

# Emergence of the Tamil Community in the GTA

## FACTS AND FIGURES



Canadian Tamils'  
Chamber of Commerce®  
[WWW.CTCC.CA](http://WWW.CTCC.CA)

## THE CANADIAN TAMIL DATABASE

The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) has launched an ambitious and important initiative that will bring the Tamil business community to the forefront. The aim is to draw the Canadian public and government's attention to the tremendous opportunities to work with the Tamil community.

This initiative involves building a comprehensive database. This database will consist of up-to-date, cost-efficient and accurate information and statistics about the Canadian Tamil community. It will be a tool with which to continuously measure the growth of the Tamil community. As such, this database will be an invaluable asset to entrepreneurs, community members, organizations, planners, policy makers, and all levels of government.

The database will be implemented over the next 2 years:

### PHASE I

- Database Launch: March 8, 2006
- Release of the report "Emergence of the Tamil Community: Facts and Figures"
- Partnership with Statistics Canada to promote the Tamil community's participation in the Census 2006
- Completion: Spring 2006

### PHASE II

- Dynamic Web-based directory of Tamil-owned businesses
- Tamil Community Map of the GTA including population concentration and services
- Completion: Fall 2006

### PHASE III

- Comprehensive Database encompassing Census 2006 facts and figures as well as information on the Tamil Business Community based on surveys, focus groups and interviews
- Completion: Fall 2007

## THE REPORT

This report is part of Phase I of The Database Project. It is the first in a series of steps CTCC plans to undertake to disseminate information about the Tamil Community. This report provides a snapshot of the Tamil Community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). It includes facts and figures about the community in the GTA, highlights the tremendous growth of the business community, and outlines potential opportunities for development and growth.

The report is based on a compilation of various sources of information including: Statistics Canada Census 1996 and 2001, research studies published on the Tamil community, and market surveys conducted for the specific purpose of this project. CTCC engaged Adventa Strategies Inc., a market research and consulting firm, to produce this report.

The facts and figures presented in this report are based on data that has been gathered to date. It is a work in progress. As such, this report may not represent a complete picture of the Tamil community in the GTA.

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Tamils of Sri Lankan origin ("Tamils") are one of the fastest growing visible minority groups in the Greater Toronto Area. Canada is now home to more than 250,000 Tamils, of which approximately 200,000 live in the GTA.

The history of Tamils in Canada goes back to the 1940s, when a few hundred Tamils migrated to Canada. The 1983 communal riots in Sri Lanka precipitated the mass exodus of Tamils, with over 500,000 finding refuge in countries such as Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, France and Switzerland.

The vast majority of Tamils immigrated to Canada in the last 20 years. Canada is now home to the largest Tamil population outside of Sri Lanka. Within this short period of time, Tamils have established a mounting presence in multiple aspects of Canadian life: business, academic, political and social. The Tamil business community has grown in leaps and bounds, with over 2,000 Tamil-owned businesses in the GTA.