



# Arctic Tamils: A New Chapter in Anthropocene of the Far North

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Does this caricature of a polar bear look out of place? Even given the dire warnings of climate change, is watching her sun on a tropical beach is way too much of a contrast? If that be so, could we start to imagine the non-fiction involving the life and times of a bunch of refugees hailing from near the equator, who made the Norwegian Arctic their home under trying circumstances...

- ❑ Sri Lanka, the root-word for the term 'serendipity', was ironically the location for an long running ethnic warfare starting in the late 1970's and continuing for around three decades.
- ❑ Norway was an early mediator in this conflict, and subsequently a familiar destination for many ethnic minority Tamil refugees fleeing the calamities of war.
- ❑ Norway then was much reliant on its fisheries, with many harbours in Finnmark region to its very north. However, these were no longer the favourite place for most of its traditional labour force to live in.
- ❑ Many Sri Lankan Tamil refugees were first settled into these areas which were a complete contrast to the life they had ever known in their native lands. Their task for most part: Difficult, monotonous jobs as cheap labour for fish-cutting and sorting in factories.
- ❑ Even so, to modify Anne Sigfrid Grønseth's (2011) term, it was a combination of hard-work, stigma and opportunities.
- ❑ As refugees turned naturalized citizens, raised families, and took root locally, they made internal migrations seeking better opportunities and comforts to places like Oslo, only to be replaced by other communities who similarly sought refuge.
- ❑ It would be interesting to look into how such resettlement policies of different countries in the region is impacting the Arctic anthropocene, and what it holds for the future.