

## Constitution of plantation collective as a unique Sri Lankan organization: An ethnographic narrative

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### ABSTRACT

The realm of organizational communication has broadened its scope beyond conventional workplaces to encompass non-traditional entities. This evolution stems from the Communicative Constitution of Organisation (CCO) perspective, emphasizing communication's role in shaping organizational dynamics within unconventional contexts. Employing the Four Flows model as its theoretical framework, this paper aims to explore how communication processes influence the tea plantation collective—a distinctive Sri Lankan organization. Motivated by the researcher's personal experiences and dedication to addressing inequalities in marginalized communities, the study utilized short-term organizational ethnography as its primary methodological approach. Conducted as part of the MSc in Management Degree program, this research faced time constraints, necessitating a focus on producing a high-value dissertation within set deadlines. The study primarily drew upon informal discussions, interviews, and observations as primary data sources alongside secondary data. Within the tea plantation community, the presence of the four flows—membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning—is evident. Human agency propels this community, deeply rooted in Sri Lankan culture, valuing collective purpose, relationships, and oral traditions. The community's unity and shared ownership are reinforced by its inclination towards secrecy, creating a familial atmosphere and fostering a strong "we-feeling" among employees. Rejecting individualism, the community relies on shared ownership and oral agreements, fostering a cohesive familial character. Secrecy, not aimed at withholding information but limiting external communication, safeguards the community's collective interests. This study underscores the pivotal role of communication and human agency in molding and sustaining the plantation community as a distinct and tightly-knit organization.

**Keywords:** Plantation community, Communicative Constitution of Organisations (CCO), Four-flows (FF) model, Organisational ethnography, Short-term ethnography