form gradually got extended and several of the older elements of the built environment got replaced with new elements. Within this period it got the character of a contemporary colonial township within the British Empire.



Figure 14:
Indigenous fishery
houses at coast (left)
and the new houses
provided by the
government

Map 6: Kalutara in Late British Period (1926)



Source: Author's construction based on...

- DeFonseka.com (No date). *Diyambetalawa*, Available from: <http://www.defonseka.com> [Accessed 15th December 2007]
- Fernando, M. (2002). *Bank of Ceylon super grade branch- Kalutara 50th anniversary: 2002*. Sri Lanka, Bank of Ceylon.
- James, S. (1993). *Re collections of Ceylon*. Colombo, Lake House bookshop. P. 11.
- Walter, D.G.F. (1971). *In & Out of Kalutara Court: book 2*. Kalutara, Kalutara Court.
- Weerasinghe, O. (1948). *Housing schemes in Kalutara, Kalutara urban council silver Jubilee souvenir Colombo, The associated printers, Ltd.*
- Woolf, B.S. (1914). *How to see Ceylon*. 5th ed. Colombo, Visidunu Publication. pp. 79-80.
- *Town Survey sheet, 1926, Survey Department, Kalutara*

At that time, Several Buddhist Schools such as Balika Vidyalaya , Kalutara Vidyalaya, Tissa College were Established with the contribution of local Buddhist elite. This has changed the existed domination of missionary schools such as Holy Cross College. Those Buddhist schools were located on lands where elite residents were located. Contemporary temperance movement which protest against the alcoholic liquor were supported by the *Sinhala Jathika Sanvidhanaya*. They made a huge pressure on distilleries. As a result distilleries had to close down and the industry had dramatically declined. Since then the land along Dutch canal, which had been used by distilleries were gradually converted to residential uses.

Increasing fleet of motor vehicles along the Galle road and the congestion apparent when they pass Kalutara became an issue towards 1930s. Increasing motor traffic could not befit the 'main street' which was not more than twenty feet wide, cohesively defined by commercial buildings abutting the intersections and occupied until such time by bullock carts and human interactions with not much of a trouble. Thus, in 1930 there came a proposal to widen it up to 'hundred feet'; perhaps, the numerological norm of British highway planning. This proposal, however, was not passively accepted by the political and social groups of the area and they had vehemently opposed it. Due to the protest, the project was held for thirty years without implementing. In a tug-of-war the project

however got completed in 1960 providing a motor vehicle friendly town which was never seen before in Sri Lanka. The praising of the project was mainly upon its facilitation of through traffic uninterrupted by town activities. The central carriageways were elevated to assure non interference of the local traffic and pedestrians throughout the passing of the town. Yet the continuing protests even after the construction, was of concern that the town got divided into two sections and the elevated road was making a barrier for inhabitants to use the town. The amicable solution brought in at the end was to have a few defined pedestrian crossings across the 'highway' that was originally meant for uninterrupted through traffic. The buildings that defined the old main street and demolished for the widening of it, were gradually emerging at the set back positions, redefining the new 'Broadway'. These new buildings were mostly flat facaded and free from elements protruding into the street due to planning controls, enforced in the form of street lines. At the same time, instead of more organic, humanly scaled and street sheltering characteristics seen in the former buildings, these new buildings were posing a dominating stand, striking order and reflected some ruling of the modern movement and international styles, that were influencing the architecture all over the world at that time.



Figure 15: Strait building edges beside the road

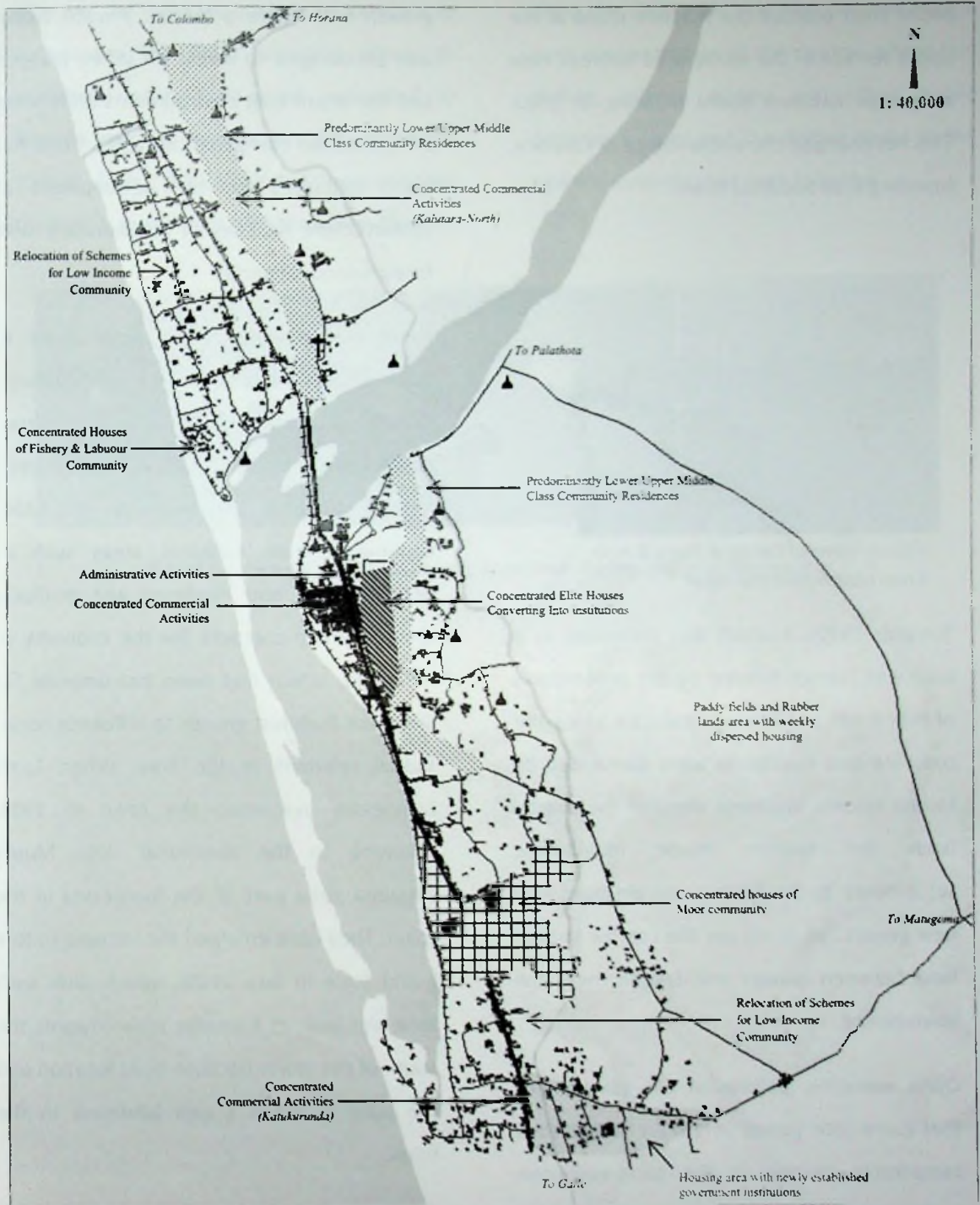
When the linear development became intense along the Galle road, alternative directions of expansion were sort. Then popular 'satellite town' concept was resort by planning agencies and the decision was to shift the public institutions to Nagoda, a few kilometers interior of Kalutara town. Improvement made to Hill Street and Nagoda road to direct access to Nagoda. Trade-oriented Moor residents at Katukurunda provided necessary landscape for this. Accordingly, Kalutara town configured into linier spatial form along the Galle road and tended to grow along Nagoda road. National Health institution (1974), Teaching hospital, Katukurunda Air Force runner-way, Police training school were established on proposed administrative area at Nagoda. Many institutions have successfully shifted from the centre but it was difficult to move some government departments and political authorities. They have been located in a new building at Galle road in 1970s, which is yet the tallest building of the town seven stories in height, and reflect the influences of modern movement.



Figure 16: Kalutara-North coast; marine promenade

Sri Lanka had gained independence from British ruling in 1948 and the planning and improvement activities were transferred to the hands of local bureaucracy. Still, the visions had not yet shifted from British planning principles and norms. This was reflected at many instances of change. The native configured land use patterns of Kalutara-North coast was replaced by a 'planned' grid-iron road network, in order to regulate the use of land and to upkeep the urban character. A plan for the construction of marine promenade, similar to the Bondi Beach in Australia was proposed at this time. Administrative functions and public services located at the town centre were considered as an underutilization of land and made a decision to shift them to *Nagoda* a few kilometers interior of the town.

Map 7: Kalutara in Post Independence Period (1970)



Source: Author's construction based on...

- Bank of Ceylon super grade branch- Kalutara 50th anniversary: 2002. Sri Lanka, Bank of Ceylon.
- Fernando, M. (2002). Bank of Ceylon super grade branch - Kalutara 50th anniversary: 2002. Sri Lanka, Bank of Ceylon.
- Jayalath, P. (1998). Strategies to regenerate urban streetscape disturbed by road widening programmes, Unpublished M. Sc. Architecture dissertation. University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
- Kalutara urban council silver Jubilee souvenir (1948) Colombo, The associated printers, Ltd.
- Keble, W.T. (2004). Ceylon Beaten Track-1940. Colombo, Sooriya prakashakayo. pp.299-303.
- Town Survey sheet, 1970 Survey Department, Kalutara
- Topographic Map, 1:50000, 1980. Survey Department, Sri Lanka

After seventy years of enthusiastic work the Bodhi Trust erected the massive *stupa* at the upper terrace of the moderated fortress, now known as Kalutara Bodhi Maluwa, in 1980. This has changed the entire image of Kalutara, branding it as Buddhist town.



Figure: Views of Kalutara Stupa & Holy Cross church from the coast

Towards 1970s, tourism was promoted as a source of foreign income by the government of that time, and lands in Kalutara along the coastline and riverbanks were demanded by tourist resorts. Business demand on coastal lands for tourism made low-income settlements to be further marginalized and new generation to occupy the narrow strip of land between railway and lagoon, near the town centre.

Open economic policies of the government that came into power in 1977 effectuated a remarkable change in the socio-economic environment of the whole country. Service and manufacturing industries were promoted by the government on the belief that more GDP growth was achievable through those two sectors as against conventional agricultural sector. Thus, the urban areas, where service sector activities generally

concentrated, showed an unprecedented growth with more activities. Private sector was encouraged to invest on urban projects and the urban built environments underwent a tremendous change of character. State has taken initiatives for the development of infrastructure facilities in collaboration with foreign donor agencies.

Tamil groups were taking some share of businesses in Kalutara South from early days. They established a Hindu Kovil at the town when town was along the old main street. Parallel to that the migration of Moor community from adjacent areas such as Beruwala was also increased and gradually they began to compete for the economy of the place, which had been instrumental for Sinhalese Buddhist groups to influence socio-spatial relations in the area. When Tamil businesses evacuated the town in 1983, following to the communal riots, Moors acquired good part of the businesses in the town. They have enlarged the mosque in to a grand scale in late 1980s, which until such time was built at a smaller scale towards the south of the town. Because of its location and the scale it added a new landmark to the town.

Economic agents demanded lands from the centre, therefore many houses at old road converted to shops and institutions. The lands around the town were increasingly densely populated and more residential areas came in converting rubber and coconut plantations in the vicinity. Road development projects

undertaken by the government planned to upgrade the old cart track from Kalutara to Rathnapura (B8 road) providing access to peripheral areas. B8 road connected to Nagoda road at Nagoda junction. Gradually spatial form get elongated concentrated towards Nagoda road. Kalutara town that we

see today has a linear form which expands along the Galle road and Nagoda road, with a peak concentration of the centre, where bus station, railway station and other public activities located and the skyline peaks at the gigantic stupa located next to bridge.

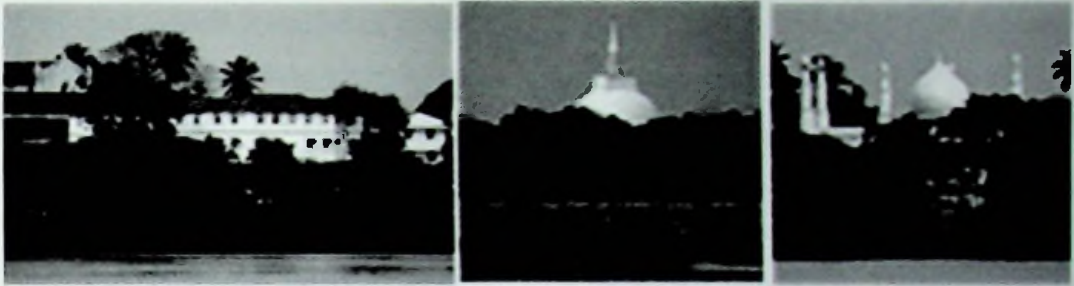
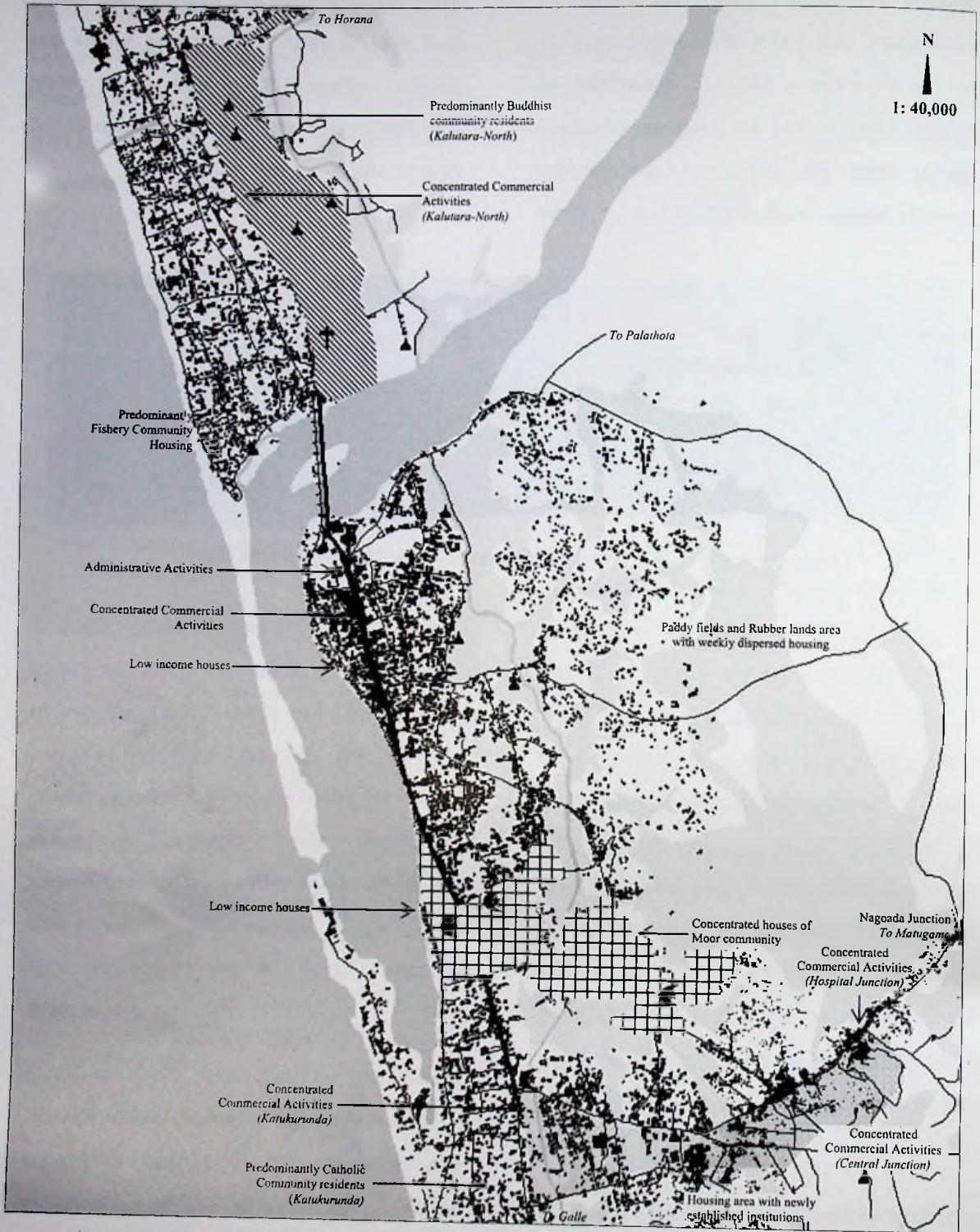


Figure 18: Views of Holy Cross church, Stupa and the mosque from the coast

Map 8: Kalutara in Present Period (2005)



Source: Author's construction based on....:

- Topographic Map, 1:50000, 1980. Survey Department, Sri Lanka
- Satellite Image Google earth, 2007 December
- Land Use Map, 2004, UDA Kalutara
- Field observation
- Interviews with people

Conclusion

This study attempted to reformulate the already known story of Kalutara town as a historic process, intending to explain the spatial form as an evolving phenomenon. In order to conceptualize the process, the spatial extent of the town has been studied relating to the contributions of socio-cultural, economic and political agents acting in within a broader geographic context of the form over last three centuries. The discussion has used a sequence of maps that represented the spatial extent of Kalutara town at different periods in its history. The changes observed in the maps of the town at different phases clearly indicates that it has been in a continuous process of evolution. The brief, yet illustratable account given in this paper, indicated that Kalutara Town that we experience today is not a mere urban setting that accumulated some physical elements over time. According to the study, each element and its configuration in space has a storyline behind and what we witness today in Kalutara has configured over a few centuries and not in a few years. Moreover, it is not a 'spontaneous growth' as is mostly stated of small towns in some planning literature. but, each part of the configuration has been purposive and deliberated by some agent, both internal and external to the town. In summary; political, administrative, and other decisions of rules, ruled, users, used and even the natural setting were equally

instrumental in evolving the the spatial form into what it is today. As a process is a continuous and everlasting, their activities will be there tommorow too, over a above deliberate planning efforts.

The spatial form of an urban area therefore, is not merely a physical entity which will be planned to a paticular end state. Rather, it is continuously reproduced by different agents that acts within the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts associated with it. Sometimes these agents could not be recognized relating to a single event or a process since they are interwoven and sometimes contesting with each other. Buddhist revival movement is one such example which contested the Christian missionary activities but driven by several other political and economic agents. Therefore, the changes in spatial form caused by the Buddhist revival movement has to be seen in the context of Christian and other forces operated in making of it. There may be some constituent agents, other than the ones who were noticeable at Kalutara, and may be apparent in the case of other townships. Further, the same agents who were apparent in the context of Kalutara can act in a different manner in some other context. Hence, it is important to understand the spatial form is not a nutral entity and planning of it does not operate in a smooth line towards a specific end as it is mostly expected.

The main contribution of this study is to bring the above argument into light in Sri Lankan town planning context, where there is a clear gap in this sort of studies.

However, This study can be quoted for containing certain limitations. One obvious limitation is the speculative nature of the method adopted. In fact, reporting of historical events naturally involve predispositions of the reporter and thus, involves some kind of speculation. Yet, in this study, the interpretive sources are evaluated for their validity, while empirical evidences such as maps and elements, physically

observable in the field were the source of information to construct the scrutinized spatial form. Another limitation that can be cited is the assembling of the events. Events are concurrent and not consecutive and elongated rather than instantaneous. Therefore the way the incident reported in this paper may not be highly convening as there are some overlappings, pauses and repeatings. Future studies may look forward to overcome these limitations through better methods of reading & recording and opening new new arenas to read historical process of the evolution of spatial form.

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