

Underdevelopment and Militancy: The Case of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka

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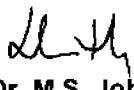
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This is to certify that Smt. Jessy Sebastian P. has completed her research for the Ph.D. Degree on "**Underdevelopment and Militancy: The Case of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka**", under my Supervision and Guidance. She has successfully completed her thesis and it is a record of bonafide research work done by her during the period of research in the School of Gandhian Thought & Development Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam.


Dr. M.S. John

DECLARATION

This is to certify that my thesis entitled "**Underdevelopment and Militancy: The Case of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka**" for Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.) is a bonafide record of research work done by me at the School of Gandhian Thought and Development Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University. It is certified that the thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree other than Master's Degree or Diploma, Associateship, Fellowship or other similar title and that it has been composed by me independently.



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Dedicated to.....

My late father

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIADMK	:	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhakam
CNC	:	Ceylon National Congress
CP	:	Pro-China
ENLF	:	Eelam National Liberation Front
EPRLF	:	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
FEEC	:	Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificate
FP	:	The Federal Party
GUES	:	General Union Of Eelam Students
JVP	:	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
JYC	:	Jaffna Youth Congress
LRC	:	Land Reform Commission
LSSP	:	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTTE	:	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
PA	:	Peoples Alliance
PLOTE	:	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
EROS	:	Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students
SLFP	:	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLFP	:	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
TC	:	Tamil Congress
TELO	:	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
TULF	:	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNP	:	United National Party

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Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.1. An Overview
- 1.2. Literature Review
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 An Overview

Underdevelopment of any country is the product of its own economic, political, social and cultural characteristic or structure. In such countries inequalities in income and differences in culture have led to the creation of dual societies and economies. Each of the two parts is supposed to have a history of its own, independent of the other. Among these two, one part of the economy and society has intimate relations with the outside capitalist world and that part has political power inside the country and became modern capitalist by its contact. The other part is widely regarded as variously isolated, subsistence-based feudal or pre-capitalist and therefore more underdeveloped in nature.

The underdevelopment of a country leads to various related problems. One of them is ethnic complexity. Even advanced industrial societies are not free from ethnic problems. Most modern states are initially composed of two or more distinct cultural groups. These include differences in language, kinship structures, inheritance systems, religious beliefs and most generally, styles of life. Gradually any one group or a handful of groups become the 'core' within the country, which have distinct cultural practices and way of life. Other minority groups or regions are called 'periphery'. During the process of national development, separate cultural identities or regions begin to lose

social significance and become blurred. Gradually, several local and regional cultures are replaced by the establishment of one national culture.

Conflict has been a feature of human society since time immemorial. Disputes that arise may be organized around social classes, ethnicity, religion or some combination of these factors. The struggle can be over economic opportunities as well as political and civil rights, among other constable factors. According to Michael Hechtor the state of war is considered tolerable only when hostilities occur between social units called nations. Civil wars or conflicts are defined, as those taking place between members of the same nation.

There are genuine grievances producing civil war, many of which are related to economic factors, systematic economic discrimination against groups based on ethno-linguistic or religious differences. These differences have generally been influenced either by traditional liberal anti-militarism or by the advocacy of militarism as dynamic force of economic development. It is the weapon of the weak, who lack numbers or conventional military power. Long and continuing suppression of a specific group of people may turn violent sometimes. They use militant attitudes towards the ruling elites.

According to Andre Gunder Frank the world is constituted by a single economy. In such a situation all people are circumscribed in to the capitalist mode of production. The result is that the periphery is impoverished, while the center accumulates and

grows. Immanuel Wallerstein's work on world systems analysis is often linked with Frank's work. Though it differs in emphasis, being concerned with the structure and growth of a world economy, ultimately, the causal explanation of underdevelopment is similar.

Development of one sector of the world resulted in the stagnation or actual retrogression of dependent areas, that is the Third World or the Developing Countries. Capitalist development simultaneously generated development and underdevelopment, not as a separate process, but as related facets of one single process. The capitalist power systematically reduced colonies as their economic appendages.

Fundamental changes in the social structure are an integral part of the development of underdevelopment. So the vested interest groups tried their level best to change the social structure by implementation of various policies through the administrative setup. Besides, dependency theorists laid emphasis on the historical dynamics of the expanding capitalist mode of production. They pointed out that the integration of world economy led to both development at the center and underdevelopment in the periphery. The Underdevelopment in the capitalist multiethnic state affected the minorities more than the ruling majority. The majority ruling class at the center developed at the expense of the minorities who suffered most in the long run. Such a situation created a sort of internal colonialism within a developing state. The model of internal colonialism developed by Michael Hechter helps to explain the dynamics of the core-periphery relationship.

The core is seen to dominate the periphery, politically and to exploit it materially.

Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has received more international attention in the past three decades than any other problem in South Asia. At the heart of this crisis is the problem of the Tamil minority who always felt suppressed and marginalized by the Sinhalese majority. The situation has been worsened by social, economic and political subjugation by the successive governments. The conflict arose from the demand of the Tamils of Sri Lanka for a separate autonomous province within the state of Sri Lanka, even as the government dominated by majority Sinhalese protected the interests of that community. However, over the years, Tamil politics came to be radicalized by the intervention of young Tamils who had suffered long years of repression and torture.

After independence, the single member constituency system of elections encouraged the emergence of a highly competitive party system led by two Sinhalese dominated parties. The Sri Lankan Tamils, minority community, constituting only 12.6 per cent of the population, found themselves increasingly marginalized. But the territorial concentration in the North and East strengthened their representation in the parliament. But they were not so powerful enough to protect the rights of the Tamils. The successive governments, which came to power, have been trying to suppress these Tamils in various ways. The first attempt in this line was started by the enactment of the Citizenship Act in 1948. Through

this act the plantation workers of Indian origin were deprived of their citizenship and made stateless. This was a great blow to the working class in the country brought about by the upper middle class Sinhalese. Next came the Sinhala only Act in 1956. Through this Sinhala became the only official language. This created many problems among the English proficient Tamils, particularly in the north. Another one is the standardization programme in university admissions introduced in 1970. This policy further alienated the Tamils who were deprived of their right to higher education. The Sri Lankan government to appease their support base, particularly the Sinhalese petty bourgeoisie consisting of Buddhist monks and the Sinhalese educated class introduced these programmes.

The policy of Dry Zone colonization was another important issue. This policy minority declared populated areas unfit for productive purposes and less utilized. This was the result of the uneven spread of irrigation facilities. High evaporation and poor soil conditions in the North warranted greater irrigation facilities than the South. The main centers of concentration of the Sri Lankan Tamil population, Jaffna and Batticaloa districts, could be distinguished from the rest of the country for having the lowest percentage of irrigated and cultivated land. Again, input subsidies and consumer subsidies also favoured Sinhalese. Subsidies were aimed at surplus producing large farmers most of whom were Sinhalese. A notable feature is that a few traditional landowning minority elites among Tamil and Muslims formed a disproportionate number of the surplus-producing group. Thus

the rural dry zone colonization resulted in the improvement of the living conditions of the Sinhalese, and other segment of the population benefited only marginally. Segregation is more evident in the allotment of land in the catchment areas of major irrigation projects. Only a small percentage of allotments were given to Tamil people. Besides, the effects of the economic policies of successive governments were also discriminating to the Tamils.

Prior to British colonization, sea trade carried out economic activity in Sri Lanka. Up to the Second World War, trade was essentially confined to the estate sector. The post war period witnessed large-scale industrialization aimed at import substitution in this sector. The economy only stagnated following this strategy. Returns on investment in the industries were generally poor. Exports were mainly in the form of raw materials. To overcome this situation Sri Lanka changed over to export oriented growth strategy in 1977. By this policy, the Sri Lankan economy was opened to world capitalism and made less dependent on domestic responses. As a result, the growth rate increased, the rupee was devalued and foreign debt and dependence on export earnings increased. Both industry and agricultural sector depended on imports and exports. Thus the economy came to be dependent on foreign trade.

Promotion of growth strategies led to major changes that affected the nature of the state in the long run. The liberalization and open door policy diluted the state regulation of the private sector. The hitherto protected bourgeoisie in the import substitution phase

were made to face the demand of an open liberalized economy. The two bourgeoisie groups who benefited from liberalization measures were the monopoly capitalists and those persons who were associated with trade and services. During this time it was alleged that the state gave political patronage to Sinhalese capital and discriminated against Tamil capital in the industrialization process. Control of the state in the import substitution phase and its highly discriminating attitude to Tamil capital was more clearly seen in the case of non-monopoly capital. Tamil monopoly capital did not emerge in the light industries in the absence of political patronage. Light industrial activity attracted mainly Sinhalese capital. However, trading and services continued to be dominated by the Tamils. With the opening up of the economy, non-monopoly capitalists suffered the most as they were devoid of special concessions because the domestic market they controlled was flooded with imported goods.

In the employment pattern too Sinhalese benefited more from the opening up of the economy. The closed economy had developed a public sector where Sinhalese were given preferences by making knowledge of Sinhala language an essential qualification for employment. At the same time the private sector opened opportunities for non-Sinhalese group as English came to be used for business transactions. This created more employment opportunities for Tamils in potential terms. Through economic exploitation and subjugation, the state created a sort of internal colony within its jurisdiction to enhance the growth of majority Sinhalese group. Deprival of employment opportunities, and the

discriminatory economic policies of the government were compounded by the inability of the Tamil moderate leadership to do anything about them. This predicament was responsible for urging young Tamils to radicalize Tamil politics by engaging in armed struggle against the state to attain a separate Eelam.

During 1970s an insurrectionary movement took place in Sri Lanka by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which was unemployed Sinhalese youth believed pro-Chinese ideology. The uprising killed thousands before it was bloodily suppressed.

Most of the academicians consider the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as the first group established to advance the cause of a separate Tamil nation. The LTTE alleged that the strategy of the traditional left parties was to collaborate with the Sinhala capitalist class. The LTTE has been ideologically committed to Marxism- Leninism and integrated national struggle with class struggle designing their ultimate aim as national liberation and socialist revolution. However, they claimed that their ultimate goal was the establishment of a sovereign socialist democratic republic. The other offshoot organizations like Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), and Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) were also committed to Marxism-Leninism. However their ideological pronouncements were mainly directed towards attracting Tamil youths. Negotiations under the facilitation of Norway are currently going on to find out an

amicable peaceful solution to this long live question. But no concrete solution has been achieved yet.

1.2 Literature Review

A model of internal colonialism developed by Micheal Hechter was explained in his book *Internal colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* published in 1975. He explained the dynamics of emergence of a reactive ethno nationalist regional identity from a more holistic structural perspective. In this book he focuses on the relationship of political economic dominance of the center over the periphery. Center seeks to establish superiority over periphery within society, that is economically, politically and socially backward reforms. His model recognizes the potential for exploitation of the peripheral region by the center that seeks to control the former.¹

S.B.D.de Silva attempts synthesis between the external and internal aspects of underdevelopment and, in the Marxist tradition, focuses on the impact of the external on the internal as the dominant reality. In his book *Political economy of underdevelopment* published in 1982. He analyzed the internal situation in terms of the interaction of the forces and relations of production. Dr. Silva's analysis is in terms of the character of the dominant capitalist and classes. The domination of merchant capital is revealed in the functioning of the plantation economy. He also analyzed how the recent internationalization of capital has affected the economies of the Third World.

Imperialism and Underdevelopment edited by Robert I. Rhodes in 1970 is a collection of eighteen essays, and these essays form a complete and cohesive treatment on problems of underdevelopment considered in historical perspective. More important for this study are the articles by Andre Gunder Frank and Harry Magdoff in which they present their views of the relationship between underdevelopment and imperialism.

Satchi Ponmambalam in his book *Sri Lanka: National Conflict and the Tamil Liberation Struggle* published in 1983 discusses all the events, policies and strategies of governments from the early stages to up to the events held Nam submit in New Delhi 1983. The author made an authoritative study based on primary data. He explains how the consciousness of the Sri Lankan Tamils that they constitute a separate ethnic group deserving political recognition had been developing for several decades in the pre-independence period. Different policies of Sri Lankan government are also highlighted in the work.²

Pradeep Bhargava in his book *Political Economy of Sri Lanka* published in 1987 highlighted the Sri Lanka history of capitalism in the post independence period. The liberalization of the Sri Lanka economy and its impact on the society are explained in this book. According to him the policy of export promotion and import substitution was an inevitable phase for an economy like Sri Lanka. The role of world capitalism, the nature of state formation, why democracy was had suspended in Sri Lanka for few years and

class interests that brew the ethnic tensions are also discussed in the book.³

Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka edited by Paul A Groves published in 1996 has several contributors. B.L Panditharatna discussed development of Sri Lankan land settlement system. 'Agrarian change and agricultural development in Sri Lanka' by G.H. Peiris also throws light on the thrust area of this study.

Sri Lankan Ethnic Crisis: Towards a Resolution by R.B. Herath is a frank reflection on the history and politics of Sri Lanka that has produced the current tragic ethnic crisis. It is the first book on the subject to help the reader fully understand the historic context of the crisis, discover hidden factors that influence it, and see a peaceful way to resolve it with a new democratic model of governance. The basic principles of the model are claimed to be universally applicable to all countries facing similar ethnic crises.

The cyanide war- Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka 1973-88 by Edgar O' Balance published in 1989 is an account and study of the Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka, which can be said to have begun in 1973. He explained about the five main Tamil militant groups and their activities. Intervention of India in Sri Lankan issue and its future prospects were analysed in it.

The book *Politics of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka*, written by Ambalvanar Sivarajah published in 1996 attempts to investigate the politics of the Tamils in Sri Lanka since independence; it is

based on systematic empirical evidence. All the problems erupted in the island after independence are discussed in the chapters. The incidents which sharpened ethnic consciousness is also discussed through chapters. The book is based on data collected through interviews conducted among a cross section of the Sri Lankan society.

Marxist interpretation of Sri Lanka's history is seriously explained in N. Samugathasan in his book A Marxist Look at the History of Ceylon published in 1974. Advent of Europeans, two world wars, emergence of neo-colonialism and notes on 1971 riots are discussed in it.

To understand trade and industrial policy, *Trade Liberalization in Sri Lanka* by Ganeshan Wignaraja published in 1998 is very useful. The views of export in favor of led growth and trade liberalization and role of government are dealt within the book. The author explained how Sri Lanka's industrial policies led to a curtailed industrial development.

Decolorizing Ceylon-Colonialism, Nationalism, and the politics of Space in Sri Lanka written by Nithal Perera published in 1999, traces the historical construction of contemporary social space in Sri Lanka. It explains world systems perspectives, landscape interpretation and theories of colonial architecture and urbanization. The author examines the colonization, decolonization and construction of post colonial Sri Lanka through lens of successive spatial transformations.

Assignment Jaffna by S .C Sardeshpande published in 1992 is a personalized account of a Division Commander attempting to suppress insurgency on foreign soil and combat environment. It is an account of the happenings as seen through the eyes of a divisional commander who was in war. He concluded that it was the Jaffna Tamils who made him a good soldier and a better human being in his own eyes

Domestic conflict in south Asia edited by Urmila Phadnis, S.D Muni and Kalim Bahadur, Published in 1986 is comprised of the political dimensions of organized domestic conflicts in south Asia. The roots of the political conflicts, their economic imbalances, ethnic and cultural diversities, and their aspirations are explained in the book.

Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: its origin and development in the 19th and 20th centuries written by A. Jeyaratnam Wilson published in 2000 is a historical account of the growth and transformation of Tamil consciousness in Sri Lanka. It summarizes the movement to safeguard cultural identity through a political struggle and for a separate state. The separation of Tamils based on language, religion and colonization of Tamil areas in the north and north-east was also analyzed in the book Prof. Wilson examines the social and caste structure of the Sri Lankan Tamils and their linguistic, cultural and literary heritage. He describes the high level of their political and cultural activity in the nineteenth century. He also investigates the expressions of rising Tamil consciousness in the twentieth century: the All-Ceylon Tail

Congress, the Tamil Federal Party, the Tamil United Front and the Tamil United Liberation Front. Furthermore, he details the miniaturization and arming of Tamil youth, the bloody struggle for supremacy among the armed Tamil groups, the Indian intervention and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, and the phases leading to the present impasse.⁴

Ethnicity Versus Nationalism: The Devolution Discourse in Sri Lanka was written by Partha S. Ghosh in 2003. It explained the issues involved in the complex problem of Sri Lanka which has been facing for the last two decades. This book constitutes a comprehensive and in-depth study of federalism and devolution in the Sri Lankan context. The author succeeded in giving a clear picture of the various phases of the evolution of the problem, from pre-independence to the victory of the Kumaratunga government in 1994, and its subsequent failure to implement the much promised federal structure for the country. Partha Ghosh skillfully presents the various proposals of the government, including the draft constitution meant to convert the unitary state of Sri Lanka in to a federal one. He discusses the issues involved in the debate and deals with the devolution discourse, both at the political and the intellectual level. The broad theoretical premises that govern the concept of devolution in an ethnically divided society are also examined in detail. The author concludes with an analysis of the current situation in particular, the on going peace talks.

Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka: ‘Pearl of the East’ or the ‘Island of Tears’? edited by Siri Gamage and I. B. Wastson, is

a collection of essays that provides a critical but humanistic perspective on the various dimensions of the on going ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The contributors of this book concentrated on the conflict between the Tamils and Sinhalese communities. They concentrated the ideological and material construction of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, and it become the major plank in politico-social discourse and in the mobilization of public opinion in the country. The explanations and the information from these books are used as the authentic material of secondary source for this study.

1.3 Objectives

- a. Major objectives of this study are to examine:
- b. The theoretical foundation.
- c. Political economy of Sri Lankan state.
- d. Historical background to the emergence of the ethnic diversity in Sri Lankan state.
- e. Status of Tamils in the colonial and post-colonial situations.
- f. The economic conditions of the various ethnic groups in Sri Lanka.
- g. Underdevelopment of North - Eastern provinces.
- h. Socio political programmes of the successive governments.
- i. Socio economic conditions for the emergence of militancy.
- j. Ideology and strategies of different militant groups.
- k. Development of militant movement in Sri Lanka.

1.4 Assumptions

- a) It is assumed that the Tamil question emerged in the circumstance of unequal and uneven capitalist development.
- b) The Tamils enjoyed a very good financial position during the colonial period and they suffered most in the post-independence period.
- c) The social, economic and political programmes of successive governments in Sri Lanka showed tendencies of partiality and discrimination against Tamils.
- d) It seems the petty bourgeoisie leadership of the Tamils failed to see the problem in right perspective, and that created the conditions for radicalization of Tamil politics.
- e) The majority ruling class at the center developed at the expense of the majority in the periphery and created a colony capitalism within the state.

1.5 Methodology

The study was carried out within a historical and analytical framework. The source materials include documents and publications of Sri Lankan government and reports and documents of different militant groups. Secondary sources including various books and publications.. The World Wide Web also has been used for drawing information.

1.6 Chapterisation

Besides introduction the thesis is divided into eight chapters laid foundation for further study. The second chapter discusses theoretical points. Developmental views of Karl Marx based on class perspective analysis, underdevelopment theory of Frank and Samir Amin and internal colonial model made by Micheal Hechtor are covered in this chapter. Theoretical background for the emergence of militancy in a country also stated.

The third chapter concentrates on the political economy of Sri Lanka based on the economic situation during various periods, that is during Portuguese, Dutch and British colonialism and after the independence.

The fourth chapter focuses on status of Tamils in Sri Lanka under Portuguese, Dutch, and British and in postcolonial Period. In post independence period the record under UNP government and SLFP government is also discussed. The chapter also focuses on the status of Tamils in field of Politics, Education, Government service and Land holdings.

The fifth chapter concentrates on uneven capitalist development in Sri Lanka. Various governments that came after independence brought so many reforms particularly on land which brought development only in Sinhalese dominated areas. Major irrigation projects covered only southwestern parts of the country. Tamil dominated northeastern parts were exempted from those policies

and programmes. Such type of uneven development flourished in Sri Lanka. All these points are discussed in this chapter.

The sixth chapter discusses various policies of the Sri Lankan government during the colonial and postcolonial period and how these policies effected Sri Lankan people both majority and minority community differentially. Here we found that all these policies adopted by Sri Lankan government marginalised Tamils in the country which paved the way for the emergence of Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka.

The seventh chapter concentrates on emergence of various Tamil militant groups in Sri Lanka. Their ideologies and strategies are also discussed in the chapter.

Evolution of freedom struggle of Tamils is discussed in the eighth chapter. The role of external powers namely India and the course of conflict resolution are also covered in this chapter. Findings are summarised in the concluding chapter.

NOTES

- ¹ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).
- ² Satchi Ponnabalam, *Sri Lanka: National Conflict and the Tamil Liberation Struggle* (London: Zed books, 1983).
- ³ Pradeep Bhargava, *Political Economy of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Navarang, 1987).
- ⁴ Jeyaratnam Wilson, A., *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origin and Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000).

Chapter 2

Theoretical Perspective

- 2.1. Marxian View
- 2.2. Theory of modernization
- 2.3. Theory of Ethnicity
- 2.4. Underdevelopment
- 2.5. Internal colonialism
- 2.6. Nationalism
- 2.7. National development
- 2.8. Militancy
- 2.9. Conclusion

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

An ethnic problem often develops and grows as a result of the different programmes and policies of the state. Though it can often be solved in the initial stages, it is seen that the state in most cases is not sufficiently sensitive with ethnic aspirations. This leads to substantial movements demanding various forms of self-determination. Ethnic assertion poses a major threat to the legitimacy of existing state and can lead to oppression of the ethnic group in question. Using the coercive mechanisms of the state in turn changes the problem into a national question. This may even question the very survival of the state and the ethnic group. In most of the underdeveloped countries the programmes and policies of the state are formulated to appease a majority group or the supporting group of the ruling party. The modernization theory in the context of political development held the view that particular ethnic loyalty will disappear with the passage of time. When it was found that modernization only fuelled these loyalties, it was felt that ethnic identity often arises as the result of modernization. This is corroborated by the discriminatory policies of multi ethnic states.

Internal colonialism assisted by factors like economic dependence, uneven development, development of underdevelopment etc., causes the emergence of militancy in Sri Lanka. In order to

understand the problem in detail the theoretical background to the above factors need to be analyzed.

2.1 Marxian View

Much of the social analysis that focuses on the injustices and inequalities in the society has been influenced by the ideas of Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition. Central to Marxism is the understanding that capitalism is an economic system with two major classes. The capitalist class owns and controls the means of production, capital, and continually tries to increase its profits. The economic class, which is the large majority of the population, is the working class. They sell their labor power, their capacity to work, in return for a wage. Profits come largely from paying employees less than the value they add to production. Marx called this *exploitation*.

Conflict between these two classes is inherent in a capitalist system. Workers try to raise their wages and improve their working conditions. Employers try to limit wages and increase the amount of work done per hour. The employer has the upper hand because workers fear losing their job and not finding another one soon. This is the usual case because generally there is significant unemployment.

Exploitation, in the Marxist sense, can only be ended by the working class by overthrowing capitalism. Workers can, however, improve their economic situation by forming unions and other organizations. The more disunity among workers, the weaker is their ability to effectively challenge the employer. This insight is central to the Marxist analysis of racism, which focuses on attempts by capitalists

to divide black and white workers. If white workers identify primarily as whites rather than as workers, they will not act on their common class interests with black workers. The way to end racial oppression and class exploitation is an interracial and united working class.¹

Today Marxian theories of the state have come a long way since its origin. The newer theories are of two kinds. The first kind describes the capitalist state of the industrially advanced societies, and the second, the dependent state of the developing societies. These theories are rooted in Marx's idea of class perspective. The new Marxian theories reject the instrumentalist state of Lenin. The theories also challenge the idea of a universal theory of state or single version of capitalist state. They argue for specific historical analysis within the universalistic conception relating to the state and the capitalist societies.²

Development of one sector of the world resulted in the stagnation or actual retrogression of dependent areas, that is, Third World or the developing countries. Capitalist development simultaneously generated development and under development, not as a separate process, but as related facets of one single process.

2.2 Theory of Modernization

Modernization Theory describes the process of transformation from traditional or underdeveloped societies in to modern societies. It focused on the ways in which past and present pre-modern societies became modern through the process of economic growth and change in social, political and cultural structures. Modernization theorists believed that the economic growth within the societies is measured by

Gross National Product. Mechanization or industrialization is an essential element for this growth. Theorists study the social, political and cultural consequences and also the essential conditions for the process of industrialization and the economic growth. Thus the modernization is a broader concept than industrialization and narrower than development. More clearly industrialization involves the use of inanimate sources of power to mechanize production and it involves increase in wages of labor, income levels and occupational diversification. There is no need for the existence of social or cultural modernization. On the other hand the modernization theorists define Development in terms of economic output per capita and envision democratic and capitalist institution as components of modern society.³

The modernization theory suggests that the advanced industrial technology produce both economic growth and other structural changes. For example, modern societies are characterized by high levels of urbanization, literacy, research, health care, secularization, bureaucracy, mass media, and transportation facilities. On the other hand there prevails weaker kinship ties, nuclear conjugal family system, low birth rate and low death rates. In decision making process the people have more participation and they enjoy universal suffrage. And there is industrialization, technical up gradation of production, replacement of exchange economies with money markets and increased division of labor, commercial facilities and development of large-scale markets. Thus associated with this structural change there may be cultural changes also. People are more agreeable to change and they are

interested in the future and are achievement oriented and they are concerned with the rights of individuals, and they are less philosophical.

The classical evolutionary perspective of modernization by Spencer, Durkheim and other nineteenth century theorists contributed the idea that societies evolve from lower to higher forms and progress from simple and undifferentiated to more complex types. Western industrial society is seen as superior to pre-industrial society. But, the diffusionists added that cultural patterns associated modern society could be transferred through the social interaction such as trade, war, travels media etc. The structural functionalists such as Talcott, Parsons, Berthold Hoselitz and Marion Levy emphasized the idea that societies are integrated wholes comprised of functionally compatible institutions and roles and that societies progress from one increasingly complex and efficient social system to another. This contributed to the notion that internal social and cultural factors influence economic change.⁴

Parsons theoretical work in 1960s treated societies as self regulated structural functional wholes in which the main process of change are social differentiation and the discovery of certain evolutionary universals such as bureaucratic organizations and money markets. This, in turn, increase the adaptive capacity of the society by providing more efficient social arrangements and often led to the system of universalistic standards⁵ the same way

of neo-evolutionists differentiation theory of modernization is provided by S. N Eisenstadt.

In 1974 Inkeles, Alex and David H Smith studied from six societies and they felt that the prevalence of individual modernity in society was determined by the factors as education and factory experience and individual modernity contributed to the modernization of the society. Thus Rostow's well-known theory of the stages of economic growth emphasized the importance of new values and ideas favoring economic progress along with education, entrepreneurship and certain other institutions (labor, land, capital, market etc.) which are conditions for societies.⁶

During 1960's the modernization theory face severe criticism from the upcoming theorists who found their areas in the theories of development. The peculiarity of ethnocentrism and the bias in favor of dominant capitalist interests of modernization theory had attained more importance in these criticisms. Irrespective of these two natures, the new theorists gave focus on explaining the contemporary underdevelopment of third world countries in terms of colonization, imperialist interference and neocolonial exploitation of developing countries after independence.

2.3 Theory of Ethnicity

Most of the earlier theories of ethnicity was based on a form of genetic favoritism. It is the general tendency even in animals to favor their kinship. The newest theories of ethnicity stem from "rational choice" by which the individuals try to maximize their

advantage. The study of ethnicity brought out three approaches. The first one is assimilation. It has deep root in classical theory, and American society. It focuses on the social processes and outcomes that tend to dissolve ethnic distinctions by assimilating one ethnic group by another. Milton Gordon had explained this approach by addressing the role of ethnicity in United States. It is a multi-dimensional concept. He elaborated seven types of assimilation, but among them two are important, mainly acculturation and structural assimilation. Acculturation means the adaptation of the cultural patterns of the surrounding society by one ethnic group. It encompasses the external cultural traits such as dress, language and their internal values. Structural factor emphasize that inequality among racial and ethnic groups depends not so much on individual acts of discrimination as is done in schools and family surroundings. It is a type of discrimination that occurs on a wide range, for example, educational tracking systems that sort students according to racial background based on culturally and socially biased ideas⁷.

The second approach of ethnicity is stratification, it is concerned with the origins and consequences of inequalities of various kinds among ethnic groups. Ethnic groups generally are hierarchically ordered; there is typically a dominant group or super dominant group which is commonly called the majority group (in some cases it is minority, for example in the South Africa during apartheid period). There are also subordinate groups often called minorities. The dominating groups wield power. Both groups engaged in conflict over scarce resources. In the conflict, the

dominant groups with their favorable occupational position, educational opportunity and power, enhance their position while minorities seek to challenge it.⁸

The third is *ethnic group* resources. Its domain included mobilization and solidarity by which the members of ethnic groups attempt to use their ethnicity to compete successfully with others. This approach takes its point of departure from inequalities among groups. Their solidarity and ability to form a separate ethnic sub economies is important. Such characteristics can give the group and its members, relative advantage or disadvantage in this competition. If they get advantage, the group maintains its attachments rather than to assimilate.⁹

In studying the economic and political nature of a country ethnicity takes an important position. In most cases, the ethnic groups become interest groups, have interests of many similarly situated individuals. In this way, most of the ethnic problems in the third world were the result of the policies of the colonial government and they were intensified by the anxieties of groups over their status in the post-colonial period. The ethnic inequalities within a society intensified the subjugation feeling of the minority groups. The subordinating groups form economically exploited internal colonies. The notion of economic exploitation enter into the thoughts of these groups only after a higher stage of the conflict. The common factor which unite them is the ethnic homogeneity.¹⁰

2.4 Underdevelopment

Under development is a discrete historical process through which economies that have already achieved a high level of development have not necessarily passed. To grasp the essence of the problem of contemporary underdeveloped economies this peculiarity must be taken into consideration.¹¹ Present situation of underdeveloped countries resembles earlier stages of the worldwide expansion and development of mercantilist and capitalist system. The economic history of world reveals that, the development of underdevelopment is a historical phenomenon that most of the developed countries had been faced years back. Thus the problem of underdevelopment has its own historical orientation. As J.A Schumpeter stated

Nobody can hope to understand the economic phenomena of any, including the present, epoch who has not an adequate command of historical facts and adequate amount of historical sense or of what may be described as experience. [historical report] affords the best method for understanding how economic and non-economic facts are related to one another how the various social sciences should be related to one another... most of the fundamental errors currently committed in economic analysis are due to lack of historical experience more than to any other shortcoming of the economist's equipment¹²

Economic development occurs in a succession of capitalist stages and contemporary underdeveloped countries are passing through these stages. Historical research demonstrates that present underdevelopment is a large part the historical product of the past and continuing economic and other relations between the satellites underdeveloped and now developed metropolitan countries.¹³

The underdeveloped countries are characterized by inequalities and differences in culture, which may lead to emergence of dual societies and economies. Each of the two parts is supposed to have a history of its own. In most cases only one part of the economy and society has been affected by the capitalist world by intimate economic relations. That part became modern, capitalist and relatively developed precisely because of its contact. The other part of the economy remained subsistence-based feudal or pre-capitalist and therefore more underdeveloped.¹⁴ The growth policy in an economy are naturally located in the majority area when infrastructure facilities are more developed.

Present international system has a structure in which metropolis tends to develop and the satellite to under develop. The early work of Andre Gunder Frank was to undermine the theory of dualism which posited a traditional sector holding back a modern sector from development. He advanced a notion of chain type metropolis satellite relation. The exploitative link starts from the central powers through to the landowners, the peasants and the

landless labors, each extracting an economic surplus from the one below. Gradually he moved out of the dependency tradition to work on the broad historical process that gave rise to the formation of the world economy. In this he is following the path of Immanuel Wallerstein's world system analysis. That is, world is embracing process of capital accumulation centered on Western Europe.¹⁵

In Frank's theory, the state in the Third World is an instrument of foreign than of local capital 'According to Frank,

Indeed, this dependent, and in this sense weak, character of the state in the third world-dependent financially, technologically, institutionally, ideologically, in a word politically, on the international bourgeoisie(s) and their metropolitan state-may regarded as the fundamental characteristic of the third world state.¹⁶

Samir Amin brought in the idea that the periphery state is being constituted by foreign economic domination. He argues that,

It was the anti-imperialistic liberation movement in the periphery that brought about the transformation from exploitation of primary production labour to a world division of labour where industrialization could begin in the third world.¹⁷

Cardoso and Faletto differ to a large extent from the work of Frank and Samir. They suggest that the capitalist development in the periphery is not a duplicate of capitalist development in the metropole, and that periphery development is conditioned by capitalism as a world system. They reject the theory of dependent capitalist development and the idea of permanent stagnation of the periphery due to the narrowness of internal markets. They argue that inter and intra-struggle caused the spread of capitalism in the periphery.

2.5 Internal colonialism

This concept was used by Marxists like V.I. Lenin and A. Gramsci to describe political and economic inequalities between regions within a given society, by political sociology to characterize the uneven effects of state development on a regional basis, and by race relations theory to describe the underprivileged status and exploitation of minority groups within the wider society. It links ethnic solidarity and mobilization to the phenomenon of the subordination of some areas or groups of a country to others. The members of an internal colony may be differentiated by ethnicity, religion, language or some other cultural variable; they are then overtly or covertly excluded from prestigious social and political positions.¹⁸

The present international system has seen a variety social change which affects every sections of the society. Internal colonialism is a very popular model of study, which encompasses all groups in

the society. The term internal colonialism was first coined by V.I. Lenin in his study of national development¹⁹ A serious approach to the study of internal colonialism was taken by Michael Hechtor. In his study he says that:

Far from maintaining that increased core-periphery contact results in social structural convergence, the internal colonial model posits an altogether different relationship between these regions. The core is seen to dominate the periphery politically and to exploit it materially. The internal colonial model does not predict national development following industrialization, except under exceptional circumstances.²⁰

2.5.1 Features

The main features of internal colonialism formulated by Hechtor are firstly an uneven wave of modernization among all segments of people. As a consequence of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups namely the core and periphery, the core group super dominates the other and it seeks to stabilize and monopolize through policies aiming at the institutionalization of the existing stratification system.²¹

Secondly the 'core' attempts to regulate the allocation of social roles by allocating high status and more beneficial roles for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced group are denied access to these roles.

The economic conditions of these two groups are very different. The core is characterized by a diversified industrial structure, and mostly independent. At the same time periphery is dependent and complementary to the core. Decisions about investment, credit, and wages tend to be made in the core. As a consequence of economic dependence, wealth in the periphery lags behind the core. As time passes the disadvantaged peripheral group will react for asserting its own culture as equal or superior to that of the relatively advantaged core. This may help it to conceive of itself as a separate nation and seek independence.²² This view of core-periphery relations at the international level was applied to the problem of ethnicity within society. Instead of relations between the countries, the internal relations are between regions inhabited by different ethnic groups. These groups may not be initially antagonistic towards each other but as they begin to trade in a single market or as they are all controlled by a single state, then the ethnic distinctions become more and more important. In such an instance, once ethnic group may become politically dominant and then control the internal regions inhabited by other ethnic groups. This situation is internal colonialism according to Michael Hechter.²³ In Sri Lanka ethnic mobilization has occurred among sections of the majority community, namely Sinhalese, which control political power. Tamil nationalism can be seen as a response to this. In Sri Lanka Tamils maintained their homeland region of the north and east of the country. The Jaffna peninsula was known as the center of the Tamil country. Hence it was argued that the Tamils had a distinct culture and their own identity. Gradually, many factors emerged one by one and this

idea flourished. The Sinhala power devalued Tamils culturally, politically and economically. Most of the governmental budget allocations were biased towards developing Sinhalese areas, thereby creating internal colonialism in Sri Lanka.

2.6 Nationalism

Nationalism has also become a predominant, social force in the modern world. In earlier historical eras, individuals thought of themselves as members of solitary groups like families, clans or communities, but now they also think seriously about their nation. This feeling of nationality clearly has special significance in human life. For protecting and enriching this status the individuals are permitted and encouraged to target out groups. This created a conflict situation and in certain cases such conflict led to war within the state.²⁴

Most of the modern states were composed of two or more distinct cultural groups. In the process of their economic and political development an effective bureaucratic administration arose in the country, and a strong central government was often established focusing on the core region.²⁵ It is economically and technologically forward and their political influence and control extended outwards to the eventual boundaries of states. Small groups with distinct cultural practices also exist in countries. These included groups with differences arising language, kinship, structures, inheritance systems, modes of agricultural production, patterns of settlement, legal systems, or lack thereof, religious beliefs, and most generally, styles of life. These regions are called peripheral

regions.²⁶ In Sri Lanka there was cultural division from the period before and following British colonialism, and there were also discriminatory actions taken by Sinhalese dominated governments after independence. About nationalist ideology Romila Thapar writes in Communalism and Ancient History that,

Historical interpretation is integrally related to
a people's notion of its culture and nationality.
This in itself makes historical writing one of the
most sensitive intellectual areas with wide
repercussions on popular nationalism and
political belief.²⁷

Nationalism in any form has both progressive and regressive aspects whether it is a part of its core or periphery. Tamil Nationalism like its Sinhala counterpart in the 1950s is no exception. Tamil nationalism has had a positive impact on Sri Lankan Tamil society. That was because of the emergence of nationalist feeling among various groups within the Tamils in Sri Lanka. They, for the first time, actively spoke about distinctions of class caste and gender. The economic backwardness of their areas and group also was challenged by Tamils youths in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁸

2.7 National Development

National development of a country would describe a process with, the creation of national society being the goal rather than a particular state of affairs.²⁹ This may be attained through a combination of various factors. The concept of national

development in modern times is the process by which a state characterized by sectional or otherwise competing economies, polities, cultures within a given territory, transformed into a society composed of a single all-pervasive, and in this sense, national economy, polity and culture.³⁰

2.7.1 Cultural Integration

There may be so many groups which are objectively differentiated by religion or language. Such cultural differences, often undesirable, contribute to inter-group conflict. Such conflicts are avoided by effacement of objective cultural differences between groups in contact. Gradually this would lead to the growth of national identity. A sense of nationality is achieved only through the feelings of belonging to a corporate group. This would come only in a culturally integrated setting.

2.7.2 Economic Integration

Economic integration is the second dimension of national development. Economic integration refers to the evolution of substantially equal rates of social and economic development among the collectivities in a society. It can be measured by the level of per capita income of that community, infant mortality, literacy rate and extent of existing political power.³¹

2.7.3 Political Integration

Political integration is attained by collectivity of political behaviour. It may be some times electoral or extra parliamentary. That means, two groups sharing different occupation and cultural

heritage can have similar general political preference. In this situation it is said that they are in a state of high political integration. This type of integration implies that objective cultural factors such as language or religion cease to have salience in the formation of a group's political demand.³²

Michael Hechtor made an important suggestion that,

In order to examine such general propositions as to whether cultural or economic integration is more significant for the realization of political integration, thereby seeking an elementary causal understanding of the evolution of national development, it must be made clear that little can be gained from the consideration of case studies clustered at the extreme ends of the integration continuum. This highlights much of the difficulty with research, which has been completed on problems of national development. Case studies have been almost exclusively selected from a group of societies having no appreciable prospects for the realization of either economic or cultural integration in the near future.³³

2.7.4 Diffusion Model of National Development

This model asserts that core-periphery integration can be maintained only in the absence of sustained mutual contact. Hence the establishment of regular interaction between the core and the

periphery is seemed to be crucial for national development. Peripheral group is more traditional than modernized core group. The cultural modernity, its values and normative orientations of the core were attracted by the peripheral and it may undergo transformation. For studying inter-group relations in an anthropological version, the process of acculturation is very important.³⁴

2.8 Militancy

Militancy is a complex phenomenon. It entails a wide range of group actions undertaken in line with violent coercive strategies. It may not be objective oriented unless we analyze all possible impulsive factors which have determined the dynamics of the behavior of the group concerned in a given context.³⁵ In the emergence of every militant or terrorist group there may be a radical political organization seen as the central factor. The dissatisfaction with the policies of the government is extreme and their demands usually involve the displacement of existing political elites.³⁶ They get information of other militant and terrorist action and they learn from the experiences of others by the news media. There are so many factors that motivate force and provide the necessary supportive climate for group behavior at different stages of militancy, namely psychological, structural and positional.

2.8.1 Psychological

Psychological characteristic is the most important factor behind the violent behavior of every militant group. It is mainly molded by

the mindset, feeling and perceptions of its central leadership. The non-psychological i.e. the instrumental factor, pave the basis for the maintenance of militancy. Thus these two different sets of forces interact with each other to determine the level of the militant behavior.

Aggressiveness is an inherent part of every person. Constant aggressiveness of the leader makes a militant more violent and some of them are amenable to drastic change and some others are not willing to change. Aggressiveness is an enduring part of the personalities of the latter. For them violence is 'a way of life; violence alone can give them a sense of significance'.³⁷

They have a sense of

Fulfillment through total dedication to the point of self sacrifice and sense of power through inflicting pain and death upon other humans.³⁸

For militants the state is the sole oppressor of their rights. It not only denies them justice but also uses coercion to suppress their voice of descent. The militants are convinced that the state is the source of their problem, and that, they are merely trying to save themselves from the all-out destructive efforts of the state. In order to achieve their goal they are willing even for their own complete destruction in the hands of the opponent.

For this purpose, most commonly, militant organizations develop the spirit of self-sacrifice among its volunteers. There could always be many prepared for self-sacrifice while fighting the oppressor.³⁹

Suicidal attacks are the main tool of oppressed against oppressor. For them death is not a tragedy, and it is not the result of an agitated mental state'. On the contrary, it is a calculated proceeding, undertaken in the 'service of a living cause'. So suiciders rejoice in their death, because it advances their aim at least one step further.⁴⁰

Another important matter is that the militants cannot avoid the path of violence owing to a feeling of guilt. But, in course of time some kind of militants, develop such feeling either with adversary's military pressure or by the pressure of their own community. They regret 'the killings, that they have carried out in pursuit of their goal'. Gradually such militants return from normal social life and rejoin the democratic mainstream.⁴¹ At the same time another group of militants develops a feelings of commitment to the use of violence. In its long-term struggle it may suffer a high rate of attrition. So many militants sacrifice their life for the attainment of their goal and become martyrs. This compels the survivor as a moral responsibility to carry the struggle forward against the adversary. Any kind of discontinuance of the struggle before achieving their cherished goal would be considered as unfaithfulness towards the martyrs. So they continue the struggle until the goal is attained.

2.8.2 Structural

This characteristic is more explicit than the psychology of militants. It will shape the group's determination to preserve the path of violence, namely, hyper-centralized authority and

capabilities. If the power of the militant group is located solely in the central power, that militant group is said to be hyper-centralized. The leader of that group is omnipotent. He decides matters of war and peace. The interest of the leader constitutes the overall interest of the group. His decisions are final and his word is law. It is leader centric and he expects high loyalty from its cadres. If the leader has developed a high degree of aggressiveness he takes a hardened approach to peace.

The strength or the capability of the opponent determines the outcome of a violent confrontation. If the state has more strength than the militant group, it can easily defeat the militants. At the same time another situation emerges when the militant has more power than the adversary. If neither happens, the two adversaries can easily keep up their respective campaigns without any conspicuous success or defeat.⁴²

The military strength of a militancy is measured by its ability to use "force" as a counter strategy. And the political capabilities of the militants depend upon the commitment of the cadres to the goal of the group. The commitment of the cadres is reflected in their strict devotion to the ideology and doctrine of the group, their readiness to take risks, their total acceptance of the orders and strictures of the leader and their loyalty.⁴³ If the militants lose either military or political capabilities, it would mean a weakening of their campaigns and vice versa.

2.8.3 Positional

After a long battle one or two parties in the battle change their respective positions. For militants a formidable fear is about their future position in the changed situation. Some fears are common to the group as whole, others bother its central leadership alone. Primary concern of all may be about the physical insecurity. The cadres and the leaders is often missed it, even though their rehabilitation may be assured in the post settlement package. After that some them may think about the social unacceptability as members of a civilized society. In addition to this, the leaders have fear of survival. An important point to remember here is that the longer the conflict the greater the sacrifices by the militants. Their sacrifice and their sufferings acquire in their eyes a large connotation as the price for the goal they seek to achieve.⁴⁴

2.9 Conclusion

In the light of above theoretical framework we proceeded to discuss the theme of un-even capitalist development and underdevelopment in Sri Lanka, emergence of various militant groups and the Tamil separatist movement in that country. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has over determined the socio-political process in the country. The next chapter sets out to examine the political economy of Sri Lankan state, the emergence of ethnicity as a political phenomenon can be linked to the nature of growth of economic policies by the government and the resulting process of economic growth that has taken place in Sri Lanka in the post independence period.

NOTES

- ¹ Tamils Fight for Freedom- A Memorandum Submitted by the Liberation Tigers to the Seventh Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Nations Held in Delhi, March 1983, pp.64-65., S.K.Sharma and Urmila Sharma, *Western Political Thought-From Bentham to Present Day Vol.II* (New Delhi: Atlanta Publishers,1998), p.198.
- ² Pradeep, Bhargava *Political Economy of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Navrang Publishers, 1987), p.185.
- ³ Edgar F. Borgatta, Marie L. Borgatta (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Sociology* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992), pp.299-1300.

Other theorist may be more concerned about the development of autonomous productive capacity, equitable distribution of wealth or meeting basic human needs.

There may be many versions of modernization theory but they have some common tenets, first among them is societies develop through a series of evolutionary stages. Second, these stages are based on different degrees and patterns of social differentiation and reintegration of structural and cultural components that are functionally compatible for the maintenance of society. Thirdly contemporary developing societies are at a pre-modern stage of evolution and they eventually will achieve economic growth and take on the social, political and economic features of Western European and North American societies which have progresses to the highest stage of social evolutionary development. Fourthly, this modernization will result as complex western technology is imported and traditional structural and cultural features in compatible with such development are overcome

- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Talcott, Parsons, "Evolutionary Universals in Society" *American Sociological Review*, Vol.29, 1964, p.361.
- ⁶ Edgar, n.3.
- ⁷ Ibid., p.576.
- ⁸ Ibid.,p.578.
- ⁹ Ibid., p.581.

- 10 Rose Mallik, *Development, Ethnicity and Human Rights in South Asia* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998), pp.114-115.
- 11 C. Furtado, "Element of a Theory of Underdevelopment-the Underdeveloped Structures", in Henry Bernstein, (ed.) *Underdevelopment and Development : The Third World Today* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), p.34.
- 12 S.B.D. De Silva, *The Political economy of Underdevelopment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), pp.15-16.
- 13 Andre Gunder Frank 'The Development of Underdevelopment' in Rober Rhodes (ed.), *Imperialism and Underdevelopment* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p.4.

It was Andre Gunder Frank who electively absorbed all these theories and strongly influenced by the work of the Monthly review School, it began to popularize the notion of development of underdevelopment. The main thrust of his early writings was to undermine the theory of dualism which posited a traditional sector holding a modern sector from development. More questionably Frank advanced a notion of a chain type metropolis satellite relation.- an exploitative link stretching from the central powers through to the landowners, the peasants and landless peasant labourers each extracting an economic surplus from the one below.

- 14 C. Furtado, "Elements of a Theory of Underdevelopment-the Underdeveloped Structures" in Henry Bernstein, (ed.) *Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World Today* (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1978), pp. 40-41.
- 15 Frank, n.13, p.5.

Gunder Frank has explicitly moved out of the dependency tradition to work on the broad historical process which gave rise to the formation of the world economy. In this he is following the path of Immanuel Wallerstein who pioneered the world systems analysis centered around the belief that the world has experienced a single all-embracing process of capital accumulation centered on western Europe. in shifting his analysis to the level of capital accumulation on a world scale he has joined forces with the earlier work of Samir Amin, although Frank is more concerned with the early genesis of the world system.

- 16 Quoted in Pradeep, n.2, p.188.

- ¹⁷ Quoted in Pradeep, n.2, p.88.
- ¹⁸ *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology* (219-220).
- ¹⁹ V.I Lenin, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (Moscow:1956), p.172.
- ²⁰ Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966* (London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), p.9.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid. p.10.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid. p.3.
- ²⁵ Andre Gunder Frank, n.13, pp.6-7.
- ²⁶ Sivert Langholm, "On the Concept of Center and Periphery" *Journal of Peace Research*, No.3-4. 1971.
- ²⁷ Romilla Thapar, "Communalism and Ancient History" in R. Thapar (ed), *Communalism and Writings of Indian History* (New Delhi: 1977), p. 20; Radhika, Coomaraswamy, "Nationalism : Sinhala and Tamil Myths" *South Asia Bulletin* (New York) , Vol.VI, No.2, Fall 1986, p.21.
- ²⁸ Ibid, Radhika.
- ²⁹ Gunnar Myrdal, *An International Economy* (New York: 1956) pp.9-11.
- ³⁰ Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship* (New York: 1970).
- ³¹ Hechter, n.20, p.19.
- ³² Ibid. p.19.
- ³³ Ibid., p.21.
- ³⁴ Ibid., p.24.

Acculturation is thought to occur when groups of individuals having different culture come into continuous first -hand contact and they

make subsequent changes in the original culture pattern of either or both groups.

- ³⁵ P. Sahadevan, "On Not Becoming a Democrat: The LTTE's Commitment to Armed Struggle", *International Studies* (New Delhi), Vol.32, No.2, p.251.
- ³⁶ O.N. Mehrotra, "Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka" *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol. XXI, No.10, p.1520.
- ³⁷ Sahadevan, n.35, p.252.
- ³⁸ John Richard Thackrau, *Encyclopedia of Terrorism and Political Violence* (London: 1987), pp.204-205.
- ³⁹ Maxwell Taylor, *The Fanatics: A Behavioural Approach to Political Violence* (London: 1991), pp.190- 194
- ⁴⁰ Walter Reich, (ed), *The origins of Terrorism: Psychology, Ideologies, Theories, State of Mind*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990}, p.146.
- ⁴¹ Sahadevan, n.35, p.255.
- ⁴² Ibid, p.257.
- ⁴³ Jeffery Ian Ross and Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Terrorism Subsides: A comparative Study of Canada and United States", *Comparative Politics* (New York), Vol.21, July 1989, pp.408-409.
- ⁴⁴ Martha Crenshaw "The Origin of Terrorism: Terrorist Behavior as a Product of Strategic Choice" in Watter Reich (ed.), *Origin of Terrorism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.7.

Chapter 3

Development or Underdevelopment: the Economic Policies of Sri Lanka

- 3.1. Development of Underdevelopment
- 3.2. Political economy of the Sri Lanka
- 3.3. Independence and After
- 3.4. Conclusion

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT OR UNDERDEVELOPMENT: THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF SRI LANKA

3.1 Development of Underdevelopment

Many Developing countries of the world today are increasingly facing a paradoxical situation in their attempts to seek solutions to the major problems associated with achieving economic development for their people. For achieving the needs of food, shelter, clothing and employment for millions of people, these countries are now compelled to exercise severe pressure on available resources. An important problem facing these countries is the difficulty of trying to balance their drives for an increase in national material output and at the same time attempting conservation and renewal of their renewable natural resources. Sri Lanka is a typical example of one such country.

The theoretical study of economic growth and development is strictly based on the economic variables like income, capital saving and the social forces behind the movement of those variables. Important social force among others is the phenomenon of ethnicity. The pattern of development of the country was formed by the dynamics between dominant ethnic interests and other social forces and classes, and this even includes the dynamics of highly politicized minority ethnic interests. The outcome of these forces might lead to ethnicity emerging as the factor that over-determines the process of accumulation.¹

Lenin wrote:

why will you not understand the psychology
that is so important in the national question,
and which if the slightest coercion is applied
besmirches, soils and nullifies the undoubtedly
progressive importance of centralization.²

Communal identity is an extension of individual identity that gives people a sense of belonging. Identity to quote the American social psychologist, Erikson

Is a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture.³

3.2 Political Economy of Sri Lankan State

Like many third world countries, Sri Lankan economy is very much dependent on world capitalism. The state formation in post colonial Sri Lanka is noticeable in Sri Lankan history. It went through various stages, from an outward looking economy at first, to an inward looking one and a return to an outward looking economy. These changes were the results of colonial legacy. The economy had gone a long way from colonial mode of production especially as it existed in the plantation sector to the emergence of a home-grown capitalist sector. It led to state capitalism in conjunction with capitalist mode of production, materializing in the form of the investment promotion zones. The outward looking strategy incorporates the imperial mode of

production and an inward looking growth strategy is not in turn with capitalist mode of production.

Industrialization is inevitable and indispensable for sustained growth of an economy. At the time of independence, Sri Lanka was a small export dependent state. The economic planners formulated policies for industrializing the country through import substitution. With the use of loans and grants from the developed capitalist countries Sri Lankan economy facilitate imports of capital and intermediate goods for all industries, mainly export oriented and consumption goods industries. Thus a foreign aided consumer society became a foreign aided investment structured society and it become a part of new international division of labour. We can not explain the political economy of Sri Lanka without the study of the state formation in Sri Lanka.

3.2.1 The Economy of Sri Lanka before Independence

Many features of Sri Lanka's current civilization and situation had its beginning in the ancient period. The Sinhalese and Tamils, the main races of today had settled in the island during the ancient period. The famous Chinese traveler Fa Hien, who visited Ceylon in 412 A.D says that;

Ceylon had originally no inhabitants, but only demons and dragons dwelt in it. Merchants of different countries came here to trade. At the time of traffic, the demons did not appear in person but only exposed their valuable commodities with the value affixed. Then the

merchant men according to the prices marked, purchased the goods and took them away. But in consequence of these visits, men of other countries, hearing of the delightful character of the people, flocked here in great numbers, and so a great kingdom was formed.⁴

3.2.1.1 Portuguese

Sri Lanka was mainly an agricultural economy and manufacturing was hardly developed during colonialism, and even before colonialism. In 1505 Portuguese conquered Sri Lanka. Their main interest was in spices especially cinnamon, with Sri Lanka accounting for most of the world's supply. The trade was peaceful. It did not require armed escorts or large foreign establishments, and it was mutually beneficial. They made no interference with the existing administrative structure of the country. They used the native administrative hierarchy for their own purposes.⁵

At that time capitalism was not the dominant form of production in the state. The world market and international division of labour were yet to emerge. To them, conquest was confined to acquiring a trading post and secure the sea route to east. But, this was not the case in Jaffna. "Because much before the conquest of Jaffna, missionaries from south India had crossed over to Jaffna and had made inroads, especially among fisher folk of Jaffna and Mannar through conversion to Christianity. During and after the conquest this minority provided considerable support to Portuguese in Jaffna. It strengthened their control over fishery

and increased their domination over the Island's elephant trade. Jaffna was the main market of the elephants that were captured in the island".⁶

3.2.1.2 Dutch

After the Portuguese the Dutch came to the country with similar interests. This revealed that early colonial exploits were essentially coastal and extractive. In other words, their impact on Sri Lanka's people and economy was marginal. But the British were to play a role of much greater and lasting consequence.⁷

Coastal bastions were established to affirm their foothold on the country. Canals and roads were constructed cut to establish communications between such bastions, and trade assumed importance. The rich natural resources of the island attracted the attention of these invaders and the export of such resources to enrich their own economy necessitated the establishment of anchorages and harbours as well as access routes to the hinterland. The coastal zone provided the platform for such exploitation and underwent radical change. Coastal land was suitable for the cultivation of export items, mainly cinnamon. At the same time population centers were established along the coast, and more intensive exploitation of coastal resources were continued. The opening of the coastal railways and highways accelerated this process.

By this way the Dutch improved the economic conditions of the state. Moreover, they started elementary education which made a large section of people literate. Thus the Dutch left the people of

coastal districts of south-west and Jaffna Peninsula better prepared to take advantage of the development. This brought dynamic changes in the coastal areas during the colonial era.⁸

3.2.1.3 British

Colonialism as an economic system was more vigorously implemented by British. The period ruled by the British was more significant in the making of modern Sri Lanka. When the British East India Company came to trade in the east of Sri Lanka at the beginning of the 17th century, it was fully aware of the economic potential of the island. But it hadn't made any attempt to conquer the island, because the Dutch were very powerful at that time. By the middle of the 18th century the Dutch power declined and Sri Lanka fell into the hands of the British.

In the initial stages of British invasion, Cinnamon was the important export commodity cultivated on British managed estates in Sri Lanka. It had monopoly in world trade. But, when China, India and Java started to export cinnamon, the investors in Sri Lanka looked for other crops. They developed coffee plantations in which the British were owners and managers. Tea cultivation in Sri Lanka started in 1867 due to the destruction of the coffee plantation by a fungal disease. This change led to the transformation of feudal agrarian society into a capitalist plantation economy showing the characteristics of an export economy.⁹

3.2.2 Policy Towards Primary Sector

In the first half of 19th century cinnamon was the most valuable export of Sri Lanka. In 1833, the British handed the cinnamon business over to private enterprises, but kept the export taxes. In the 1840s cinnamon business faced enormous losses in the European markets, and the profit fell.¹⁰ The European investors withdrew from the trade and gradually cinnamon estates passed into native hands. But the destruction of the spice trade destroyed the foreign trade and the financial position of the Sri Lankan economy. The basis of the feudal political economy was now completely absent. The native population was dependent on its own food and clothing. During this time, coffee, began to be planted in the mountains of Kandy province. It paved the way for the establishment of plantation economy which in turn necessitated radical changes in the land holding system and use of labour.¹¹

3.2.3 Irrigation

In 1849, for unifying the government's interest with local interests, feelings and habits, the government introduced an irrigation policy in the country. By this policy they used local money and labour as well as general revenue. Irrigation works were improved from the position of 1855. For this, a combination of monetary contributions and technological supervision from the government and voluntary local labour were used. This was known as the *grants-in-aid-system*.¹² Gradually this mutual co-operation declined. Village headmen were described as having lost the authority. To counteract this depression "the paddy Lands

Irrigation Ordinance" was enacted. Validity of this act was limited for five years. Flexibility was one of its keynotes. Government agents or assistant government agents and assemblies of proprietors were given the power of making rules for each locality. The settling of disputes and the application of sanctions in particular localities were vested in an elected village committee or *gansabha* under the chairmanship of the government nominee. The working of this legislation got sufficient appreciation from the people and superior level district offices. So it was reenacted for another five years in 1861.¹³ The 1861 legislation provides certain provisions for headmen to involve in the matters of paddy lands under cultivation. In 1866, again the powers of headmen were further enhanced since the government agents and assistants did not have the time or the means of attending the meeting of all the tribunals in their districts. But a renewal of the ordinance in 1867 enlarged its flexibility. To meet the problem of localities the government agents were permitted to make rules of their own authority without convening assemblies of proprietors. In other words each locality had three chiefs to enforce the rules in the locality namely a *gansabha* or an irrigation headman or a combination of the two.¹⁴

3.2.4 Policy Towards Secondary Sector

During British colonialism industrial sector faced a laissez-faire policy from the authority. The state was pre-occupied with the provision of infrastructure for the development and maintenance of efficiency of the predominantly foreign owned plantation agriculture. The gradual infusion of political autonomy led to the persistent

demands for greater emphasis on industrial development. During First World War (1914-1918) the government recognized the weakness of the lop-sided economy specializing on a few plantation crops for exports. So in 1922 the government appointed an industries Commission to study how to use Ceylon's abundant hydro-electric potential for industrial development.¹⁵ After that a Banking Commission was appointed by the state Council. The commission made some far reaching proposals including the establishment of a state and the opening up of new industries, both agricultural and manufacturing sector, for competing in external trade.¹⁶

3.2.5 Impact of Great Depression

After 1930s there was a decisive turning point in Sri Lanka's economic situation. The great depression and subsequent World War II led to the need for applying policies that help to satisfy home demand and it reduced the attention of international business. Authorities were compelled to introduce credit facilities for local enterprises. They also gave tariff protection for rice production and consumer manufacturing. It made a long term impact on the economy. Most important result was the establishment of *The Bank of Ceylon* in 1939. Tariffs on the products such as soap, vegetables and eggs were increased. In Sri Lanka the tariff imposition was against the interest of the planters because of its implication in pushing up the cost of living.¹⁷

3.3 Independence and After

The independence of Sri Lanka in 1948 was not the outcome of a bitter and bloody liberation struggle as in many other colonial territories, but was achieved by peaceful negotiations. At the time of independence Sri Lanka was a country with a marked internal contrast in environment and level of economic development and with a resource base which was almost entirely agricultural.¹⁸

The government that came to power in 1947 general elections was not ready to interfere with the land ownership patterns that existed and the powers of the landlords. The then winning party's United National Party (UNP) support was the Sinhalese landlords who hold over the peasants able to influence their voting behavior.¹⁹

3.3.1 On Land Development

The policy of Dry zone colonization was started by UNP government and continued up to 1970. Through this policy they opened up the jungle lands for resettlement and irrigatable paddy burning. The government's aim was to create a new group of peasant colonists on whom the country was depending for marketable surplus. This policy of colonization was totally against the national economic priorities at that time. All the schemes were proposed for consolidation of political power.²⁰

Again the government was against the industrialization of the country. Its power was based on urban commercial groups and consumption interest of the propertied class. Moreover, domestic

private capital was attracted by the opportunities in the estates. That was why in 1951 and 1954 Sri Lankan ownership of the estates increased from 19 to 26 percent.²¹

The land reform act was enacted in 1972. It stipulated that the maximum extent of land which could be owned by an individual in Sri Lanka shall be 25 acres. It also provided for the setting up of a Land Reform Commission (LRC) vested with powers to acquire privately held land in excess of the ceilings and facilitate the development of the land so acquired in accordance with the economic and social policies of the government. The Land Reform Act (LRA) was amended in 1975. Following table shows how it affected the economy.

Government Land Acquisitions During the Land Reform Period

	Acquired through the ceiling legislation	Acquired through amending legislation	Purchased under the Land acquisition act of 1950	Total
Tea	139,354	237,592	34,240	411,86
Rubber	82,563	94,835	6,676	184,074
Coconut	112,523	6,406	-----	118,929
Other (including)	228,971	79,124	13,315	321,410
Uncultivated				
Total	563,411	417,957	54231	1,035,599

Source: Land Reform Commission

Generally, the land reform law brought:

1. The decline in the effective area under the main plantation crops due to the diversion of some land for other uses.
2. The decline in the productivity of plantations.
3. The displacement of a segment of the plantation work force as a result of forced eviction and discrimination.²²

3.3.2 Economic Liberalization in Sri Lanka

From the end of the 1950s the economy of Sri Lanka faced inability to finance an adequate level of imports. The insurgency of 1971 made Sri Lanka a state controlled economy. The role of government in selected areas has been permitted to become increasingly prominent. As a result of economic controls and the expansion of the public corporate sector, the state came to dominate international trade and payments, the transport, plantation, financial and industrial manufacturing sectors and more important, it played a major role in domestic trade. This meant that at all levels opportunities for commercial profit were seen to depend on good political connections. This was against the interest of the owners of capital, especially the more established formal sectoral enterprises.²³

In 1972 plantations were nationalized. Land reform legislation was passed in 1975. The 1970-1977 period visualised a mixed economy. During this period several instances of nationalization of private property were carried out. A similar measure was the ceiling

imposed on individual income and ownership of houses during this period. The Business Undertakings Act (BUA) of 1972 was very important. By this act private business were undertaken by the government.²⁴

In 1977, the new government of Sri Lanka began to initiate the process of economic liberalization. The spokesman of government had come to prefer the title "open economy". The message implicit in the use of this title was that the economy is made to operate essentially on a private enterprise basis, guided by free market forces. Areas open to private enterprise were almost unlimited.

It was the programme that results in the transfer of public assets to private ownership. There was a general reduction of the state involvement in trade and almost complete liberalization of access to foreign exchange for all economic transactions. It abolished dual exchange rate system and affected initial devaluation of currency. Dual exchange rate means, selected import and export transactions were permitted to be carried out at the official exchange rate and some others were subjected to the purchase of the so called Foreign Exchange Entitlement Certificate (FEEC). It also introduced imposition of tariff on public sector imports and reduced overall tariff level. It gave encouragement to private sector competition to public enterprises in such fields as passenger bus services, retail telecommunication and electricity service, supply of agricultural fertilizer and milling of rice. It brought a major reduction in consumer subsidies especially food subsidies. It also gave intensive support of foreign direct investment including

suspension of much labour legislation for enterprise operating under special export processing zone conditions and encouragement for private provision of health, and for reduction in state services. The growth of manufactured exports were based on low skill products with little upgrading and diversification.²⁵

3.3.2.1 Impacts of Liberalization in Sri Lanka

1. The massive inflow of foreign resources through public sector led to many individuals and groups associated with government getting material benefits. These beneficiaries includes politicians who had public sector contacts, businessmen who have built up larger enterprises through servicing the big expansion of public investment and public servants and MPs who had found valued foreign trips and scholarships available in relative abundance. All these easily happened in Sri Lanka because it had so many foreign aid donors.
2. The initial devaluation of the currency brought some far reaching effects.
3. It brought major changes in economic and social relations. And generated high level of bitterness and uncertainty among peoples.
4. The commercialization and support given to capitalism by the government was against the traditional ideologies of Sri Lanka and against the values and life style of the country. The liberalization process projected one particular ethnic group. It brought ethnic tension and conflict.²⁶

Table 3.1
Shows Different Production Sectors in Sri Lankan Economy

Sector	1959	1970	1977	1959-1977
(1) Total Primary Sector	39.6	35.7	35.0	-4.6
a. Agriculture including Forestry, hunting and fishing	39.1	35.0	32.5	-6.6
b. Mining and quarrying	0.5	0.7	2.5	+2.0
(2) Total Secondary Sector	16.4	20.0	17.0	+6
a. Manufacturing	11.6	13.8	13.0	+1.4
b. Construction	4.8	6.2	4.0	-0.8
(3) Tertiary Sector	44.0	44.3	48.9	+4.6
a. Transport and communication	9.2	9.4	10	+0.8
b. Trade and Commerce	13.6	14.3	13.5	-0.4
c. Housing services	3.4	3.1	3.0	-0.4
d. Public Administration and defense	5.1	4.7	6.0	+0.9
e. Other services	13.0	13.4	15.5	+2.5

Source : Department of Census and Statistics

3.3.3 Coast Conservation Act of 1981

Coastal resources are of major economic significance in developing countries. The majority of less developed countries are coastal states or islands. Sri Lanka is one of the developing countries that have given importance for coastal development. Its coastal ecosystem contains rich natural resources capable of supporting a variety of activities and serving diverse human needs for food, energy, shelter and other commercial development. Planned and coordinated development of coastal resources can provide the basis of accelerated and sustainable economic growth in the country.²⁷ For this end a coastal resource development Branch was established on 01 January 1978 under the auspices

of ministry of Fisheries with responsibility of implementing the Coastal Conservation Act No.57 of 1981.²⁸ This came into effect from 01 January 1983. This was for the preparation of the coastal resources management and managing coastal belt of Sri Lanka on a long term need oriented basis. Under this policy many solution could be found for eradicating and minimizing the ever aggravating environmental, social and economic problems. The act provided that:

Irrespective of the legal provisions elsewhere no person shall engage in any kind of development activities within the coastal zone unless with a permit issued by Director of Coast Conservation for such purposes.²⁹

3.4 Conclusion

The economy of Sri Lanka has gone through different faces. It swings from an outward looking economy to inward looking and back to an outward looking economy. Before the independence it was framed to the benefit of the colonial powers. After the independence, the different governments followed the policy of appeasement of various sections of the society. Thus we find that various stages of capitalism merged into one another in the Sri Lankan economy. Privatization of public enterprises and setting up of investment promotion zones are responsible for the emergence of a national bourgeoisie dependent on foreign capital.

NOTES

- 1 Goderey, Gunatilake, "Participatory Development and Dependence—The Case of Sri Lanka", *Marga* (Columbo), No.3, 1987, pp.38-39.
- 2 Jehan, Perera, "Exploring Solution to the Communal Problem", *Sinhala Youth Cautions Sri Lanka Government* (New Delhi: Tamil Information Center, 1984), p.6.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 N. Sanmugathasan, *The Marxist Looks at the History of Ceylon* (New Delhi: 1974), p.1.

This account probably means that the original inhabitants of Ceylon have been less civilized than the Indo-Aryans who later invaded the country. But at least, they seem to have been sufficiently civilized to charge fixed prices for the merchandise they exchanged with foreign traders, probably Arabs.

- 5 K.M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.122-23.
- 6 G.D. Winis, "The Fatal History of Portuguese in Ceylon", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); Jean Gross Holtez, "Forging Capitalist Patriarchy: the Economic and Social Transformation of Feudal Sri Lanka and its Impact on Women,"(Durham N.: Duke University Press, 1984), pp.27-28.

Thomas Pires, traveling the east during the early Portuguese colonization, noted the beauty of Ceylon and its wealth of natural resources. Although rice was scarce, he said, "all other food stuffs were plentiful and domestic and foreign trade very active. Ceylon trades elephants, cinnamon, ivory and arecanut with whole of the Choromandel and Bengal and Pulicat, taking rice, white Sandalwood, seed pearl and other merchandise in return. Gold money is current in Ceylon.... Ceylon has good craftsmen- jewelers, blacksmiths, carpenters and turners chiefly. The people of Ceylon are serious well educated. The grandees to little honor to strangers and they do not steal... they have complete justice among them."

- 7 E. S. Simpson, *The Developing World: An Introduction* (New York: 1987). p.221.

⁸ H.J.M. Wickremaratne, "Environmental Problems of the Coastal Zone in Sri Lanka" *Economic Review (Hong Kong)*, May 1998, p.8.

⁹ G.C. Mendis *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo: Educational Publishers, 1952), pp.14-15; Jean Gross Holtez, n.6, p.49.

During the first phase of British rule in Sri Lanka the economic purpose of the colony was to extract spices, particularly cinnamon, for sale in Europe. The British imposed a monopoly on cinnamon exports and tax on imports in kind in Britain to keep the price artificially high. But cinnamon had already been planted in Indonesia and a cheaper bark, cassia, was available. Thus high profits from cinnamon were only temporary. Driving up the prices increased the attraction of substitutes produced elsewhere. Gradually other native products replaced the cinnamon or products grown specially for export. But the destruction of the spice trade destroyed the foreign trade of the native polity and put the final touches on the isolation of Sri Lanka from its neighbours. Without the cinnamon to trade for cloth and rice, the island was short of both items. Without the revenue to be made from the export of cinnamon, the financial position of the state was questionable. Sri Lankan political authority had already been destroyed by British military power: now its economic base was also destroyed.

The second stage of British enterprise in Sri Lanka was the creation of plantation economy for the production of export products such as coffee, rubber and tea. This plantation economy required substantial land and labour. During this time the British economy began to feel the financial drain as capital flowed to Sri Lanka and the products from that island were in great demand in London.

¹⁰ Ibid., Jean Gross Holtez, p.51.

¹¹ S.B.D de Silva, *The Political Economy of Underdevelopment* (London, 1983) pp.275-300.

¹² Michael Robert, "Irrigation Policy in British Ceylon During the Nineteenth Century" *Journal of South Asian Studies (Australia)*, No.2, August 1972, p.53.

¹³ M. Roberts, "The Paddy Lands Irrigation Ordinance and the Revival of Traditional Irrigation Customs 1856-1871" *Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies* No.1 & 2, January -December, 1967, pp.114-30.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Sessional Paper No.1 1922. *Industries Commission Report* (Colombo: 1922).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Pradeep, Bhargava, *Political Economy of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Navrang, 1987), p.38.

Export prices rose by about 80 per cent during the war, while import prices more than tripled. This resulted the unfavorable balance of trade. The production cost of plantations was reduced by subsidizing food. Several manufacturing plants were set up both in public and private sectors. Efforts towards setting up manufacturing plants by the government were made in following industries: hats, coir products leather goods plywood mill, acetic acid plant, quinine, steel rolling mill using scarp as well as glass, ceramics and paper. The cost of production was high and the quality low. In the private sector also some industries came up: local handicrafts, broom, rugs textiles, moulded rubber goods, batteries. Eau-de-cologne, packing chests, toilet goods, bricks and tiles, plywood hosiery, lacquered goods etc. However only a few plants survived the transition to peacetime. It soon became clear that a high tariff barrier was required to maintain production levels. During this period, producers of rice and other food crops for local consumption generally failed to respond to increased demand because they were given little incentives. The prewar induced manufacturing plants also collapsed.

¹⁸ E.S, Simpson, n.7, p.221

¹⁹ Mohan Ram, *Sri Lanka : The Fractured Island* (New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1989), p.31.

²⁰ Satchi Ponnambalam, *Dependent Capitalism in Crisis: The Sri Lankan Economy 1948-1980* (London: Zed Books, 1980), p.21.

²¹ Pradeep, n.17, pp.299.

²² G.H Peris "Agrarian Change and Agricultural Development in Sri Lanka" in Paul A. Groves (ed.), *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996.), pp.114-117.

²³ Mick, Moore "Economic Liberalization versus Political Pluralism in Sri Lanka" *Modern Asian Studies* (Cambridge), Vol.24, No.2 p.350.

²⁴ Ibid., p.351.

²⁵ W. D. Lakshman, "Active Control Vs. Market Guidance in a Capitalist Economy: The Case of Sri Lanka" *Social Scientist* (New Delhi: Vol.15, No.4-5, April-May 1987, pp.20-21.

²⁶ Mick Moore, n. 23, pp.372-73.

²⁷ Dianeetha Sadacharan, "International Perspective and Sri Lankan Experience," *Economic Review* (Hong Kong), May 1985, p.6.

²⁸ Indra Ranasinghe, "An Evaluation of the Implementation of the Coast Conservation Act No.57 of 1981" *Economic Review* (Hon Kong), May 1985, p.19.

²⁹ Ibid., *The urgency for activating the provisions of this act became so acute that it was driven into effect from 01.01.1983 by a government Gazette Notification. A programme was launched through the media to build up awareness among the members of the public regarding the scope of development activities in the coastal Districts was represented so that the issue of permits would be expedited.*

Chapter 4

Status of Tamils: Colonial and Post Colonial Period

4.1. Colonial Period

4.2. Post Colonial Period

CHAPTER 4

STATUS OF TAMILS: COLONIAL AND POST COLONIAL PERIOD

4.1 Colonial Period

The medieval Sri Lankan history showed that in that period there were three kingdoms in the country. The coastal area of southwest part was ruled by kingdom of *Kotte*. The northern part of the island form Vanni. The area between Jaffna and Anuradhapura in the Jaffna peninsula was occupied by Tamil settlers and was known as *Jaffna* kingdom. The *Kandyan* kingdom existed in the central highlands. The *Kotte* and *Jaffna* kingdom fell victims to Portuguese conquest in 1505, and later to the Dutch in 1656, and the British in 1796. In 1815 the *Kandyan* kingdom fell to the British and the whole country thus came under foreign rule for the first time.¹

4.1.1 Under Portuguese

Following the Vasco da Gamma's discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in 1498, the Portuguese maritime adventurers made their way to Sri Lanka. Capitalist mode of production was not the dominant form of production at that time. The concept of global market and compartmentalization of labour were not widely established. To them conquest was aimed at acquiring a trading post and secure the sea route to east. Expansion of the realm of colonies was not their aim. They administered the Sinhalese and Tamil areas as separate territories.²

The most important legacy of the Portuguese in the island was the introduction of Roman Catholicism and missionary activity. Franciscans established centers in the country from 1543 onwards. Jesuits were active in the North. Towards the end of the century, Dominicans and Augustinians arrived. With the conversion of Dharrnapala, many members of the Sinhalese nobility followed suit. Dharmapala endowed missionary orders lavishly, often from the properties of Buddhist and Hindu temples. After the Portuguese secured control of Sri Lanka, they used their extensive powers of patronage and preference in appointments to promote Christianity. Members of the landed aristocracy embraced Christianity and took Portuguese surnames at baptism. Many coastal communities underwent mass conversion particularly, from Jaffna, Mannar and the fishing communities all over the country. The Portuguese language spread extensively, and the upper classes quickly gained proficiency in it.³

The converts were assured better preferential treatment under their law and exempted from certain taxes. Briefly, this group came to be treated as a privileged group. For both Sinhalese and Tamils who aspired to high office, the membership in the church was a facilitating factor. At the same time, religious fanaticism and narrow mindedness of Portuguese led to the deprivation of people who had not converted to Christianity.⁴

4.1.2 Dutch

Dutch east India company first controlled only the coastal lands. They gradually pushed inland, occupying considerable territory in

southern, and southwestern Sri Lanka. In 1665 they expanded to the east and thus controlled most of the cinnamon growing lands and points of exit and entry in the island.

The attitudes of Dutch towards ethnic groups in the country were not different from the Portuguese. They continued the separate administration of Sinhalese and Tamil areas. In the Sinhalese portion they introduced Roman-Dutch law and introduced certain reforms within the country.⁵ They undertook the education of the people to enable them to read the Bible and other religious books. Like Portuguese, they respected the traditional land structure and service relationship, but based it more methodically to enhance revenue. Taxes in kind collected for the state were used in trade. Remuneration of Sinhalese nobility also was retained because the Dutch depended on the rural nobility for knowledge of the system. They continued the separate administration of Sinhalese and Tamil areas. In the Sinhalese portion they introduced Roman-Dutch law and effected certain reforms within the country.⁶ When the Dutch occupied Ceylon, the reformed Church established schools. The Dutch tried to promote trade with neighbouring countries, but only under a strictly controlled system. They sought to monopolized the export of cinnamon, elephants and pearls.

4.1.3 British

When British East India Company came to trade with Ceylon they were fully aware of the importance of the cinnamon of Ceylon. However, the British came to Ceylon in 1796 for reason other

than economic. British and French were more concerned about the control of eastern parts of India. At that time, sea battles took place in the Bay of Bengal. The east coast of India did not possess a single harbour which could be used as a naval base. That was because of climatic change. In this background they decided to obtain a specious and safe harbour in the Bay of Bengal during monsoon. They found that the best harbour was Trincomalee. At that time Trincomalee was under the control of the Dutch. But the imperial government in Ceylon decided to engage in a war against Dutch. The British East India Company found it a good opportunity to occupy Trincomalee and captured it in 1793. France declared a war against British and Dutch Republic. Finally, Ceylon fell into the hands of British, the most progressive commercial and maritime power in the world at that time.⁷ Harry Williams commenting on the commencement of the British rule in the whole of Sri Lanka after the deportation of the very last Sri Lankan ruler in 1815 stated:

From Vijaya in 543 B.C to Wickramain A.D
1815 had been without a king, one hundred
and sixty five monarchs in all, they played their
little parts in the fascinating enigma of power,
but now they are gone and the stages is set for
new civilization, that of the west.⁸

During the colonial rule, they transformed the internal economies of Sri Lanka in tune with the European market. Crops were used as export commodities. Land used for cash crops was in Sinhalese

areas. Sinhalese upper strata, traditionally holding land benefited the most from this change. Their political leverage in the colonial system of the 18th century brought them large amount of land. With slow movement towards freehold land in the Dutch period and the development of artificial cultivation of cinnamon, the main export crop, these Sinhalese landowners came to be more securely tied to the market.

This introduced two fold considerations in the economic structure, and also it had far reaching repercussions in the social and political formations. The modern plantation sector was highly developed, foreign-owned, organized and characterized by colonial mode of production, modernization and positive marginal product of labour.⁹

From 1830s, the estate system of coffee plantations, established by British capital and entrepreneurship, produced fundamental socio-economic changes. The new export economy, dominated by the demands of commodity production was linked to the imperial network and controlled by the metropolis. It was virtually dependent on foreign capital, a permanent labour force and low wages. For this purpose a large number of Tamil workers from south India, were imported to the country.¹⁰

At that time British planters tried to minimize the labor costs by controlling the regular attendance of their workers during the crop season. They used the local workers during the crop season and they found that the local villagers were insufficient for the work. So they recruited seasonal labor from south India.

When the coffee industry was more firmly established, the same laboures came regularly and the planters kept many workers during the off-season. But very few came with their families as there was not much opportunity for female employment. These regular migrants freely interacted with the local villagers except at the estates at the highest elevations where the villagers were too far away. As coffee picking was seasonal work and all of them could return to India once the coffee season was over, it is likely that many of them remained in the villages near the estates doing casual work.

When tea replaced coffee after the crash of the 1870s, the workers came with their wives and children for whom there was picking work all the year round. Plantation society became a distinct world, and there were less opportunities for villagers and estate workers to meet.

After the British conquest in Sri Lanka, at first they administered the Sinhalese and Tamil areas separately as earlier rulers. The Colebrooke-Cameron Commission recommended the abolition of separate administration. So British rulers brought together Tamils and Sinhalese as a single politico-geographic entity under centralized government.¹¹

In 19th century British introduced plantation system which strengthened the land holding classes. They imported Indian Tamils as plantation labor and this increased the cultural division of labor in the country. These Tamils were placed inside estates

entrenched in Sinhalese areas. They also expanded the administrative system and recruited natives for the lower levels.

Y. Fries and Bibin who made a study on the immigrant plantations came to the conclusion that it was another case of 'divide and Rule':

The hatred shown by the Kandyan peasantry was a natural reaction to colonial exploitation, but unfortunately this resentment was diverted from the plantation owners to the plantation workers..... The mutual distrust and fear between the local peasants and the Tamils was fostered and cultivated by the colonial rulers. Villagers had no right to go in the plantations and the plantation worker had no freedom of movement..... In spite of this, natural economic relationship have developed over the years, in that plantation workers would have looked to the surrounding villages for their requirements of foodstuffs and the like..... But the British rulers of the country met the requirements of the worker population through import and thus they destroyed every possibility of natural linkage..... planting interests also exploited the existing contradiction between Sinhalese and Tamils by recruiting village labour as strike-breaking force.¹²

The flow of labour between villages and tea estates was regulated by the varying needs of the planters, who employed villager as extra labour in rush periods or on contract for specific tasks such as weeding while keeping their regular Tamil labour nucleus. At the time of labour shortage planters become beware of contract labourers.¹³

4.1.4 In the Field of Education

The long settled Tamils were given greater facility for education. In that way a large number of Tamils got better education. English education was provided mainly by Christian missionary schools. The government had limited state schools and granted state aid to private schools. Local personnel who were proficient in English were appointed for junior and middle level bureaucratic positions. Hence English education came to be valued and it spread outwards, particularly to Jaffna, where a number of mission schools was established. English education became the primary means of economic advancement, social mobility and elite status.¹⁴

At the close of the 19th century the prestigious civil service, the apex post of the colonial administrative structure, was opened for Sri Lankans. This facilitated English educated peoples to join the state service. Majority of them were Tamils. Along with the government service, the English educated went into medical, legal and teaching professions, engineering technical and allied occupations, banking, brokerage and mercantile jobs.¹⁵

In trade and commerce the Tamil speaking Indians and Muslims were dominant. In administration throughout there were a large number of anglicized, often Christian, Sinhalese and mostly Tamils. In Sinhala areas Tamils appeared in super-ordinate positions of bureaucratic authority and economic power and also held very lowly positions as estate laborers. There was a proliferation of the cultural division of labor that overflowed ethnic regions. Some Sinhalese and Tamils, especially of the middle class elite, developed positive attitudes toward each other as they made contact at places of employment, educational institutions, and public places in the mid nineteenth century. As the nation moved into twentieth century their interest collided and enhanced contact led to more ethnic consciousness and the asymmetry of relations led to incipient antagonism.¹⁶

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the urban population of the island grew, particularly in the Sinhala areas connected to the European market. Skilled Tamils and Sinhalese moved into commercial towns. Given the fact that commerce operated through networks, it became clear that earlier ethnic networks played an important part in the commercial success of Tamils and Tamil speaking foreigners.¹⁷

4.1.5 In the field of Administration

In 1911 the legislative council was established and Tamils and Sinhalese elite came together. At that time the national leadership roles fell into the hands of Tamils. They came together as equal partners on a vague platform of nationalism engendered by class

interest not on the basis of anti-colonialism or desire for political liberation.¹⁸

At that time inter-caste rivalry among Sinhalese was of greater importance. The Karava Sinhalese were economically and politically dominant groups and *Goyigama* Sinhalese instead tried to end *Karava* domination. But the 1915 Sinhalese Muslim riots were suppressed by the government and this forced the imprisonment of many Sinhalese leaders. For releasing those leaders they had to change the martial law. This strengthened the unity of Sinhalese community and that led to the formation of the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in 1919.¹⁹

The introduction of territorial representation, the elective principle and segregated formations gave rise to mobilization of the respective ethnic communities for political purposes. The constitutional reform got momentum in 1920 when the Tamils took on a new self-images as a national minority. So they wanted a Tamil political leadership and then resorted to demanding communally weighted representation and sought legal safeguards to bargain with the Sinhalese leaderships. The constitutional reform process gathered momentum after 1920. The Tamils took on a new self-image as a national minority.

4.2 After Independence

At the time of independence Sri Lanka had one of the highest literacy rates among Asian countries. The British gave top priority to education as part of their welfare programme. In course of time English education also created cleavages in the Sri Lankan society.

The education among Sinhalese was disadvantageous for seeking employment and other opportunities.²⁰

Another impact of colonialism was that within the society class divisions had emerged. There was a small number of upper middle class and they were often limited by kinship. This group stood at the apex of the social structure. They were subordinated only to British officials. Among this small group were two segments, namely plantation interests and those in colonial administrative service. Plantations concentrated on forest clearing, building and transport contractors, retail trade, suppliers of food and so on. The offices in the colonial service had knowledge of English language and they were qualified for higher positions of power. But these two segments gradually went for professions, estates agency, export business, shipping and commerce.

There were also lower middle class which included the salaried persons in the public sector, mercantile and banking, teachers, professionals, small land owning farmers, traders and shop keepers. These groups did not share a common class consciousness; sometimes they voiced support for militant trade unions allied to left-wing parties. They periodically engaged in strike actions and won for themselves better salaries and improved conditions of service.

At the bottom of this social stratum was the working class. They can be divided into both urban and rural. The urban workers had their own organization and they had better solidarity and militancy. The rural workers were largely unorganized and find

only seasonal employment. The plantation workers consisted of Indian immigrants working on tea and rubber estates, and they contributed the largest component of the working class. They were the most discriminated and exploited among all working classes in the Sri Lankan society.²¹

The majority of plantation workers were organized in a party known as the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) under the leadership of S. Thondaman who was a member of Jayewardene's cabinet. As plantations were a major foreign exchange earner the government followed some kind of appeasement policy towards this sector. But Thondaman was against it. In all these agitations the Indian Tamil peasants were less involved. At the same time they played a crucial role in the upliftment of the plantation sector and thereby the improved position of the country in the world market. Since they were coming from India as labour force in British plantations, without any rights, they became the most unorganized class in the country. In other words, they were the harmless community and most useful for the economy until the 1983 violence.²²

The various governments which came to power after the independence tried to marginalize the Tamils in Sri Lanka by various measures. It was the United National Party (UNP), a party led by the majority Sinhalese, which came to power immediately after independence. UNP led by Stephen Senanayake was the major party which was founded in 1946 by a change of name of Ceylon National Congress (CNC). In the initial stages its members

included the right-oriented conservatives of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. But later it became a Sinhalese dominant group. It was the UNP which won the 1947 general elections and assumed power from the British.²³

The UNP government had not interfered with the land ownership patterns that existed and the powers of the landlords. That was because the party's electoral support was the Sinhalese landlords of the low-country areas who through their hold over the rural peasants were able to influence their voting.²⁴

4.2.1 In the Political Field

The Ceylon citizenship Act No.18 of 1948 brought all Indian Tamils both born and domiciled in Sri Lanka ineligible for Sri Lankan citizenship. The law defined the qualifications necessary for citizenship as persons who born before or after 15 November 1948. This was deliberately aimed at excluding the Indian Tamils from Sri Lankan citizenship.

According to the provisions of the 1948 law a person born in Sri Lanka before 15 November 1948 become a citizen of Sri Lanka only if his father was born in Ceylon or his paternal grandfather and paternal great grand father were born in Ceylon. This legal formulation was designed to deny citizenship to the plantation Tamils of Indian origin, not only those living, but those still to be born. With this citizenship law nearly a million men women, and children of Indian origin working and living in the country lost their citizenship. In other words, a million lost their homeland and became non-citizens. So, it is clear that the Sinhalese

regarded the Indian Tamils as a slave community, and they were treated with contempt. This legislation denied political rights to both Indian Tamils and those with Sri Lankan origin. By the Citizenship Act political representation was also reduced. Most of the Indian Tamils whose ancestors had been brought by British to work in the plantations became stateless.²⁵

D. Senanayake the chairman of the Land Commission in 1920s, had for a long time viewed the Tamils of Indian origin with disfavour and argued that they were not permanent residents of Sri Lanka. The Interim Report of 1927 defined "Ceylonese" so as to exclude the Indian Tamils. The report stated that Ceylonese mean Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils, Burghers, Ceylon Moormen, Ceylon Malays and Europeans in Ceylon, that is, those who had adopted Ceylon as their permanent home.²⁶ Based on this report the Land Development Ordinance of 1935, framed by D.S Senanayake as minister of agriculture and lands excluded Indian Tamils from the benefits of land, alienation by the government.

As early as 1940, Senannayeke said,

It is unthinkable that we should give... full rights of citizenship to people who have not made Ceylon their permanent home. The vast majority of the Indians in Ceylon consider India to be their home and Ceylon their place of occupation.. They are here only to earn and to make money and to take it a way to India. ...Unless we stem the tide of the growing

domination of Indian in Ceylon in our economic and social life, our extinction as a Ceylonese nation is inevitable.²⁷

He made some arguments in favour of his comments. He said the Tamils had bolstered the Tamil population to 23% in the Island. They had expressed the working class solidarity and increasing militancy in 1930-40. They also supported the left wing political parties. All these denials, deprivations and discriminations were only for the establishment of ‘Sinhalese Nation’ in Sri Lanka by the political leaders. Moreover, the solidarity of Tamil working class with their Sinhalese counterpart was a constant threat to the upper class control of the state. These fears forced Senanayake to hit at the very root of the democratic strength of the working class of Ceylon.²⁸

4.2.2 In Service Sector

On 5 June 1956, immediately after assuming power prime minister Bandaranaike introduced in the Sri Lankan Parliament, a bill to make the Sinhala the only official language of Sri Lanka.²⁹

Reacting to this bill G.G Ponnambalam the leader of the Tamil Congress said:

The imposition of Sinhala as the sole official language of this country must inevitably and inexorably put an end, even if that is not your real objective today, to the Tamil nation and Tamil people as such.³⁰

Before the bill was passed, English was the official language of Sri Lanka. And the bill provision was given to retain the English language until 31 December 1960. This act demanded the proficiency of Sinhala in the civil service. The officials who did not know Sinhala were deprived of the right of increments and promotions on this ground. So Tamils were forced to learn Sinhala language or leave employment. So many English medium schools were closed by the minister of education.³¹

By passing the Sinhala only Act, the Tamils who were proficient in English language were prohibited from using English language. This negated the purpose of education and shut out Tamils from their traditional source of employment. But simply by knowing the “official language”, it became easy for the Sinhalese to have employment without any competition. Tamil entrants to the civil service had to pass Sinhala examination, and a policy of discrimination in favour of Sinhalese in University was introduced.³² As a result the Sinhalese became the official rulers and Tamils were reduced to the status of a mere subject people. In fact, the employment opportunities in the public service were thus, practically closed to Tamils.

In view of the adverse language and employment policy of the central government after 1956, the urban middle class Tamils increasingly entered professions and business that requires higher degrees of literacy skill, technical expertise, self-help and self employment but were compelled to do so outside Jaffna in areas where better opportunities were present. This situation drastically underlines low capacity that the Jaffna economy had to absorb much of its new educated lower middle class in this period. It also explains University admission policies which struck Jaffna Tamil Youths in the early 1970s by sharply reducing access to professional and technical programmes like medicine, engineering and physical sciences. The real motive on each of this occasion was economic i.e. to prevent Tamils from earning money and to eliminate them in employment and business.³³

4.2.3 In Land Holdings

The unevenness of benefits of the development can be gauged from the uneven spread of irrigation facilities, which overwhelmingly favoured Sinhalese dominated areas in the region. By the end of the 1970s 94% of the North Central province were irrigated, while it was only 76% in Amparai district. Among Tamil populated areas, Mannar was highly irrigated with 88% of coverage. The other districts such as Trincomalee and Vavuniya were irrigated below 59%. The main center of Sri Lankan Tamil population, the Jaffna and Batticaloa districts had less than 33% irrigated land.

The overall government policies increased the control of land by members of the majority group and provided broader bases of support to its elite. The political leadership of newly settled areas went to Sinhalese leaders and former public servants. This elite group was originally from the low-country Sinhalese areas.³⁴ The new infrastructural and functional links would be forged with the Sinhalese-dominated center and the Tricomalee area would acquire a new strategic importance as a national center of industry and trade. The ethnic ratios in Tricomalee district were already sensitively balanced at parity between the Sinhalese and Tamil communities as a result of state-sponsored settlement. Thus the Sinhalese control of the district and its growing economic opportunities increased.³⁵

4.2.4 Education

Tamils were marginalized in the education sector not only by 'Sinhala' only act, but also by the standardization programme. Bandaranaike government in 1970 introduced the standardization programme. It was a notorious selective device which was mainly aimed at subjugating the Tamil students. According to this programme, the Tamil students were required to obtain a higher aggregate of marks for university admissions than their Sinhalese counterparts.³⁶ This severely undermined the Tamil prospects for higher studies and the rights to higher education.

Closing of English medium schools and standardization programmes came as a shock to the Tamil students. By this way, the Tamil students, who were proficient in English, and had better chances

to get admission in universities and also to get employment in government and other sectors, were marginalized. The Sinhala students who had poor knowledge of English were lagging far behind the Tamils who easily got university admissions and placement. With the benefit of this Sinhala policy being advantageous to Sinhalese people and also to appease Sinhala clergy, the government introduced various destructive measures, which ultimately threatened the very future of the Tamil population. This also caused unemployment among the Tamils and became an important issue later on. This was one of the reasons why Tamil youths became more militant in their approach.

NOTES

- ¹ Pradeep Bhargava, Political Economy of Sri Lanka (New Delhi: Navarang, 1987) p.35, Chelvadurai Manogaran, Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1987), pp.26-27.

There is no consensus as to the date of the establishment f the Jaffna Kingdom. But some Tamil scholars believe it was founded soon after the invasion of the island by Magha of Kalinga. Even Sinhalese historians C.W Nicholas and S. Paranavitana have suggested that the Tamils secured control of the northern province in the thirteenth century. Thus Sinhalese and Tamil historians agree that the kingdom was certainly in existence by 1325. According to Gananath Obeyesekare, The Tamils of the present day Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts owed allegiance to the king of Kandy rather than to the King of Jaffna. Some others suggested that by 1325 the Tamil rulers were strong enough to hold suzerainty over a large area in northern Sri Lanka as far as the coast of Puttalam.

- ² Satchi Ponnambalam, Sri Lanka: National Conflict and the Tamil Liberation Struggle (London: Zed books, 1983), p.41.

- ³ Jean, Gross Holtz, *Forgoing Capitalist Patriarchy: The Economic and Social Transformation of Feudal Sri Lanka and its Impact on Woman* (Durham N.C: Duke Press: Policy Studies, 1984), pp.31-33.

The Portuguese writer Fernando de Queyyroz was in no way deluded by the banners of Christianity his fellowmen carried. He reported a visit to Ceylon by saint Francis Xaviour in the middle of the sixteenth century. On leaving the island Saint Francis took off his shoes and left on the shore, saying, that not even the dust of so wicked a land would he take with him. And as he could not have said him in a material sense, it gave matter for long discussions as to whether he spoke of the Moors who were declared enemies or of the perfidy of the natives or of the proceedings of the Portuguese or of all of these which seems most likely.

- ⁴ G.C. Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo: Educational Publishers, 1952), p.15.

- ⁵ Satchi Ponnambalam, n.2, p.41.

- ⁶ Ibid., p.42.

- ⁷ G.C. Mendis, n.4, pp.13-14.

- ⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

- ⁹ Ibid.

- ¹⁰ Patrick, Peebles, *The Transformation of Colonial Elite: Mudaliyars of 19th Century Ceylon* (University of Chicago: D.Phil Dissertation), p.245.

- ¹¹ Satchi Ponnambalam , n.2, p.42.

- ¹² Y. Fries and Bibin, *The Undesirable*, (Calcutta, 1984), pp.13-14.

- ¹³ Eric Meyer, "Enclave Plantations, Hemmed-in Villages and Dualistic Representations in Colonial Ceylon" *Journal of Peasant Studies* (London), April- July 1992, p.209.

- ¹⁴ D.Thenduwara, Gamage, "How did British Colonial Policy Influenced the Contemporary System of Sri Lankan Education", *Asian Profile* (Hong Kong), Vol.19, No.5, October 1991, p.477., G.C. Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo, Apothecaries, 1952), pp. 78-79.

- ¹⁵ Satchi Ponnabalam, n.2, p.43.

- ¹⁶ Chelvadurai Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1987), p.19.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Gananath, Obeysekere, "Political Violence and Future of Democracy in Sri Lanka in Committee for Rational Development" (ed.) *Sri Lanka : The Ethnic Conflict, Myths, Realities and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Navrang, 1984), p.73.
- ¹⁹ Satchi Ponnambalam, n.2. p.48-49.
- ²⁰ Pradeep, n.1, p.41.
- ²¹ Ibid., p.44.
- ²² Ibid., p.223
- ²³ Mohan Ram, *Sri Lanka The Fractured Island* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989), p.31.
- ²⁴ Sachi Ponnambalam, *Dependent Capitalism in Crisis: The Sri Lankan Economy 1948-1980* (London: Zed Books, 1980), p. 21.
- ²⁵ The Citizenship Act No18 of 1948.
- 4(1) Subject to other provisions of this Part, a person born in Ceylon before the appointed date (i.e. 15 November 1948) shall have the status of citizen of Ceylon by decent, if (a) his father was born in Ceylon or (b) his paternal grand father and paternal great grand father were born in Ceylon
- (2) a person born outside Ceylon before the appointed date shall have the status of a citizen of Ceylon by decent, if (a) his father his paternal grand father and was born in Ceylon or (b) his paternal grand father and paternal great grand father were born in Ceylon.
- 5 (1) ...a person 3 born in Ceylon on or after the appointed date shall have the status of citizen of Ceylon by decent, if at the time of his birth his father was a citizen of Ceylon
- ²⁶ Satchi Ponnambalam, n.2. p.76.
- ²⁷ Ibid.

- ²⁸ A. Aziz, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka : An Analysis" *Scandinavian Journal of Development Alternatives* (Stockholm), Vol.VII. No.3, September 1989, pp.112-113.
- ²⁹ Chelvadurai Manogaran, n.17, p.47.
- ³⁰ Satchi Ponnambalam, n.2, p.101.
- ³¹ M.V.M. Alagappan, Multiple Oppression with Genocidal intent" in M.V.M. Alagappan (ed.) *Tears in Tear drop Island* (New Delhi: Sterling, 1985), p.81.
- ³² Special Correspondent, "Sri Lanka a Small and Soluble War", *Economist* (London), Vol. 296. No.7405, August 1985, p.15.
- ³³ Amita Sastri, The Material Basis for Sparatism: The Tamil Eelam movement in Sri Lanka," *Journal Asian Studies* (Chicago), Vol.49, No.1, February 1990, p.72.
- ³⁴ Ibid., pp.61-62., After the 1930s, successive government dominated by the Sinhalese elite also sought to alleviate the rural poverty and unemployment in the Sinhalese regions by irrigation expansion, land development, and peasant resettlement. Government initiatives supported a significant movement of the Sinhalese population from over crowded parts of the Wet Zone to newly developed locations in the Dry Zone. It seems responsible to assert that very little migration from Sinhalese areas to these previously dry, peripheral and inhospitable areas would have taken place otherwise. In carrying out this program, the institution of electoral democracy, the goals of economic progress and self-sufficiency and concern for the welfare of the indigent rural population formed a pool of powerful legitimating instruments and symbols for the central elite.
- ³⁵ Ibid, p.64., The Sinhalese dominated unitary state both explicitly and implicitly promoted their interests. These factors intensified the perception among the Tamils that they were being inexorably marginalized even with their own areas. The terms of trade discriminated against them in the interests of social peace in the Sinhalese areas.
- ³⁶ M.V.M. Alagappan, n.31, pp.81-82.

Chapter 5

Uneven Capitalist Development in Sri Lanka

- 5.1 Earlier Development of Sri Lanka Settlement System
- 5.2 Salient Features of British Settlement System
- 5.3 Development of Capitalism in Sri Lanka
- 5.4 Ethno-Spatial Population Clusters
- 5.5 Conflict Over Territory
- 5.6 Rural Development
- 5.7 Urbanization of Sri Lanka
- 5.8 Mahaveli Project
- 5.9 Conclusion

CHAPTER 5

UNEVEN CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is a tropical island with central mass of highland and mountains where most of the rivers originate and drain radically towards the surrounding lowlands and the coast. The island's climate is very much dependent upon rainfall which is seasonal. According to the availability of rainfall the whole country is divided into *Dry Zone* and *Wet Zone*. Dry zone receives less than seventy five inches of rainfall which occupy sixty percent of the country and Wet zone receives more than seventy five inches. This zone covers mainly south western part of the country and north east is dry zone.¹

The population of the Sri Lanka is composed mainly of Sinhalese(about 75%), who are Theravada Buddhists; Hindu Tamils make the largest minority (some 18%), and there are smaller groups of Muslim, Burghers (descendants of Dutch and Portuguese colonists), and Eurasians (descended from British colonists). The official languages is Sinhala, Tamil is the second national language, and English is commonly used in government.²

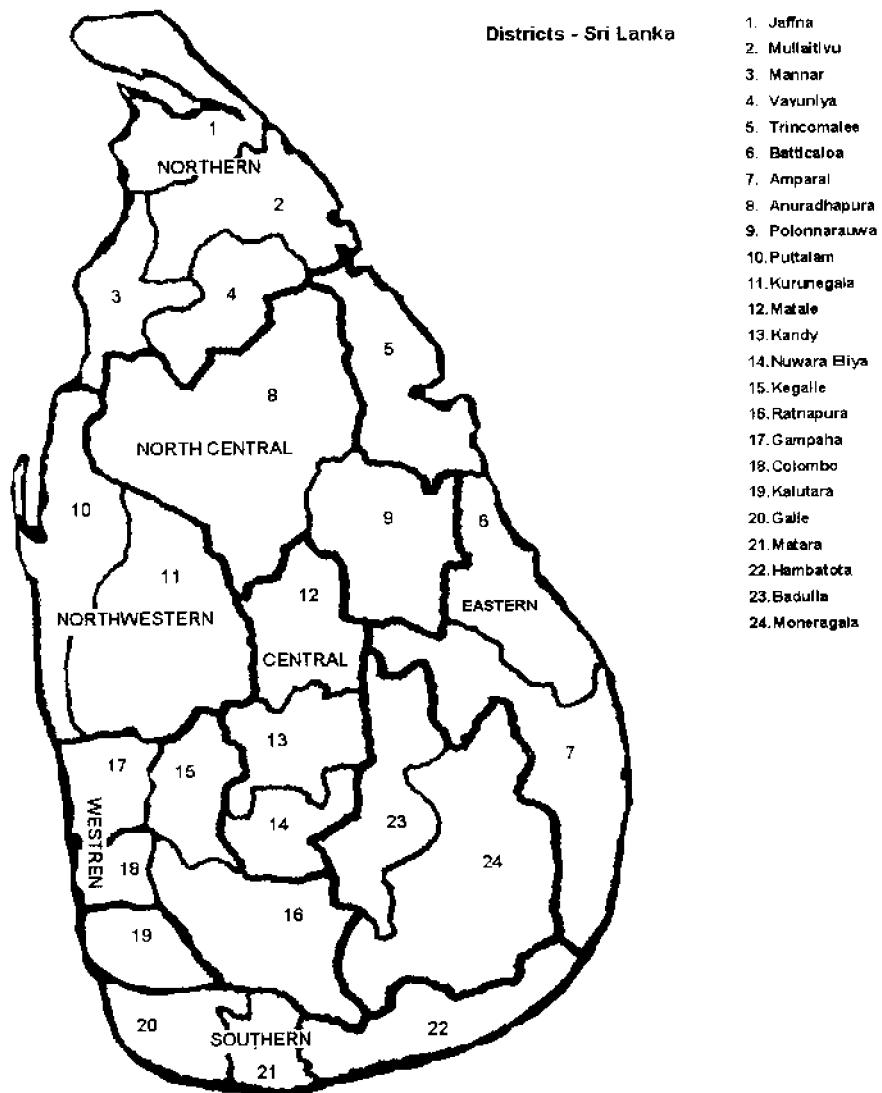


Figure 5.1

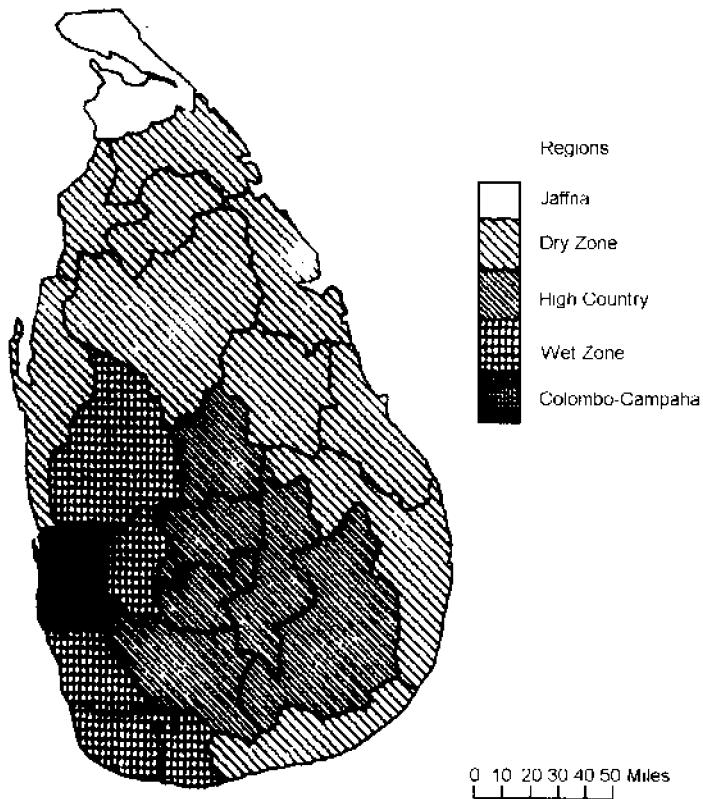


Figure 5.2

5.1. Earlier Development of Sri Lanka Settlement System

The land settlement system of Sri Lanka started about 500 B.C. In early stages the settlement had taken place along the river valleys. These types of settlements were mainly found in Northern plain and Southern lowlands.

Under the Portuguese (1505-1658) and Dutch (1658-1796) rule, trade had increased and the Dry Zone settlement based on

irrigation system declined. Internal agricultural development was not their aim. Their main objective was the expansion of trade supported by coast, port and fort settlement. But, they had given importance to rainfall crops such as cinnamon and spices. As a result, the Wet Zone area became heavily populated.³

During the British rule the development policies were focused on Colombo, the capital and chief port. The highland agricultural products such as tea, rubber and coconut were the export items and the manufactured products from these items were imported into the country. They neglected the development of Dry Zone area. The majority of country's rice production took place in that area. This brought inevitable results in the food production of country during that time.⁴

During the first phase of the British rule in Sri Lanka, the primary economic purpose was to extract spices, particularly cinnamon for sale in Europe. But it did not last long because cinnamon had already been planted in Indonesia. Cinnamon suffered enormous losses in the European markets, as the import duty took the largest part of the price and profit fell. European investors withdraw from the trade and eventually the duty was repealed. Since attractive substitute were produced in other countries, the cinnamon production in Sri Lanka declined. So they had developed other native products such as clothes and rice to replace cinnamon. The financial position of the state became questionable. In this situation the British in Sri Lanka changed to plantation sector for the production of export commodities.

Tea, rubber and coconut were mainly planted in the country. This plantation economy was more labor intensive. A large number of workers came from south India, and also from the village population within the country. The Sinhalese worked only part time on the plantations, because agriculture, which was his main source of income, and it was highly seasonal.⁵

At that time the policies of government of Sri Lanka destroyed the basic industries of foreign trade between India and Sri Lanka. Along with trade relations, diplomatic and cultural ties also were destroyed. Thus Sri Lanka was isolated from its neighbours and oriented toward London money market and manufacturing enterprises. Antony Bertolacci who was comptroller general of customs and acting auditor general of civil accounts in the colony, wrote a thorough account of the country and economic problems in 1817. Almost constant warfare and the diversion of service tenures to other enterprises had devastated the former irrigation system that had provided a livelihood for the population.

The province of Batticaloa seems particularly to have declined in prosperity during the first years of the British administration. For some time previous to our taking possession of that country, the province of Batticola furnished annually from four to five thousand head of cattle for the consumption of the Dutch troops stationed at Trincomalee. A few years after our conquest it was necessary to send bullocks

from Tricomalee to Batticola, for the provision of twenty or thirty British soldiers stationed at the latter post...The district of Wanny, a fine flat country, particularly adapted to the cultivation of rice had undergone, at various times, great and general changes in its prosperity. There are now the remains of upwards of 600 tanks- some of great extent- made to collect water for irrigation of the paddy fields. This fertile country was in a highly flourishing state long before the Dutch had possession of the island: but had considerably declined from that condition, during the first years of their government. At... times the kings of Wanny were independent... Ultimately submitted to Dutch ... troops marching through depopulated country... when British troops marched through it was depopulated again ... I passed it in 1799 and saw many villages left desolate, without a single inhabitant ... it is the driest district in the island (and can be used for) the cultivation of rice... (but for that purpose) there is need to restore tanks. ⁶

5.2 Salient Features of British Settlement System

We can sum up main features of British settlement system as :

- They developed Colombo as the capital and chief port.
- They developed Tricomalee as a naval base for their Eastern Empire.
- They divided the island into nine provinces and twenty districts as the basis for decentralized regional administration and the subsequent growth of capital cities of these province and districts.
- They developed tea and rubber plantations. The road and railway network spread all over the country. They developed mainly southwest low land and Jaffna rather than the Dry Zone area.⁷

5.3 Development of Capitalism in Sri Lanka

The 'land and labor' policies of colonial rule transformed from feudal, village based economic system in to a structure of property ownership, wage and rules based economic system in Sri Lanka. The colony capitalism is the condition common to developed countries in the twentieth century. It is the common nature of imperialism which is the label one would use for the form of power and extension of capitalism of the colonizing state. They exploited the native labor and resources to create surplus value to support the colony's native ruling class.⁸ When the British acquired the whole country they created the feeling that they introduced democracy in the country. But they gradually revealed their ability of ignoring the rights of the inhabitants in the country, and asserted their own rights to exploit land and

labor which rested up on the widespread acceptance of this ideology.

Initially to the British in Sri Lanka, the economic purpose of the colony was to extract cinnamon for trade in Europe. Gradually this situation changed Sri Lanka had become a plantation economy and supplied export products such as rubber and tea. During that time the British economy began to feel the financial drain as capital flowed out to the colonies to the detriment of the home economy.⁹ And the export of the British capital was realized from the surplus value created by the labors is the country. In this background Rosa Luxemburg commented on how capitalism, differs from other economic system based on exploitation,

The basic law of capitalist production is not only profit in the sense of glittering bullion, but constantly growing profit the capitalist uses the fruit of exploitation not exclusively, and not even primarily, for personal luxury, but more and more to increase exploitation itself. The largest part of the profits gained is put back in to capital and used to expand production. The capital thus mounts up, or as Marx calls it, accumulates.¹⁰

Another feature was the development of plantation economy in Sri Lanka by British. They brought the mountains of the Kandy province under plantations. It demanded radical and structured change in the landholding system and the use of labor. This

development in plantation sector paved the way for reduction in agricultural production. Another reason for the reduced agricultural production was depopulation and failure of irrigation schemes. The depopulation and the failure of irrigation scheme were caused by the destruction of agriculture and thereby a shortage of rice in the country. Under the British rule the island did not produce the quantity of rice that was sufficient to feed its own population. Much of it was imported from the coasts of Malabar and coromandel and from the Bengal. Another region was Canada which produced a large surplus.¹¹ Antony Bertolacci commented that,

The territory under the British government does not produce the quantity of rice that is sufficient to feed its own population. Much of it was, at all times, and still continues to be, imported from the coast of Malabar and Coromandel and from Bengal and very large supply was received from the Canadian country, which produced a large surplus. But as, the population of that territory was greatly augmented from the introduction of vaccination, in a manner above stated, so that surplus of food was proportionately diminished.¹²

It is clear from the above comment that the destruction of Sri Lanka native economy took place as a result of the British policy. The trading partners that had provided the island with rice and

cloth in exchange for its cinnamon were almost totally obliterated. The basis of the feudal political economy was now completely absent. The surplus wealth that maintained the kingdom and sustained the population during times of drought or failure of the rice crop was no longer available. The wealth accrued from the export items were diverted to British for food and clothing.

5.3.1 Introduction of Property Ownership

For changing the situation of starvation British introduced a new system of land holding. First among them was “Chena” holding. Which means the land or jungle used to plant dry grain crops or fruits. When the crops were harvested, the land was abandoned for many years before it would be used again. This type of cultivation was concentrated mainly on corner or dry down rice cultivating area. Vegetable garden were often used for this propose. An important thing to remember here is that no claim to ownership was established by the use of this land, but the right to cultivate unused forest was permitted.¹³

Actually in Sri Lanka some of them believed that the idea of Chena was originally the idea of natural right to use of property by reason of labor. So as time passed this had come to mean family possession of certain chenas. Eventually this means that a given paddy field or coconut field had a chena attached to it was transferred along with the paddy field. When they need, they used these lands as a necessary resource to be used.¹⁴

The British rule generated the property ownership in the country. In the maritime regions the Dutch had imposed Roman Dutch law

and created *Thombos*, or land registration to adept the local use of land to their legal system. The British took over this system in areas the Dutch had surveyed. At the same time the local law was left intact and some part of lives of the residents was expected to be regulated by traditional law and custom. They brought ownership of property and law of inheritance of contract. They institutionalized a property system in the society and thereby changed the basis of government and created legal rules to protect those rights. A British governor in Sri Lanka Frederick North asserted that *the establishment of private property is the object of all my institutions.*¹⁵

At that time there was no uniform law regarding the possession of land. Discussion and negotiations of land on property ownership was complicated. Because the British assumed that any lands not permanently assigned or not under cultivation were empty and unused and at the same time the Sinhalese often regarded such lands to be used if necessary. Vast areas of uncultivated land were taken for the cultivation of coffee rubber and tea by the British. Such process led to the transfer of property rights and transfer of land from Sinhalese to Europeans. These plantations absorbed labors from other countries also. And the Bank of Ceylon was opened in 1840 under the royal charter. It was opened mainly on financial interests. The introduction of private property enabled some big financial agencies to hold control over large areas. The opening up of a Bank facilitated the take over of major portion of land under the British control.¹⁶

5.3.2 Crown Lands Ordinance of 1840

When plantations increased, the demand for land also increased and the government of Ceylon passed the Crown lands Ordinance in 1840. As per this ordinance, all forest, waste or uncultivated land was to be presumed to be the property of the Ceylon government until the country proves its ownership. This opened up vast stretches of land and effectively disposed the native people of all but their paddy fields. Furthermore uses of chenas were to be severely restricted indeed eliminated. In the Kandy areas chenas were deemed to belong to the crown and not to be the property of any private person claiming these areas against the crown, unless the claimant could show proof of having paid customary dues, taxes or services within twenty years on the same scale as that rendered within the same period for similar lands of private owners. In low country chenas and other lands only cultivated at certain intervals were declared forest or wasteland.

This left surveying, search of title and establishment of proof of tenure up to the individual who claimed the land and it meant that the poorer proprietor would have to give up right that he could not afford to substantiate. It also meant that cases where taxes had not been paid, owners would have to pay out considerable sums in taxes in order to lay claim to their land. Again the government posted its intent to sell land in the Gazette in English. It meant that claimants who did not read English or understand the new system were disadvantaged.¹⁷ Positive effect of Chena cultivation was that it increased job opportunities for poor people especially poor women. The large cultivation in chena

were not for subsistence but to make profits in the market. The negative side of the chena cultivation was pointed by Rhys-David :

Chena cultivation prevents civilized habits and enterprises; It is unwholesome and unhealthy; it is incompatible with paddy or other more remunerative cultivation because the working times clash; it destroys forest resources; and the rotation of the soil prevents any permanent improvement of the land.¹⁸

This ordinance brought about a transformation of land in to a commodity that could be owned by private individuals. But it brought direct conflict with Budhist temples. Large allocations of land in the past had been granted by Sinhalese kings to Budhist temples and seminaries. For maintenance some parts of these lands were farmed by peasants, who gave part of their product to the temple and used the rest for their own subsistence. The temples paid no tax or service to the authority but peasants on their land gave service to the temple. Some parts of the temple land were in forest and some part in chena. These were part and parcel of the national religious establishment in Sri Lanka.¹⁹

5.3.3 Temple Lands Registration Act

The temple land registration act enacted in 1856 enabled all lands claimed by the temples to be clearly demarcated with boundaries drawn delineating from crown land.

Under this ordinance all land claimed by the temples had for the purpose of the preparation of the register of temple lands, to be surveyed at the expense partly of the temple and partly of the government. Some of the temples owning large extents of land, in order to escape heavy survey charges, were compelled to omit claims to large portions of their temporalities. As almost all these unclaimed temple lands were undeveloped forest and waste they vested in Crown under the legislation previously referred to.²⁰

This ordinance deprived the land of many temples in the island. And at the same time all land claimed by the temples should be clearly demarcated with boundaries drawn delineating from crown land.

5.3.4 Waste Land Ordinance of 1897

Empowering the land ownership of British they passed *wasteland Ordinance in 1897*. This gave the Crown the right to take legal possession of any land where there existed no proof or title. This ordinance laid down that all chenas and other lands cultivated only at intervals would come under the ownership of crown. It affected paddy lands and house plots.

All these land policies had driven thousands of natives from the use of land in their own country and self sufficiency of the villages was lost. British had vested interest in keeping the price of rice low. Low price of rice drove many peasants into cash crops such

as coffee, rubber and tea. The irrigation system was also unfavourable to grow rice. The tank system in the north had fallen into disrepair during that time. Without irrigation system in north dry zone land was not suitable for either plantation crops or rice and paddy.

At the same time the communication facilities improved in the country this led to the expansion of the market and rise of merchant capitalism. Then a group of local bourgeoisie emerged and established a plantation capitalism and commercialization of the economy. In this way British policies in Sri Lanka changed with their attitudes. The European controlled Chamber of Commerce declared their interests as follows

Most of us are planters. Our interests are in many respects identical with those of the (European) planters. It is true that many of them have shown us the way and they deserve the credit for having brought capital into the country and shown us the path along which we may all win prosperity. We have followed in their footsteps and our interests are now the same.²¹

Directly and indirectly, British owned most of the plantations and controlled all of the trade and finance. The imperialist attitude of British intensified the rivalry between Tamils and Sinhalese kingdoms. What actually happened was that local peasants especially Sinhalese who had any lands of their own refused to

work under the brutally exploitative conditions of the plantations. In this situation British brought laborers from nearby South Indian state Tamil Nadu. Sinhalese population blamed the loss of their lands on these labours as well as planters. They seemed to look upon the poor laboures as an alien economic power. ²²

5.4. Ethno -Spatial Population Clusters

Table 5.1 Principal Ethnic Groups by Province (Census 1981)

Province	Sinhalese	Sri Lankan Tamil	Indian Tamil	Sri Lankan Moor	Burgher	Malay	Others
Western	3,321,830	228,516	59,402	238,728	28,542	31,670	11,119
Central	1,318,530	149,819	380,826	146,937	3,090	4,465	5,581
Southern	1,789,914	14,454	25,215	46,699	575	4,710	1,091
Northern	35,128	957,247	63,759	50,831	539	160	1,740
Eastern	243,701	399,299	10,857	315,436	4,158	1,045	755
North-Western	1,532,979	47,202	8,905	109,791	1,002	2,213	2,242
North-Central	774,799	13,293	843	50,413	287	447	1,410
Uva	696,596	42,866	138,357	31,912	683	1,612	2,496
Sabaragamuwa	1,266,091	34,168	130,492	48,180	498	641	1,961
Total	10,979,568	1,886,864	818,656	1,038,927	39,374	46,963	28,398

Source: Dept. of Census and Statistics, Statistical Abstract 1997

The distribution of ethnic group of the country was based on the historical circumstances. The Sinhalese had been spread over the whole island since ancient times and Sri Lanka Tamils who are associated with the Dravidians of south India inhabited the Northeastern part of the island from 13th century onwards. Another important ethnic group moors were the descendants of the Arabs who had participated in coastal trade from early time. Later they settled down and intermarried with the local population and were renamed as Muslims. The Indian Tamils were brought by the British in the 19th century to work in the estate and are geographically isolated and culturally segregate from both the Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhalese of the highlands. Ethnic group such as Malays and Burghers are small in number and they are scattered among other groups.²³

Sri Lanka is an agriculture based multi-ethnic society, its population clustered along ethnic lines. Ethnic concentration is mapped in the figure 5.2. Three levels of clusters are identified in relation to the degree of concentration of any one ethnic group in a particular district.

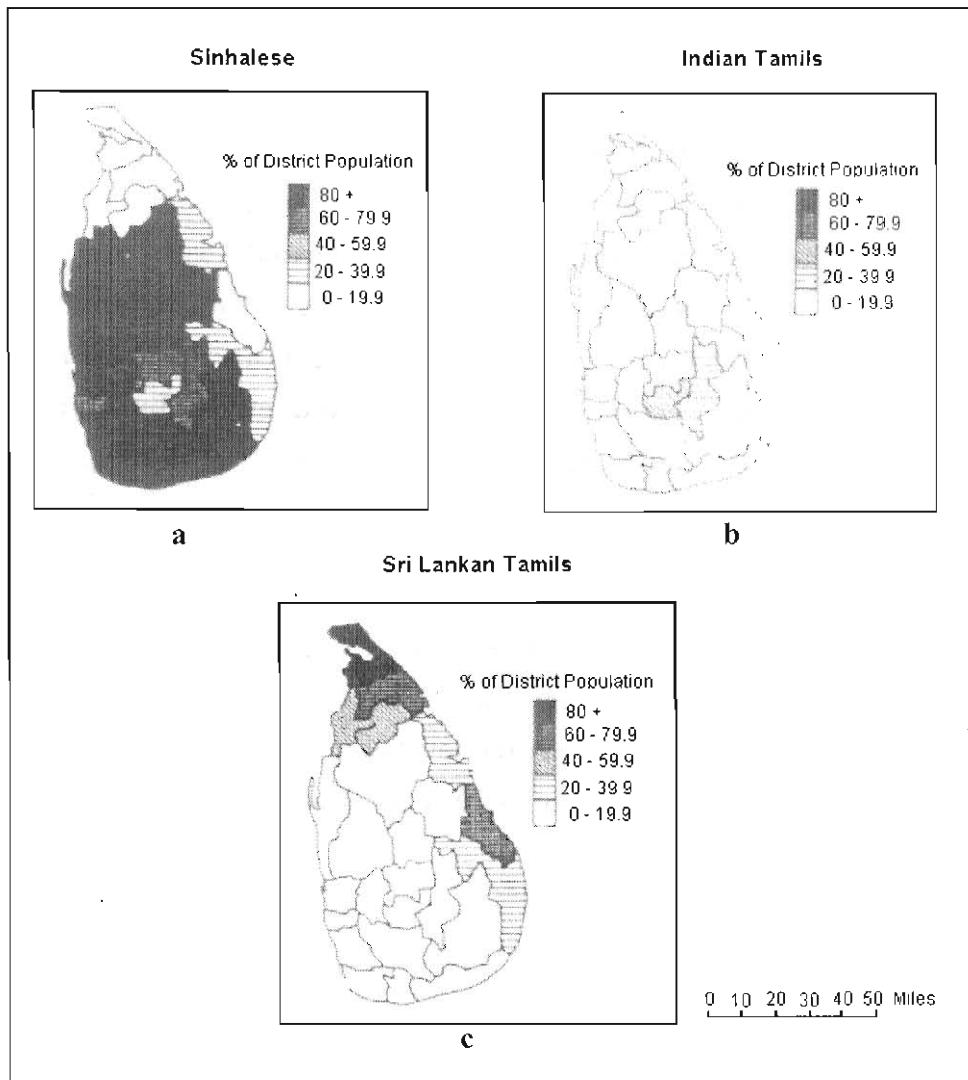


Figure 5.3

From figures it seems that more than eighty percent of the district belongs to one ethnic group. In figure 5.3.a shows the cluster of Sinhalese population Fourteen of the twenty four districts belongs to this category. Among them thirteen district have concentrated Sinhalese population the figure 5.3.b. shows concentration of Indian Tamils. There was no state which has more than eighty or eighty per cent Indian Tamils. There was only one area which has even 40-59 per cent Indian Tamils inhabited. In the figure 5.3.c and one area has a concentration of Sri Lankan Tamil population and two districts has 60-79 per cent of Sri Lankan Tamils concentration.²⁴

Here we can see that total Sinhala population is concentrated in all the districts except those in Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and are majority group in the north districts and Batticaloa. The Indian Tamils are confined to some of the plantation districts and are in the majority in Nuwara Eliya district. The Moors constitute a large proportion of the population in the East i.e. in Amparai, Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts.²⁵

The distribution pattern of ethnic group identities and the areas of geographic concentration reveals that the Indian Tamil has remained geographically and culturally isolated from the surrounding populations. The largest numbers of Sri Lanka Tamils live in Jaffna and Batticaloa districts. Their population has been declining as a proportion of the Sri Lanka population over the years. Because they were migrated to India under the agreements signed by India and Sri Lanka.²⁶

The Sinhalese community is divided into two social strata. i.e. low country Sinhalese and kandyan Sinhalese. They acquired their names from their family origins. The low country Sinhalese are from the coastal belt of the entire island. But this usually means the strip along the western or south western coast. The island's Coastal areas were ruled by Portuguese, Dutch and British. The kandyan Sinhalese are seen to be less urbanized, and less adopt at using English. They were more traditionalist and more solidly Buddhists. Many kandian Sinhalese have faced greater economic hardship than those in the low country. The development of tea estates in the hill country has left the kandian peasantry facing a serve shortage of land. Jaffna district, which is situated at the northern most tip of Sri Lanka, is also in the Dry Zone area and belongs to level one of ethno spatial clusters with predominant Sri Lankan Tamil population concentration.²⁷

The kandian Sinhala enclaves in the plantation or Muslim enclaved villages in Sinhala country remain relatively isolated and unassimilated with other ethnic groups in the region. In the urban areas ethnic identities are preserved despite greater mixing and participation of the groups in different sector of activity. For instance Colombo, city's population is a mix of ethnic groups and so its employment sector consists of all ethnic groups.²⁸

5.5 Conflict Over Territory

Conflict over the ethnic composition of the Northern and eastern regions of Sri Lanka has been a subject of impassioned analysis for more than three decades. Under the pressure of rapid

population growth since 1940s considerable movement of population has occurred within the island. The principal stream of internal migration has involved the movement of settlers mostly Sinhalese from the heavily populated wet zone of the southwest to the sparsely populated north central, north eastern and eastern Dry zone regions. Another smaller migration stream has brought Tamils south from the Jaffna Peninsula to the north eastern and north-central Dry zone districts. The lightly inhabited areas of the Dry Zone had once served as a broad belt of demarcation between the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils. The progressive addition of the population to the Dry Zone has served to blur the boundary between Sinhalese and Tamil settlement bringing in to stark relief the competition for territory.²⁹

The movement of the Sinhalese migrants in to Northern and Eastern territories considered to be with in the traditional Tamil home land has been viewed by Tamil political leaders as a threat to the survival of their community; this was one of the Tamil grievances that contributed to the development of the Tamil separatist movement. At the same, time government sponsored Sinhalese colonization deliberately encroached on distinctively the Tamil territories and threatened the traditional Tamil homeland.³⁰

5.6 Rural Development

Rural development has always been a primary concern of Sri Lankan policy makers. Some of the earliest development

measures were directed towards the control of malaria, eradication of epidemic diseases and, improvement of rural health services. Along with that the rehabilitation of major irrigation works and associated settlement colonization and village expansion schemes also played crucial role. Several laws such as Paddy Lands Act of 1958, Land Reforms of 1972 and 1975 were implemented with the objective of extending social justice in the rural sector. In this, way peasant participation in the production increases with corresponding increased in their incomes and better standards of living.³¹

The successive governments which came to power in Sri Lanka after the independence were dominated by the Sinhalese elite. They sought to alleviate the rural poverty and unemployment in the Sinhalese regions by irrigation expansion, land development, and peasant resettlement. Government initiatives supported a significant movement of the Sinhalese population from over crowded parts of the Wet Zone to newly developed locations in the Dry Zone. Very little migration from Sinhalese areas to the previously dry, peripheral and inhospitable areas took place. In carrying out this program, the goals of economic progress and self-sufficiency and concern for the welfare of the indigent rural population, the government formed a pool of powerful legitimating instruments and symbols for the central elite.³²

Earlier development of the dry zone irrigation and colonization were financed entirely by government of Sri Lanka. But after the liberalization policy of 1977 foreign financing organization played

a major role. The liberal economic policy has not reserved the long term process, predating formal independence in 1948, of re-establishing national control over Sri Lanka's natural resources. This process led to the inclusion of more Sinhalese population in the plantation sector. The proportion of tea and rubber grown by small farmers has increased at the expense of large scale estates worked mainly by Indian laboures. Some estates were taken by government and divided among landless villagers. The number of Indian laborers, most of whom reside in 'line room' on estates, has declined because of repatriation to India. Their place has been taken by Sinhalese who remain resident in villages. The nationalization of most of the estates sector in the early 1970s not only accelerated this process but gave local Sinhalese politicians a voice in the appointment of estate staff. "Estate -village integration", a slogan of the land reform period has indeed been taking place in the political sphere as well as in economics and social interaction.³³

5.7 Urbanization of Sri Lanka

Being part of colonization schemes, urbanization in Sri Lanka is characterized by small and medium sized towns. Following figure shows it clearly;

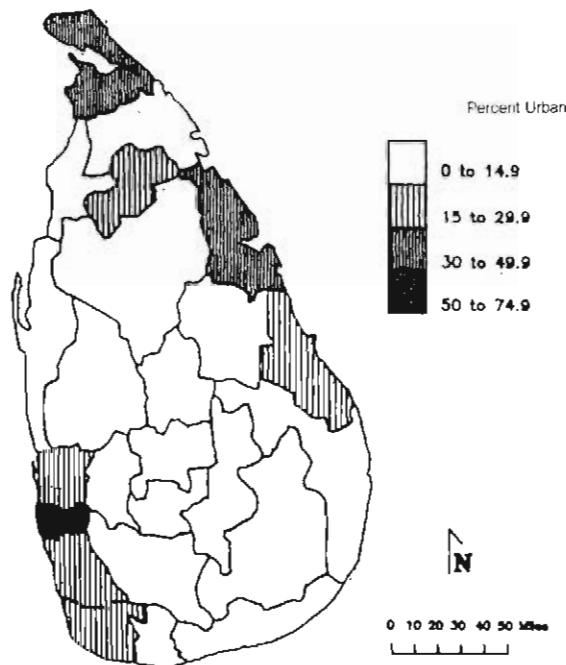


Figure 5.4

From the figure we can see that sixteen of twenty four districts have less than fifteen per cent of their population living in urban centers. Between fifteen to twenty nine per cent of urbanization is in only five districts. Thirty to forty nine percent seen in only two districts, that is Tamil populated areas, such as Jaffna and Batticaloa. According to this figure we can see that only one district has urbanized between fifty to seventy four percent of its total population.

5.7.1 The Effect of the Land Reforms on Tea Plantation

Immediately after 1970, the United Front government tried to take over tea estate in two stages. Firstly they neglected the tea land

and investments by companies. That was because of falling of international price in the 1960s and increasing production cost and constant tax ratios. Secondly, the owner of tea lands reacted against it by delaying necessary long term investment. Thereby dividends and administrative fees of agency houses could be maintained. The takeover of neglected land was the main purpose of the proposed land reform of the United Front in 1970. This was accelerated by the youth movement of 1971. The land alienation and employment generation came to the fore front. The land reform act (already discussed) restricted individual ownership of land to 50 acres. The rest was appropriated by the land reform commission and it was transferred for the greater part to the newly created cooperatives. By take over of the tea estates the public shares of tea increased; 63% of tea land came under state control.³⁴

5.8 Mahaweli Project

The Island's land largest river, the Mahaweli Ganga, has its headwater in the central highlands, and it flows northwestwards through the dry zone and empties in to the Indian ocean near the large harbor and town of Trocomalee.³⁵ The Accelerated Mahaweli development scheme was the most ambitious and comprehensive programme of the land development and settlement started on 29th May 1978. The then Minister of finance and planning Mr. Ronnie de Mel, assured that

I can assure the people of this country that the entire foreign cost of Accelerated Mahaweli Project has already been assured. In addition a large portion of the local component will also come in from abroad. All we need now is to make our own efforts to complete the job.³⁶

Most of the farming in Sri Lanka was carried out in dry zone area. The critical resource needed for farming in this area is water. To ensure an adequate water supply, irrigation is of paramount importance. Recognizing this fact successive governments have invested heavily on irrigation in the dry zone. The Mahaweli project is the most important among them. But the dry zone Tamil areas lag behind and appear to have been neglected. This is shown in the table below

Table 5.2 Showing percentage of selected irrigated land area

Sinhala district	Percentage irrigated	Average size of holding
Puttalam	79.7	3.4
Moneragala	63.2	3.9
Anuradhapura	92.7	4.1
Polonnaruwa	95.3	4.0
Hambantota	92.5	3.0
Tamil Districts		
Jaffna	31.6	1.3
Vavuniya	83.4	5.7
Mannar	94.7	3.7

5.8.1 Location

Historically Mahaweli diversion Scheme began with the ancient Sinhalese kings who diverted the Mahaweli at several points. The Maduru Oya dam is being built on the same site on which an earth filled dam one hundred feet in height and three hundred feet long existed. It is considered a masterpiece of ancient hydro engineering. Canals and Dams that figure prominently in the scheme were built by king Vasabha in 65 A.D., king Upasenain 368 A. D., King Mahasena in 475 A.D, and king Parakrama Babu in 1153 A.D.

Mahaweli development programme was the largest settlement scheme started in Sri Lanka. It was more multi- purpose in its objectives than any of the previous schemes in Sri Lanka.³⁷ The first area to be developed under this programme located in the Gal Oya Basin covers approximately 70000 acres. Within this area nearly 25000 families had benefited through a network of family farms. In family farms each had 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of irrigable land and $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of unirrigable land. These farming populations had got social and economic infrastructure through a hierarchical system of service centers distributed with in the settlement area.

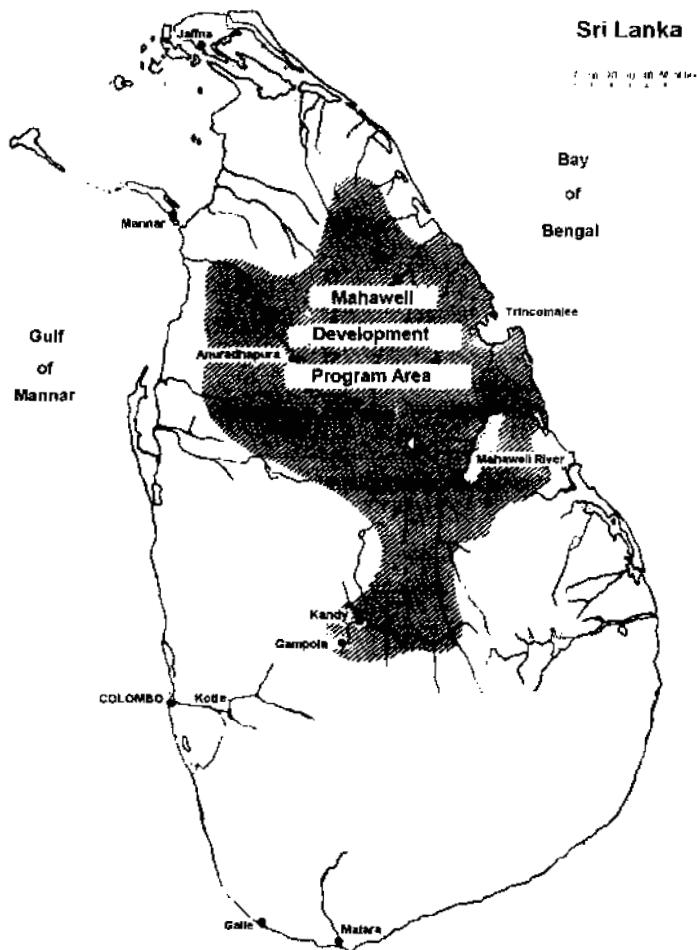


Figure 5.5

5.8.2 Hierarchical Order

The lowest level service was grouped as Hamlet Center which was designed to cater to 100-125 families. 4-5 hamlets will be considered as a village and 4-5 village will form a township. Plans have also been drawn up, to provide the village center and

township with a suitable industrial base. The smaller industries such as textile weaving centers, small scale paddy and fiber processing mills and cottage industries will be located at the village centers and the larger industries such as textile mills, rice processing mills and ago based industries such as groundnut oil and straw ware manufacturing would be located at the township level.³⁸ A hamlet provides basic amenities such as primary school and cooperative store. Next the village serves the other basic needs and the town is a service center for the population of hamlets and villages.³⁹ This hierarchical system for allotment of development schemes facilitates immediate effect of the same.

5.9 Conclusion

All these schemes are aimed at the over all development of Sri Lanka. But the different government came to power was either Sinhalese dominated or those having a pro-Sinhala approach in each and every aspect of all the policy decisions. They were introduced discriminatory policies against Tamil minority. This reflects, like any other economic policy, very much in the allocation of the catchments area of the irrigation project itself. The plans for the economic development of Sri Lanka were based on generalized schemes. That means that they were applicable to the country as a whole. But all major developmental activities have taken place in comparatively developed parts of the south west rather than rural districts. Thus these practices contributed to the uneven development of regions in the country. These Tamil

discriminatory economic policies and their implication on the Tamils question will be analyzed in the next chapter.

NOTES

- ¹ B.L. Panditharatna, "The Development of the Sri Lankan Settlement System" in Paul A. Groves (ed), *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka : A Spatial and Political Analysis* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), p.3.
- ² The Colombia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2001.
- ³ B.L. Panditharethna, n.1, p.5.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ H.N.S., Karunatileke, *Economic Development in Ceylon* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), pp.6-10.

The bulk of the immigrant labour came from the poorest and desert-like regions of south India. They were used to hard living conditions and able to subsist on a very small income. Sinhalese labor was unaccustomed to the type of work entrusted to Indian labor. Work on tea plantation normally begins around 6.a.m and goes on uninterrupted, despite rain or spells of chilly weather until the afternoon. Overall management of the tea and rubber estate was in the hands of specialized firms managed by Englishmen.

- ⁶ Jean Gross Holtz, *Forging Capitalist Patriarchy: the Economic and Social Transformation of Feudal Sri Lanka and its Impact on Women* (Durham: Duke University, 1984), p.53.
- ⁷ Ibid. p.8., James Brow, "Threats in Agrarian Change" in James Brow and Joe Weeramunda (eds.), *Agrarian Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992.)
- ⁸ *The colony capitalism implies that the economic system, which was directed from an alien country, that had no need to please or respond to the fundamental needs of domestic population. In these way two aspects of the Sri Lanka political economy developed; that which was primarily domestic in orientation and function and that was tied to the British economy. The system is defined as colony capitalism.*
- ⁹ Jean Gross Holtz, n.6, p.49.

¹⁰ Rosa Luxemburg, "The Accumulation Organized Capital- An Anti-Critique." Kenneth J.Tarbuck (ed.), *Imperialism and the Accumulation of Capital* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1970), p.49.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Vijaya Samaraweera, "Ceylon's Trade with Coromandel During Early British Times", 1796-1837", *Modern Ceylon Studies* (Peradeniya), No.1, July 1972, p.71.

¹³ Jean, n.6. p.55.

"As soon as person clears and sows a portion of jungle land, he establishes an imaginary right to the same; and although the spot is abandoned immediately after the crop is reaped, at the expiration of seven or eight years, the same individual or his heirs will reassert his claim and contest that of an adversary on other justice but prior occupancy"

¹⁴ I. H. Vanden Driesen, "Some Trends in the Economic Policy of Ceylon in the Modern World" *Ceylon Journal of History and Social Sciences*, No.3, January -June 1960. pp.1-7.

¹⁵ C.R. De Silva, *Ceylon Under British Occupation 1795-1833-Its Political, Administrative and Economic Development, Vol .II* (Colombo: Colombo: Apothecaries Co., 1953), p.36.

¹⁶ Jean, n.6., p.58: G.C. Mendis, *Ceylon Under the British* (Colombo: Educational Publishers, 1952), pp.67-68.

The government in its desire to help planting enterprises were supported by the bank. It was granted the right of limited liability which had been refused to the Ceylonese agricultural joint stock company the year before, and allowed to issue paper money without stamp duty though it afforded no real security to the public. The bank provided facilities for raising money in a manner unprecedented in Ceylon, and contributed no little to the expansion of the coffee industry as well as to its business and liabilities been taken over in 1851 by Oriental Bank of Bombay, which its old name, the western Bank of India, had established branches in 1842 in Colombo and Kandy.

¹⁷ Ceylon, Legislative Council, Proceeding of the Legislative Council of the Ceylon, 1904, 1905, p.146.

¹⁸ Quoted in James Brow, n.7, p.101.

¹⁹ Ibid,

²⁰ Jean, n.6, p. 60.

The British administration of the colony objected to the use of tenants on temple lands for religious purpose. The traditional service tenures involved ritual responsibilities for religious occasions. The Buddhist clergy continued to assume the traditional obligations. But the key issue in the dispute between the government and the temples was the British objection to the large amount of land exempt from the taxation and the large amount of land claimed by the temples that was not under cultivation but would be usable for plantations. The British sought to pry some of this land loose for their own use.

²¹ Vidyamali Samarasinghe, "The Tyranny of Space: A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Spatial Dimension of the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka" Paul Groves (ed.) *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), pp.214-217.

²² Gail Omvedt, "Tamil National Question" *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (Berkely), Vol.16, No.1, p.24.

²³ G.C. Mendis, n.16, p.6-7.

²⁴ James Manor "Introduction" James Manor (ed), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), pp.6-7.

Among the Sinhalese dominant with 80% of population district seven of them fall into wet zone and five are in dry zone. Jaffna district which is situated at the northern most of the island is also in the dry zone. Sri Lanka Tamils account for three districts with 60-79% of population while the Sinhalese account for four districts. 40- 59% of the population belong to one ethnic group there are two Sri Lankan Tamils districts and none among Sinhalese and one Indain Tamil district.

²⁵ Ibid: Vidyamali, n.21.

²⁶ Robert N. Kearney, "Territorial Elements of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka" *Pacific Affairs* (Vancouver), Vol. 60, No.4, Winter 1987-88, p.566.

²⁷ B.L. Panditharatna, "The Development of Sri Lanka Settlement System", in Paul A. Groves (ed), *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), pp.16-17.

- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ Robert, n.26, p.572.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid., pp.25-26.
- ³² Amita Sastri, "Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka", *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Chicago), Vol.49, No.1, February 1990, pp.62-63.
- ³³ Mick Moor, "Sri Lanka : A Special Case of Development" in James Brow, Joe Weeramunda (ed), *Agrarian Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992).
- ³⁴ Joachim Betz, Tea policy in Sri Lanka since independence" in Franco Farinelli (ed) *Capitalist from production in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1991) p.75.
- ³⁵ Kenneth E. Corey, "Development for counter urbanisation policies and planning" in Paul A. Groves (ed), *Economic Development and social change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), p. 81.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ G.H Peris, "Agrarian Change and Agricultural Development in Sri Lanka" Paul A. Groves (ed.) *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), p.128.
- ³⁸ W. P. T. Silva Land Settlement and Urban Development in the Dry Zone", *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Science* (Colombo), Vol.1, No.1, June 1979, pp.55-76.
- ³⁹ B.L. Panditharetna, n. 1, p.26.

Chapter 6

Various Socio-Economic Policies of Sri Lankan State

- 6.1. Policy of Portuguese
- 6.2. Policy of Dutch
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CHAPTER 6

VARIOUS SOCIO- ECONOMIC POLICIES OF SRI LANKAN STATE

6.1 Policy of Portuguese

The Portuguese, the first European power to come to Sri Lanka, established trading centers and forts in Colombo. They ruled the country for a century and a half. Shortly after their conquest they started interfering in the internal politics of the Sinhalese and Tamil Kingdoms, at first in Kotte and later in Jaffna. Both regions lost their independence to the Portuguese, Jaffna in 1619 and Kotte in 1633. They ruled directly the Kotte kingdom for sixteen years (1633-1658) and thirty nine (1619-1658) years they ruled the Jaffna kingdom also.¹ The Portuguese were interested in the cinnamon trade, and to protect that trade they needed maritime security. They had no interest in territorial conquests. Their intention was to have control of commerce by subduing and dominating others with the use of naval power. The Portuguese ruled the island according to the local customs. They introduced inter marriages between the Portuguese and the local people. As a result, a new social group came into being, namely Burghers. Another notable feature was the introduction of Christianity in Sri Lanka. It was significant in terms of its impact on social and cultural life. K.M. De Silva wrote:

Bigotry, even fanaticism, had not been unknown in Sri Lanka's past-Nor for that matter had persecution on grounds of religious beliefs.

But instances of this had in general been rare, and in the case of Buddhism, not since the distant past. By the sixteenth century tolerance of other faiths was a well-established Buddhist tradition. In Sri Lanka the Portuguese record of religious persecution, coercion and mindless destruction of places of worship scared to other faiths was unsurpassed in its scale and virulence. The establishment of Roman Catholicism was achieved at the cost of tremendous suffering and humiliation imposed on the adherents of the traditional religions and of Islam. Yet the impact of Roman Catholicism was not entirely destructive. It is to the credit of the Portuguese that conversions to Roman Catholicism stood the test of harassment and persecution under the Dutch and the indifference of the British. In sharp contrast, Calvinism, which the Dutch propagated with much the same zeal if not quite the same means as the Portuguese did Roman Catholicism, developed no strong roots among the people, and its influence evaporated with the collapse of Dutch power. Moreover, the conversion to Roman Catholicism of a large proportion of the people in the areas under Portuguese control opened the way for the absorption of new social concepts such as monogamy and the sanctity of

marriage, and certainly the disappearance of polygamy and polyandry from the lowlands owes much to the influence of the new religion.²

6.2 Policy of Dutch

In 1658 the Dutch took over the administration from the Portuguese. They ruled until the arrival of the British in 1796. They did not leave much impact on Sri Lankan life. One among the few was the introduction of the protestant form of Christianity. In administrative field they depended heavily on the village headmen. (They ensured that Sinhalese Christians live in Sinhala area and Tamils Christians in Tamil area.) Supervisory role over these headmen were played by a Dutch official called *disava* (collector). There were three such officials, namely in Colombo, Jaffna and Matara.³ They introduced Roman Dutch Law. As in the case of Portuguese, they also encouraged inter-marriages with the local people and thereby contributed to the development of the social group of the Burghers.⁴

6.3 British Policies in Sri Lanka

The British colonial establishment brought about many administrative, economic and political changes in Sri Lanka. Careful analysis of various policies introduced by the British reveals that, the root of the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka lies in those policies. The Dutch handed over the country to the British in 1796. By 1802 the system of three *disavas* were ended. In its place the colony was divided into thirteen provinces, each of them located in a coastal town after which they were named.⁵ But in 1833 the

Colebrooke-Cameron reforms introduced a highly centralized system of administration in the entire island.

6.3.1 Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms

According to the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms in Sri Lanka, the legislative and executive councils were renamed. The legislative council included governors sent from England, representatives from Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils, Burghers and members from local European community appointed by the governor. All these members were appointed not elected.

The country was divided in to five provinces. Each province was headed by a government Agent. Each province was subdivided into districts and each district consisted of several headman's divisions. In the creation of these provinces, the aim of the British was to use the most well fortified coastal urban centers. Colombo, Galle, Jaffna, Batticaloa and the capital of the Kandyan kingdom which served as the base for effective control over the territories falling under them. Most of these areas were still unexplored. It may be clear from the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms that in creating these five divisions there was no historical, geographical, or demographic consideration. But, they aimed to prevent any possible resurgence of Kandyan nationalism by cutting it off from the various branches of the erstwhile Kandyan kingdom with each of them attached to the remaining four provinces.⁶ Kandyan national consciousness was the central problem facing the colonial administration in the first half of the 19th century. In 1850 Governor Torrington wrote:

The theory of attempting to break up the so-called nationality of the Kandyans by annexing different portions of the Kandian country to the adjacent district of the Maritime Provinces has in reality proved a failure ... better to meet and provide for the remnant of the Kandian nationality ... than to be voluntarily blind to the fact of its existence.⁷

These five provinces were later re-demarcated and new provinces were created. In 1845 the North-West Province was created; in 1873 the North-Central Provinces, in 1886 the Uva Province and in 1889 the Sabaragamuwa Province were created. It is relevant to notice here that in re-demarcating the provinces and in creating new ones, there was no consideration for a specific political aim but routine administration, devolved to them. Compared to the Indian experience, one striking difference noticeable in Sri Lanka was that none of the Provinces carried any ethno cultural name, not even the Northern Province, which could have been designated as the Tamil Province. They were just geographical expressions relevant for the purpose of colonial administration.⁸

6.3.2 Educational Policies of the British

The education policy was left to be developed by the missionaries with the active encouragement and support of the colonial government. There were attempts to transfer the responsibility for education to the local authorities in keeping with the British tradition. The Colebrooke- Cameron Commission abolished feudal

system and gave equality of opportunity to all subjects. This led to the formulation of regular educational policies. Accordingly, education was to be spread to all the people if they were to comprehend Western ideas and take advantage of the new facilities. The creation of Ceylonese public opinion and participation of the people in the legislative process required the people to understand the new institutions and how they worked. For this purpose the spread and intensification of education in English language was considered to be essential. Therefore, Colebrooke recommended that indigenous population be educated in English so as to hold government jobs. From this point of view money spent on fostering education in local language was considered a waste of resources. And they were abolished in order to replace it by English education in schools. The missionaries also fell in line with the government policy by concentrating on English education. They adopted the system that was similar to the system that existed in England.⁹

6.3.3 The Economic Factors of Education

Education had a great source of influence to effect change in the society and thereby in economy. Educational system introduced by the British was not just in the medium of English, but its subject matter was also heavily westernized. The curriculum and conduct of school were consequently oriented towards western customs, tradition and culture. English education caught on amongst the upper classes. However, it was soon found impracticable to neglect Sinhala and Tamil altogether. Then education was made bilingual more of the child's mother tongue

being used at the primary level and more of English at the later stages. In this context, unlike the Portuguese and the Dutch, the British took a more keen interest in developing the educational system of Sri Lanka to suit their needs and leave a long lasting impact. But it was done more or less as a transplantation of the British model including British customs and traditions. For this purpose, firstly the colonial government encouraged the Christian missionaries to establish and manage schools in all parts of the country both in English and in national languages. Secondly, the government also was involved in establishing schools. Until the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the limited revenue of the colony allowed for education. In addition to government schools established in the towns, the missionaries were paid government grants for the purpose of establishing schools of their own. They established English education at the cost of the indigenous system of instruction, known as the Denominational System. It gave freedom to all religious denominations to establish school for their own children without any restrictions on religious teaching. Seemingly, this was a non-discriminatory and democratic policy that provided equal treatment to all religions. But the reality was something else. On account of scarcity of funds and lack of political support, the Buddhist or Hindu organizations were not in a position, like their Christian counterparts, to take much advantage of this. The actual beneficiaries were, therefore, the Christians. In 1868, 65 percent of the children attending school in Sri Lanka were Christian and only 27 percent were Buddhists. The British policy after 1884 left the development of secondary education largely to private schools, enabling the Christians to maintain this lead.¹⁰

The industrial people of the Jaffna peninsula profited by every opportunity afforded them for educating their children at modest cost. As a result they became proficient in the English language and mathematics. They were also able to compete successfully for vacancies in the clerical staff of the public and mercantile services in the large and more commercially developed areas of western and southern Ceylon, and later to gain in these areas an influential position in the learned professions. This was the cause of the Sinhalese Buddhist enthusiasts making legislations for the abolition of the denominational system of education which favored especially Tamils.¹¹

In 1885, the government was faced with the difficulty of educating the local children in the English Medium without the help of their mother tongue. Thus the government changed its emphasis from English to local language and devoted a greater part of its expenditure on education to improve and expand the education in Sinhala and Tamil medium schools. They left English education to the aided or assisted schools run by the missionaries.¹²

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication the provision of rural schools especially in the interior was undertaken by the government. The large majority of the aided schools were established along the Western coastal belt and the Jaffna peninsula thus confining English education to those areas. This resulted in the creation of particular elite groups amongst those living along the Western coastal belt and the minority Tamils in Jaffna.

The rapid increase of the revenue of the island due to the success in the plantation industry in tea and rubber increased the expenditure on education. At the same time, the success of the plantation industry necessitated the import of cheap labour from South India. This was because of the unwillingness of the local people to work in the plantations. The small landowners and cultivators among the locals believed that education would enable their sons to enter the clerical service or one of the learned professions. The main purpose for the introduction of English education at secondary level was to cater to the creation of a pool of clerks and other lower level functionaries required by the colonial administration. Since 1815, when English was made the official language, no local person could join the public service or hold office under the colonial government unless he or she acquired some knowledge of English. As mentioned earlier, the Christian missionaries mainly opened schools in Tamil dominated areas. Perhaps, the British rulers found that the Tamils were more willing to learn English and join government jobs than the Sinhalese. An important reason for this attitude was that the Ceylon Tamils were living in dry zone areas which were not fertile as Sinhalese Areas. In other words unemployed Tamils were in search of state employment unlike the Sinhalese who were engaged in trade and plantations. Some of the old generation Kandyan chiefs had an awareness of importance of English education. From the ancient times, the royal or the state service was considered as bestowing power, authority and prestige on those holding such positions. In this context, parents also did their best to give an English education to their children so that they

could aspire to enter the colonial government service. Those who could afford it, sent their sons to be educated in English universities. Others who were not so affluent but reasonably was off, sent their children to the Ceylon University College established in 1921, so that they could also enter higher levels of public service.¹³ Thus education system in the British era elevated superior, social and economic strata. It became the most important factor in social differentiation in the country.

A strong Sinhala nationalism emerged against westernism and Christians in late 19th century. But the issue of language was to enter in 1930s. The English language was the official language of Sri Lanka and it was the language of administration, professions, commerce, higher education and politics. It was against Sinhalese nationalism. So the majority of Sinhalese wanted the adoption of *Swabhasa* (own language).¹⁴

6.4 Constitutional Reforms in Sri Lanka

Until 1912, there was no constitutional development in Sri Lanka. As nineteenth century drew is a close with the expansion of educational system and general development of the country, it resulted in creation of new middle class group among both Sinhalese and Tamils. The leaders of both groups began to demand an effective role in the conduct of public affairs. They wanted constitutional reforms in the country. For this purpose the Ceylon National Congress(CNC) was formed under the leadership of Ramanatham in 1919. Their demand was that members of the council be chosen through national election on

the basis of territorial constituency and universal adult franchise In the light of their demand British compromised and introduced a new legislative council with elected members being only sixteen out of thirty seven and twenty three unofficial against fourteen officials. The Ceylon National Congress not in terms with the whole scheme and proposed the new council. Of twenty three unofficial members eleven were drawn from low country Sinhalese, three from Tamils, three from Europeans, two from Burghers, two from Kandyans, one Muslim and one Indian. Some of the Tamils, particularly those belonging to educated classes wanted equal representation. But the constitution of 1924 provided a partly representative government, not a responsible government. One of the qualifications was that voters should have known English or Sinhala. A large number of Indian Tamils were deprived of their franchise. Thus the Tamils agitated against it and so the British appointed Earl of Donoughmore to study the situation in Sri Lanka. The Donoughmore Commission framed a new constitution for Sri Lanka.

6.4.1 Donoughmore Constitution of 1931

Donoughmore constitution of 1931 did not provide full self-government. It retained the governor's power of supervision, protection of interests and veto. Some subjects like finance and law remained in his hand. Thus this was a big step on the road to self government. It introduced adult suffrage and local bodies were required to be run by elected representatives. But the franchise was restricted by educational qualifications and a special seat in Colombo was reserved for Tamils. It led to smaller share in the

state council than before. So some Tamils reacted against the Donoughmore constitution. During the Donoughmore constitution communal tensions had surfaced. The Sinhala leaders desired further change and utilized existing powers. They wanted to improve the situation of the Sinhalese electorate. The minority groups demanded safeguards.¹⁵

6.4.2 Soulbury Commission

The working of Donoughmore constitution was not satisfactory for both Sinhalese and Tamils. They wanted further constitutional concessions. The period of Second World War was crucial time for all colonies. That was also true in the case of Sri Lanka. The Secretary of state for colonies gave an assurance that after the war constitutional reform would be taken. Thus on 26th May, 1943 the government declared re-examination of Sri Lanka constitutional reforms. Under the chairmanship of Lord Soulbury (later became first governor general of Sri Lanka), a commission was appointed. After studying the behaviour of the people of Sri Lanka by interacting with various political, social, religious and other minorities association the commission submitted its report on 11th July 1945¹⁶. Independent Ceylon came into being on 3rd February 1948. It had a unitary character and the central government was powerful. It could abolish old territorial division-provinces and create new ones in their places. The interests of religion and racial minorities were sought to be safeguarded by a special system of representation. But the Tamil congress wanted balanced representation.

6.5 Post-independence Scenario

The post-independence reality in Sri Lanka was that Sinhalese majority governing body suppressed minority Tamils in the country by various measures. The Sri Lankan government's main aim was regarding the status of Tamils alongside that of Sinhalese majority. The Sinhalese dominated government adopted the Lion flag and installation of 'Sri' number plates. This indicated the political powerlessness and status deprivation of Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹⁷

6.5.1 Citizenship Act

Immediately after gaining independence, the Sinhalese nationalism began to grow. The first victim of that development was the Indian Tamils who were disenfranchised under the Ceylon citizenship Act No 18 of 15 November 1948. The Act laid down the law governing citizenship of Sri Lanka and prescribed qualifications necessary for a person before or after 15 November 1948 to become a citizen of Sri Lanka.¹⁸ The Indian Tamils were virtually declared stateless because they were required to establish citizenship of the country by providing that they were citizens of Ceylon either by descent or by registration. They could claim citizenship of the country by providing that they had family connection with the country for at least two generations. Since in those days there was hardly any practice of registering births, the Indian Tamils failed to produce the birth certificates of their fathers stating that their place of birth was in Ceylon. Consequently, a majority of Indian Tamils became stateless in a country where they had been living for generations. This legal

formulation was designed to deny citizenship to the plantation Tamils of Indian origin and it had affected not only those living but also those still to be born. (See appendix-1).

In many constituencies “Indian”, Tamils formed the majority and elected members of the leftist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) to the parliament. Their sympathy for the leftist party was not favorably viewed by the Sinhalese as well as the Ceylon Tamils and, therefore, they lost their right to vote. In other words, the “Indian” Tamils became stateless in a country where till that time they enjoyed the status of citizenship and the right to vote at the time of election. It was a clear case of discrimination against a minority ethnic group in a multi- ethnic country. The British government’s the special provisions order-in-council introduced in 1946, did not say any thing about the question of Indian Tamil voters. They did not change the existing qualifications of voters. The qualifications means the Indian Tamils in Ceylon of either sex and above twenty one age of years, all could become voters if they could satisfy the registering officer that they were British subjects domiciled to Ceylon or if they were literate and possessed some property or income qualification or if they possessed a certificate of permanent settlement duly obtained. Most of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka did not ensure any one these schemes. Hence, the names of the Indian Tamils especially estate Tamils were not registered in election register.¹⁹

6.5.2 Language Policy

The fundamental objective LSSP which formed in 1935 was to introduce use of Sinhala and Tamil in the lower courts, police stations and government departments. Thus, prior to independence, they began to launch the movement for the adoption of *Swabhasa*. English would gradually be replaced by both Sinhala and Tamil. However, in 1944, J.K. Jayawardane proposed that Sinhala be made the official language in a responsible time. But this proposal was amended and it was recommended that both Sinhala and Tamil be made the official language as medium of instruction in schools, public service examination and legislative proceedings. At the same time, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who later introduced Sinhala as the only official language of Sri Lanka, reportedly remarked;

I have no personal objection to both these languages, nor do I see any particular harm or danger or real difficulty from this.²⁰

As noted, the official national language issue was the major bone of contention between the Sinhalese and Tamils. At the time of independence of the country in 1948, the Ceylon Tamils constituted ten per cent of the population but held 31 per cent of the posts in universities and acquired a higher percentage in professional fields like medicine and engineering. Therefore, many Sinhalese resented the fact that the Tamils enjoyed disproportionate educational and employment advantages because of their proficiency in the English language in the

majority Sinhala country.²¹ When S.W.R.D Bandaranaike came to power in April 1956, he had promised to introduce *Sinhala* as the only official language of the country. The *Sinhala only* legislation came into being under the official Language Act No.33 of 1956. There were some provisions for using English language in government departments until December 31, 1960 and no provisions were made in the Act for the use of Tamil language in Tamil districts.

By the *Sinhala only* policy the doors of government employment were closed to Tamils. This forced Tamil government employees to study and work in *Sinhala* or leave employment. Only three years were granted to them by the government to study *Sinhala* or face dismissal. This rule was extended to the security services, public service, public corporations and even to the private sector. What actually happened was that the Tamil parents resisted the compulsory learning of *Sinhala* for their children. In the past, they had done it voluntarily.²²

Thus by 1958 language had became a dominant area of conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. The Jaffna Youth Congress (JYC) which came into being in the 1920s was a progressive nationalistic organization. Before independence the JYC had championed the cause of national languages in education and governance and succeeded in getting virtually all the leading schools in Jaffna to teach *Sinhala* as a compulsory subject at the secondary level. At that time, the elite Sinhalese were not concerned about their mother tongue. The JYC fought for both

Sinhala and Tamil language. But after the Sinhala Only Act the JYC took sharp retaliatory action. They terminated the teaching of Sinhala in schools in Jaffna.²³ So in 1958 the Tamil Language (special provision- as subordinate legislation) Act was passed. By this the government decided that children should be taught in their mother tongue. That means Sinhalese children in Sinhala and Tamils children in Tamil. This led to an abnormal situation. The Tamils children were supposedly educated without knowing the official language of the country. They became alienated, and outside their own regions, they had no role to play. Again the younger generation of Sinhalese and Tamils became strangers to each other. Thus by the language policy the state failed to safeguard the interests of the Tamils and actively discriminated them from Sinhalese because of their birth. Gradually they nourished the feeling that they had no state and this led to the urge to create a state of their own, called 'Eelam'.²⁴

Reading the mind of the majority Sinhalese community on the issue of language, in 1951, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike parted company with the United National Party (UNP) and formed a new political party called the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). He alleged that the UNP had failed to take action on the language question. His party's first manifesto called for immediate adoption of Sinhala and Tamil as official language of the country so that people would cease to feel alien in their own land.

Language was not the main issue in the 1952 elections. In fact, emotions were raised amongst the Sinhalese that their emancipation

could be achieved by the adoption of "Sinhala only" as the official language and the revival of the Buddhist religion. Preparations had already begun for celebrating the 2500th death anniversary of Buddha in 1956. The trends of Buddhist resurgence began in the early 1950s. They were articulated in a provocative book entitled *The Revolt of the Temple* Written by D.C.Vijayawardhene in 1953. He highlighted legend and superstition as historical facts as well as romanticized the unhistorical view of the past based on mythology, fantasy and social destiny. Surprisingly, the Sinhala intelligentsia did not question the authenticity of Vijayawardhane's version of the Sinhala history and destiny. However, such passiveness of the intellectuals in the face of strong chauvinistic ethno-religious-nationalism is not surprising. In fact, at times they have also been influenced by such emotions and articulate their own views, thus, legitimizing nationalism and feel secure in avoiding the wrath of the fanatics. Such anomaly in the behavior of the intellectuals was recently noticed in the Balkans where ethno-religious-nationalism has emerged.

Table 6.1
**Main Languages spoken in Sri Lanka by
 Various Ethnic Group based on 1981 census**

Ethnic Group	Sinhala	Tamils	English
Sinhalese	89.0	1.7	10.4
Sri Lanka Tamils	12.0	86.6	16.7
Indian Tamils	6.9	67.0	5.5
Moors	25.9	72.3	12.9
Malays	61.3	54.5	14.2
Burghers	68.5	16.8	77.2
Others	37.2	47.8	38.3

Source: Census and Statistics, 1983 (Colombo).

In the 1950s, the social and political atmosphere was surcharged with the emotional issues of language and religion in Sri Lanka. The Buddhist religious upsurge gained momentum because of the preparations for the celebration of the 2500th death anniversary of Buddha in 1956. The Buddhist monks, who are supposed to renounce all worldly affairs and devote themselves to spiritualism, became the most articulate spokesman for the adoption of "Sinhala only" as the official language. By the "Sinhala only" policy the Sinhala language became the language of administration. The government progressively phased out Tamil recruitment which was eventually not more than a trickle in public services, teaching, defence and other areas. At the time of independence, employees in the service of the government numbered 82,000, of whom 30 per cent were Tamils. Although government recruitments were expanded rapidly to 2,25,000 by 1970, the proportion of Tamils declined to 6% in the same year of the total personnel by then.

In 1973, out of 100 persons selected for higher administrative service through examination, 92 were Sinhalese, four were Tamils and four were Muslims.²⁵ The decline in Tamil recruitment to government services from 1956 to 1970 was as follows:

Table 6.2

**Employment of Tamils in government services
(in percentages)**

	1956	1965	1970
Ceylon administrative service	30	20	5
Clerical service (incl. Postal, railway, hospital, and customs services)	50	30	5
Professions (engineers, doctors, lecturers)	60	30	10
Armed forces	40	20	1
Labour forces	40	20	5

Source: Profile issued by Tamil Information center

6.5.3 Standardization and District Quota System

During Bandaranaike's time suppression of the interests of Tamils intensified. He abolished denominational system in 1960 and introduced the weightage system in favor of Sinhalese. They introduced an educational discriminatory policy called *Standardization Programme*. It was a notoriously selective device which was mainly aimed at subjugating the Tamil students. According to this program the Tamil students were required to obtain a higher aggregate of marks for university admissions than their Sinhalese counterparts. This severely undermined the Tamil prospects for higher studies. The new scheme turned out to be far more discriminating than the earlier one by denying thousands of deserving students, their right of higher studies.²⁶ And the government ignored the timely needs of the Tamil and

Muslim schools. They were not able provide enough teachers to fill the post of the corresponding number of them who retired. For the benefit of the Sinhalese the government also introduced lower qualifying marks in the competitive examination for getting admission in the university. This eliminated the competition among candidates. The merit system was abolished. Standardization and district quotas were used to favour Sinhalese students. It also sought to give the rural under privileged a fairer chance of gaining access to a tertiary education by imposing quotas on a regional basis for university admissions. The policy appeared to favour the children of the affluent Sinhalese rural families and worked against the Tamil students who were mainly from Jaffna and Colombo regions. By this policy, a large number of qualified Tamil students were removed from university admissions.²⁷ These young generations who were so flagrantly and unjustly excluded from university and prevented by the state from achieving their aspirations became the leaders of the armed liberation struggle for the state of Eelam.²⁸

6.5.4 State Sponsored Colonization

After independence dry zone colonization strategies stand in the forefront of the development strategies of Sri Lanka. The main objective of this strategy was to increase the country's food production, by utilizing its physical resources and movement of surplus population from over-crowded areas of the wet zone to the sparsely populated dry zone. The primary criteria for the selection in the colonization scheme was landlessness. In the early schemes, even houses and other infrastructures were taken care of by local administrative officials. They also tolerated the illegal

occupation and cultivation of state-owned lands because of weakness in the implementation machinery and the threat of loss of productivity, or politically sensitive problems. Successive regimes at the centre consciously tried to make the prospect of land resettlement both possible and attractive for the indigent beneficiaries. At first they maintained uniformity in the size of the individual allotment. The settlers were not required to contribute to the cost. No effective charges for land and irrigation were made. The establishment of irrigation facilities and the development of land for agriculture were done entirely by the government. The colonists were also provided government subsidies for house construction, purchase of agricultural implements and living expenses for several months after initial settlement in the colony.²⁹ By the state sponsored colonization and resettlement schemes about 200,000 Sinhalese families were resettled in over 3,000 square miles of the Tamil homelands. As a result, one third of the Batticaloa district in the Eastern province was absorbed into the new Sinhalese Amparai district.³⁰

6.5.4.1 Features of Organized Dry Zone Colonization Schemes

The entire colonization scheme in the Dry zone was divided into four regions, namely;

1. Central region,
2. Northern region
3. Eastern and South Eastern region and
4. North Western region.³¹

Table 6.3
Population of Sri Lanka region wise

Region	Area/ Sq. Km	Population
Western	3,684	3,919,808
Southern	5,544	1,882,661
Northern	8,884	1,109,404
Eastern	9,996	975,251
North western	7,888	1,704,334
North Central	10,472	849,492
Central	5,674	2,009,248

Source: Department of census and Statistics, Statistical abstract of the democratic socialist republic of Sri Lanka (based on 1981 census), 1997, pp.1-25.

The Central region covers the districts of Anuradhapura, Plonnaruwa and Matale, the western parts of Tricomalee districts and northern parts of the Kandy districts. The northern region included the districts of Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar. The Eastern and south eastern region encompasses the districts of Batticaloa, Ampara, Monaragal, Badulla and Hambantota. Fourth region, North-western region, included the districts of Puttalam and Kurunegala.³²

The application of the Dry Zone colonization strategy outlined in the earlier stages have remained more or less same in subsequent years. There was only one important modification of the original

design in the form of progressive reduction of land alienated to each settler family (from 5 acres irrigable land and 3 acres of non-irrigable homestead land in the schemes established up to the mid -1950s and 3 acres of irrigable and 2 acres of non-irrigable land in the 1960s and 2.5 acres and 0.5 acres, respectively, in the two categories of land in those of the recent past).³³

This was aimed at reducing the cost per settler family by maximizing their number accommodated in the colonies as well as for inducing more intensive utilization of the alienated land. A system of "advanced alienation", another cost reduction deviation from the original model, attempted in the colonies opened up in the 1960s, was abandoned at the end of that decade largely because of its failure to reduce costs.³⁴

Most of the colonization schemes of Dry Zone are based on restoration of ancient storage reservoirs and channel system. The only significant exception in this regard up to the launching of the Mahaveli Department Programme were the river basin development project of Gal-Oya in the eastern lowlands and Walave in the southeast. The colonies varied in size and migration impact from those with a few hundred settlers drawn from their immediate vicinity to those that have attracted thousands of migrants from the densely populated areas of the country. By the early 1980s, there were about 100 colonization schemes scattered throughout the Dry Zone.

Table 6.4**Settlement and land development in Major Colonization Schemes**

District	Number of schemes	Number of Allotters	Extent of land Developed	
			Paddy	Highland
Kandy	1	1,982	5,425	3,454
Matale	4	3,785	7,992	5,290
Nuwara Eliya	1	152	152	152
Hambandota	3	2,127	4,631	1,922
Uda-Walave Scheme	1	10,835	n.a	n.a
Kurunegala	9	6,610	15,172	9,631
Puttalam	10	2,358	6,276	7,282
Anuradhapura	9	20,381	52,038	23,806
Polonnaruwa	7	14,687	52,287	24.089
Badulla	9	4,128	9,566	4,996
Monaragala	9	2,114	5,365	2,158
Ratnapura	1	552	1,318	378
Mannar	3	587	1,761	1,174
Vavuniya	4	1,439	4,257	2,510
Mullaitivu	9	5,286	8,812	11,482
Jaffna	9	3,054	8,548	6,134
Tricomalee	6	6,325	18,105	8,938
Batticaloa	8	3,394	11,763	4,819
Amparai	1	10,815	32,643	11,798
ALL DISTRICT	104	100,611	247,111	135,007

Source: Land Commissioner's Department of Sri Lanka

From several viewpoints, the Mahaweli Development Programme marks a new stage in the processes of settlement development in the Dry Zone. Its novelty lies mainly in its unprecedented scale.

It was not only based on the physical resources of the Mahaweli River but also on several adjacent river catchments, its hydraulic matrix extends over a large part of the northern Dry Zone plains, supplying water to the several complexes of new peasant settlements and improving the existing irrigation in many of the older colonies. Moreover, the Mahaweli Programme is also more genuinely multi-purpose in its objectives than any of the previous colonization schemes. But it was developed predominately in Sinhalese areas. The water resource development in the Dry zone continues to be largely controlled where the Tamil population is concentrated. The transfer of surplus water from the Mahaweli Ganga into the rivers of the northern province and of converting the Jaffna lagoon into fresh water lake have received the lowest priority.

The colonization schemes of the Dry Zone are the main surplus areas of rice production in Sri Lanka, having an aggregate of about thirty per cent of the country's total extant of land devoted to paddy and contributing an estimated 40% to the total output of rice in the country. These Dry zone colonization schemes affected demographic balance, which was disadvantageous to the Tamils. This means the Sinhalese percentage of population increased in these areas. Thus, in Sri Lanka, the state-sponsored program affected the Tamil's land which they regarded as their traditional homelands. They regarded relocation of large numbers of Sinhalese into the area where Tamils have historically formed a high proportion of the population as a deliberate plan to bring about a change in the ethnic composition of those areas. The

resettlement program had inevitably reduced the effectiveness of the Tamil voting power in these parts of the country. At the same time some Sinhalese saw the Tamil protest as further evidence of what they view as the inflated demands which this group continually makes.³⁵

The government approach was that Sri Lanka was home to all Sri Lankans. All citizens are free to live anywhere in the island. According to a government spokesman by colonization program the people were resettled in numbers proportionate to the ethnic composition of the entire island.³⁶

6.6 The Constitution of 1972

According to the Constitution of 1972 the head of the state is prime minister. Provisions of the constitutions were against the interest of the minority people in the country. The status of Tamil language and Tamil community as a whole became worse. This led to further demand for regional autonomy under the federal constitution. The Tamils demanded the establishment of a separate state.

6.7 The 1978 Constitution

A controversial bill on Sri Lanka's constitution was passed by parliament on 9th August 1978 that came into force on 7 September 1978 which was Sri Lanka's third constitution since its independence. The new constitution envisaged unitary presidential form of government with a combination of parliamentary and presidential features. It provides strong president and weak prime

minister. For conflicting language issue, Sinhala and Tamil were recognized as national languages, but Sinhala became the official language. And Budhism was accorded a foremost position. Fundamental rights and Directive principles were also included in the constitution. Importance of judiciary and law increased and the voting age had been reduced to eighteen years. According to the Tamils point of view, the constitution also had discriminated against them because the Tamil language was given a second place.

6.8 Economic Programmes and Policies of Sri Lankan Government

The Sri Lankan government gave stress on economic development. The first post independence plan was to make Ceylon less dependent on imports for its supplies of essential food and manufactures.

6.8.1 Plannings

A six year plan of development was assigned covering the period of 1947-48 to 1952-53. The planners expected that by increasing the output of food materials, imports would be minimized and thereby increase the per-capita income of the country and domestic production. In the initial stages, the plan was a success. But the Korean war in 1950 and 1951 affected Sri Lanka economy also. The country faced food shortage and the government introduced rice ration system.³⁷

By 1954 Ceylon made remarkable economic and financial recovery as the terms of trade improved. So the government decided to follow

three principles, first, provision had to be made for commitments on relatively long term projects in the country started after 1954-55. The second was to speed up the projects started earlier. The third was concerned with the residue of funds available after providing for current commitment.

The Sri Lankans were little taxed than people of any other countries. The major reason behind it was that until the ethnic crisis in 1980s the Sri Lankan government had been spending only a small amount on military and intelligence establishments. Investment priorities in the development program were determined broadly on the lines recommended by the IBRD mission in 1952. With the renewed emphasis on long-term planning, in July 1955, government issued a statement on foreign investment policy.³⁸

The government stated that budgetary policy should be geared to achieve rapid economic development while maintaining financial stability at the same time. In September 1956, the National Planning Council was established under the national Planning Council Act No.40, of which the chairman was the minister of finance, and the council consisted of fifteen others appointed by the Prime Minister. The function of the council was to define the planning of agriculture, industry, commerce, education, social services, and other matters pertaining to the national economy. Also defined in the Act was the role of the Planning Secretariat. It was to function as a government department and its task was to

provide advisory services and render any other assistance that may help the council to perform its duties.

A policy declaration was made that the government would give high priority to industrial development and the control of basic industries while giving private enterprise every encouragement to participate in economic development. Industries were classified into three categories. The first consisted of industries to be exclusively owned and operated by the government, including cement, limonite and salt. Reversing a decision made previously, the government decided not to transfer to the private sector, under the provision of the government-sponsored corporation act No 19 of 1955, the seven state enterprises manufacturing ceramics, vegetable oil, paper, cement, chemical, leather and plywood. The second category envisaged joint participation by the state and private enterprise in industries such as textiles, light consumer industries, was left open to private enterprise.

In framing the budget for 1957-58, the government was aware that an improvement in the foreign trade position would not be forthcoming. A deficit of \$26.1 million was estimated, but in actual fact it was higher because of revised wage scales of government employees and unforeseen expenditure on account of the damage caused by floods in December, 1957.

By 1958, there was some indication of the government's achievements in agriculture and industry, although they were restricted to a few spheres. The government was able to

implement successfully the policy of increasing the domestic production of textiles.

The first comprehensive national plan was presented by the United National Party Government in 1955. But the new political party, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) that took office in 1956 did not officially accept the plan, and instructions were given to reorient it to include a program for the private sector.³⁹

6.8.2 The Ten-Year Plan

The period chosen, namely 1959 to 1968, was in excess of the conventional five or six years usually covered by development plans. There were two important reasons for this: first, the economic problems of the country, particularly the very high rate of population growth, required a scale of development far in excess of what had been attained before. A relatively short planning period would not have provided a level of development commensurate with the requirements of an increasing population and a fast, expanding work force. The problem of employment was one of the key questions of relevance to planning in Ceylon and the emphasis had to be placed on fields of productive activity where the future work force, which was estimated to more than double over the twenty-five year period ending 1981, could be found employment.

The year 1977 made a turning point in the economic history of Sri Lanka by the launching of an extensive package of liberal economic policies by the UNP government. The liberal economic policies brought relaxation of rules, controls and regulations and

facilitated the free movement of goods, services and finance within the country and outside. Many state-owned enterprises became privatized and the state bureaucracy declined. Thus there seemed substantial expansion of urban informal sector (include retail trade, goods and passenger transport and personal service) particularly in the capital city of Colombo. The country received a wide range of foreign capital investment particularly in labour intensive industries. These industries used more labor compared to capital. Most of the industrialists were engaged in garment industry, which could employ a small section of the unemployed youths mostly young women. They did not absorb unemployed men in large numbers. Moreover, the jobs created in the industries were low-paid, unskilled ones not the type of job the country's educated youths have been looking for. The dissatisfied groups were mainly from Tamils. The educated Tamils youths educated in their own language were placed in a disadvantageous position in the competition for state employment. This became a far more burning issue in Sri Lanka in 1970s and 1980s.⁴⁰

6.9 Role of Defense Forces

The role played by the defense forces in Sri Lanka was not significant during the 1950s and 1960s. The government of Sri Lanka just after becoming independent from Britain, had to organize its own entry force. The defense force of Sri Lanka mainly consists of its army, navy and air force. In the past these forces were important only in ceremonial proceedings. They did not give much importance in developing a large number of forces,

supplementing it with good training and sophisticated weapons. The table below shows the strength of the forces during 1986-94.

Defence forces of Sri Lanka-1986 and 1994

		1986	1994
Army:	Regular	16,000	63,000
	Reserve	14,000	42,000
Total		30,000	105,000
Navy	Regular	2,960	9,260
	Reserve	1,000	1,100
Total		3,960	10,300
Air Force:	Regular	2,600	8,000
	Reserve	1,100	2,000
Total		3,700	10,000
Special Task Force		3,000
Home Guard		5,000	15,200
National Guard		15,000
Police Force		21,000	77,000

Source: Asia Year Book- 1987, pp.20-21

So the government did not include much amount in the budget for defence expenditure. The armed forces were mainly involved in day-to-day law and order maintaining activities and communal clashes and they never fought a real war. At the time of immense attacks by LTTE cadres, the government forces were not competent enough to tackle the situation. The gradual increase in terrorist activities has compelled the Sri Lankan government to

increase the defence expenditure. The cost will continue to rise as the armed forces obtain more weapons and other war related materials.

6.10 Conclusion

Tamils who were proficient in English language, enjoyed a very good economic and social position during the colonial rule. But the successive governments, controlled by majority Sinhalese, came to power after independence introduced many draconian measures to discriminate Tamils from the main stream. They were disfranchised, linguistic freedom was curtailed, the sectoral identity was questioned and right to education was hindered with chauvinistic oppression. Ultimately, these policies put the young Tamils in an anarchical situation and to violence.

NOTES

¹ K.M. De Silva, *A History of Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp.100-102.

² Ibid., p.128.

³ Partha S. Ghosh, *Ethnicity Versus Nationalism-A Devolution Discourse in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), p.45.

⁴ Ambalavanar, Sivarajah, *Politics of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996). p.25.

⁵ *The thirteen provinces were Jaffna, Mannar, puttalam, chilaw, Necombo, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Tricomalee and Mullaitivu.*

⁶ G.H. Peiris, *Development and Change in Sri Lanka : Geographical Perspectives* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 1996), p.18.

Thus Nuwarakalaviya was added to the Northern Province (Jaffna), Tamankaduwa and a large portion of Uva were added to the Eastern Province (Batticaloa) western flanks of the central highlands were added to the western Province(Colombo), and parts of Sabaragamuwa and Uva were added to the Southern Province(Galle).

⁷ Vijaya Samaraweera, *The Indian Tamil Immigrant Labour and the Land Problem*, A Paper Presented at the IVth International Conference of Tamil Studies, 1974.

⁸ G.H, Peiris, n.6., p.20.

⁹ D. Thenuwara, Gamage, "How did British Colonial Policy Influenced the Contemporary System of Sri Lankan Education" *Asian Profile* (Hong Kong), Vol.19, No.5, October 1991, p.476. see also in A.K.M Mosihur Rahman, "Education and Social Inequality : The Experience of Sri Lanka" *Asian Affairs* (Dhaka), Vol.VI, No.2, April-June 1984, p.161.

¹⁰ Partha S. Ghosh, n.3, p.53.

The British educational policy not only disadvantaged the Sinhalese Buddhists vis-à-vis the Christians, but also affected them vis-à-vis the Tamils. For example, in 1869, the Department of Public Instruction was opened to financially assist schools in general through various schemes of grants- in -aid. Following this, several Sinhalese Buddhist schools were established – within a decade there were four such schools registered as Buddhist. This system, however, had little impact in Jaffna where it was left entirely to the Christian missionaries to promote education.

¹¹ Partha, n.3, pp.53-54.

¹² D. Thenuwara, n.9, p.477.

¹³ Ibid., pp 477-480.

¹⁴ O.N. Mehrotra, "Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka", *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol.XXI, No.10, January 1998, p.1522.

¹⁵ Ravi Kant Dubey, *Indo-Sri Lankan Relations- with Special Reference to the Tamil Problem* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1993), pp.6-12.

¹⁶ Satchi Ponnambalm, *Sri Lanka: National Conflict and the Tamil Liberaion Struggle*(London: Zed Books, 1983), p.63.

¹⁷ Ibid., p.72.

¹⁸ The Citizenship Act (Chapter 349) Reproduced from Vol XI of the Revised Edition of the Legislative Enactments of Ceylon (1965). Also See Appendix I.

¹⁹ Ibid., Ravi Kant Dubey, n.15, pp.37-38.

The provisions in the citizenship act create two classes of citizens by descent and by registration. A person might acquire citizenship by descent of his father or his paternal grandfather who were born in Ceylon. Besides he must have been born before the appointed date to be fixed later. Only Sinhalese can acquire citizenship by descent, though Indians had spent their lifetime in Ceylon. They have been barred. In regard to the citizenship by registration, the Bill provided the unmarried Indian residents who have lived in Ceylon for ten years, and married persons who have lived for seven years immediately prior to January 1946 will have given the status of citizenship those who acquire citizenship by registration constitute a inferior class as it did not confer full citizenship rights to them. Again the person who ask for citizenship will have prove that he has the means to livelihood that he can maintain himself and his family. Hence the persons who enter Sri Lanka after 1936 or 1939 would not have been able to acquire citizenship. Absence in Ceylon exceeds one year considered break in continuous residence. The act further stipulated that a person who apply for citizenship should able to show that he has lived in Ceylon with his wife and minor children and even if one of minor children lived outside Ceylon could not apply for the same. The candidate must conform the laws of the state. According to the laws of Ceylon one cannot marry his sister's daughter. But in south India it was permitted. And according to Celon's law one cannot have more than one wife. But many of Indians had more than one wives. This was a major disqualification for the Indian applicants.

²⁰ O.N. Mehrotra, n.14, p.1523.

²¹ Ibid., p.1525.

²² Jehan Perera, Exploring the Solution to the Communal Problem, Committee for Rational Development(ed.), *Sri Lanka – the Ethnic Conflict Myths, Realities and Perspectives* (New Delhi: Navrang Publishers, 1984), p.99.) V.P Vaidik, Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka : India's Options(New Delhi: National Publishers, 1986), p.25.

Chelvadurai, Manogaran, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawai, 1987), pp.46-47.

Sinhala only legislation provided an opportunity for 74% of the population who did not have proficiency in English language to conduct official transactions in their native language. At the same time, Tamils many of whom were proficient in the English language and not Sinhala, were prohibited from using the English language. Its use was prohibited partly because it was foreign language and partly because it gave more importance to Tamils in education and employment. Tamils objected this attitude.

- ²² Devanesan Neisah, Tamil Nationalism (Colombo: Marga, 2001), pp.11-12.
- ²³ Satchi Ponnabalam, n.16, p.4.
- ²⁴ See appendix II
- ²⁵ Ibid, p.174.
- ²⁶ M.V.M. Alagappan, "Multiple Oppression with Geonocidal Intent in M.V.M Alagappan (ed). Tears in Tear drop Island (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1985), pp.81-82.
- ²⁷ Bernad Swan, *Sri Lankan Mosaic: Environment Man Continuity and Change* (Colombo: Marga Institute, 1989), p.359
- ²⁸ Sachi, n.16, p.5.
- ²⁹ Amita Shastri, "The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka" *The Journal of Asian Studies* (Chicago), Vol.49, No. 1, February 1990, pp.61-62., see also in G.H Peris (Agrarian Change and Agricultural Development in Sri Lanka" in Paul A Groves, (ed.) *Economic Development and Social Change in Sri Lanka-A Spatial and Policy Analysis* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1996), p.127.
- ³⁰ Satchi, n.16, pp.3-4.
- ³¹ G.H Peris, n.6, pp.172-173.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid., p.28.
- ³⁴ Ibid,

Advanced alienation means that under which the selected colonists were required to participate collectively in aspects of initial land development.

³⁵ Partha S. Ghosh, n.3, p.273., Amitha, n.29.

³⁶ Patricia Hyndman, "Sri Lanka : A study in Microcosm of Regional Problems and the Need for More Effective Protection of Human Rights" *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* (Denver), Vol.20, No.2, Winter 1992, pp.283.

³⁷ H.N.S, Karunatilake, *Economic Development in Ceylon*, (New York : Praeger Publications, 1971), p.41.

In that system there also three categories of persons who received rice. First the ration of the manual worker, second was designates ordinary and the smallest was given to infants.

³⁸ Ibid.

The main points were

1. *It was desirable for local capital to participate with foreign capital in the establishment of business enterprises. No rigid rules concerning such participation were laid down.*
2. *Importance was attached to the training of as many Ceylonese national as possible in business operated by foreign firms.*
3. *Remittances of dividends and interest as well as withdrawal of capital on liquidation were permitted freely.*
4. *For taxation purpose, foreign concerns were to be treated on equal terms with local enterprise. Whenever possible, the government would negotiate with other governments to relieve the burden of double taxation.*

³⁹ Ibid.

The six – year program broadly sought to satisfy several objectives:

1. *To safeguard the existing productivity of the major areas of the economy, since a deterioration in these sectors could affect or negate advances in other directions. This included a program for the rehabilitation or improvement of the major export crops.*

2. To increase the total output in the economy through the expansion of existing economic activities and the creation of new ones. It included programs and projects for expanding the acreage and improving the yield of rice production, for improving the out put of subsidiary foodstuffs and the fishing industry, expanding the cultivation of tobacco, expanding from tourism , expansion of manufacturing industry, and other activities of a similar nature.
 3. This included utility services and basic overheads of the economy as a whole. To a large extent, these were to be the exclusive responsibility of the state, and the emphasis was on essential services such as road, harbors, telecommunications, railways and power. Substantial investments were to be made in these fields.
 4. Since social services played a significant role in development by improving the quality and living standards of the population, provision was made for investment in water supplies, housing, hospitals, schools, training institutions and subsidiary social services.
- ¹⁰ Siri Hettige "Economic Liberalisation, Social Class and Ethnicity: Emerging Trends and Conflicts in Siri Gamage and I.B. Watson (eds.), *Conflict and Community in Contemporary Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp.303-306.

Chapter 7

Ideologies and Strategies of Various Militant Groups in Sri Lanka

- 7.1. Evolution of Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka
- 7.2. The Birth of the Tamil Militancy
- 7.3. The Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF)
- 7.4. Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)
- 7.5. Conclusion

CHAPTER 7

IDEOLOGIES AND STRATEGIES OF VARIOUS MILITANT GROUPS IN SRI LANKA

7.1 Evolution of Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka

It is practically impossible to set a date for the genesis of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka. Tamils began weaving dreams of an independent homeland much before the formal inception of militancy, though in an embryonic form, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the initial stage of the formation of militancy they were inspired by the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and his thought. Once they practiced *satyagraha* with the federal party deciding to launch direct action in front of government offices in the northern and eastern provinces. The objective was to disrupt and disorganise the government's administrative stricture in Tamil area and thereby exerting pressure on the government to accept the Tamil demand for federal autonomy. The aim of this was not fulfilled. But the campaign unfolded into a huge insurgency of the popular Tamil masses to register a national protest against the oppressive policies of the Sinhala ruling elites. They argued ideologies of Gandhi succeeded in India because it was majority against minority. But in the case of Sri Lanka, it is minority-seeking rights from the majority in which the majority was not willing to give concessions.¹ Historical evidences show that the Tamils had ruled east and north Sri Lanka till 1619. Even after British conquest till 1833 the two kingdoms (Jaffna

and Kotte) were ruled separately. British colonists merged the two kingdoms for their administrative convenience. According to Eelaventhan, a Tamil Eelam Liberation front leader who remarked in 1983 that:

what is that Tamilians are now demanding is a restoration of their original kingdom not separation. Historically legally and philosophically it has been proved that the two races are different and have been separate.²

A large number of politicians came from the majority Sinhalese community. So they acquired a proportionately large share of positions in the parliament compared to Tamils. From that time onwards the leaders started inspiring the Sinhalese with their communal speeches and poisoned their minds. The Sinhalese Buddhist clergy also played a crucial role along with these politicians. They also helped for the enactment of laws to systematically prevent or obstruct the upcoming of Tamils and revitalized the Sinhalese supremacist policies after the independence.³

The oppression of Tamils and the underdevelopment of the Tamil areas in Sri Lanka was a continuous process. In early 1970s the economic policies of the state worsened the balance payments situation in the country. The terms of trade declined and serious stagflation emerged. High rates unemployment and underemployment and rise in cost of living also took place. These trends coupled with the government policies resulted in the emergence of various militant groups and

restoring to guerrilla warfare to establish a separate state.⁴ The ethnic difference was the best weapon for the majority Sinhalese politicians to manipulate the vote of Sinhalese community. It is known that they even used their power to create ethnic violence in the country and tried to suppress the minorities.⁵

The post independence scenario shows that the Tamil electors had given support to a single party, i.e., All Ceylon Tamil congress, in the face of common danger. G.G Ponnambalam led it from 1944-1952. In the elections immediately after the independence the UNP came to power with a remarkable majority. After sitting in opposition for about sixteen months the Tamil Congress leader and a majority of congress parliamentarians realized that the conflicting rival opposition parties never unit to form an alternative government. So Ponnambalam decided to join the UNP Government without demanding any preconditions for the betterment of the Tamils position. This caused a split in the party and S.J.V. Chelvanayakam formed Federal Freedom Party of the Tamils, demanding federal constitution in which the rights of the Tamils would be regained and preserved. The precondition for the above were the establishment of two official languages (Sinhala and Tamil), an end to state aided colonization of the Tamil homelands, the re-enfranchisement of the disfranchised Indian Tamils etc.⁶ In the successive elections from 1956 onwards the federal party got very good support from the Tamils.

Chelvanayakam provided leadership during the mounting language crisis of 1956 up to 1977. He had entered into several

agreements with three prime ministers for keeping the rights of the Tamils. But all were reneged due to the revolt in parliament and the obstruction from Buddhist clergy. In protest, FP was successful in mobilizing the people on the plank of with a Tamil national consciousness.⁷

During 1977-1983 Appapillai Amruthalingam took on the flag. He was a civilian political leader, a public speaker an debater in parliament. Although he receive a very good support from the majority of Tamils to fight for a separate sovereign Tamil state Amruthalingam did not throw the Tamil people into armed struggle. He was successful in keeping a very good relationship with the civilian and militant wings of the Tamil movement at the same time he failed to act as a protector of the Tamil community. Anton S. Balasingham, the theoretician and the political spokesman of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) wrote about the FP:

FP was dominated by bourgeois and petty bourgeois class elements and was a nationalist party founded on a conservative ideology.⁸

The Tamils were on the brink of calling themselves a nation and evolving their own nationalism. A nationalist party may not opt for statehood. When it realizes that there is no other hope of doing so, then national awareness transformed itself into claim for right to self-determination and statehood.

The underdevelopment and the inability of the Tamil moderate politicians to find an amicable solution for the problem paved the way to the formation of liberation movements that decided to win over

their right for self-determination through armed struggle. They have lost hope in the majority government that has always believed that the minorities are only there to accept the majorities decide for them. *The majority democratic parliamentarians tried to win over the support of parliamentarians of their nature.* The name given to these minorities who stand for their rights was *terrorists*. However, their voice doesn't have adequate weight and the government launched an offensive into Tamil areas. Hundreds of innocent civilians were killed and prosecuted. This led even moderate Tamils to become militants.⁹

The struggle for political independence became an inevitable alternative, when the Tamil political parties converged at the height of national oppression. They formed in to a single national movement with the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in 1976. The Federal Party (FP) and the Tamil Congress (TC) were joined to TULF. It confronted with steadily mounting national oppression, frustrated with failures of political agitations demanding basic human rights, the Tamil nationalist movement resolved to fight for political independence on the basis of the nation's right to self-determination. It was primarily a decision to secede and form an independent sovereign state over which the 1977 election were fought and endorsed overwhelmingly by the Tamil speaking masses. Thus, it was the intolerable national oppression and the emergence of national conflict as the major contradiction that led to this inevitable political demand, to secede which opened a new era in Tamil politics, a new historical epoch to launch a revolutionary struggle for national independence¹⁰.

7.2 The Birth of the Tamil Militancy

The Tamil militants are the historical product of the Sinhala chauvinistic oppression and the unawareness of the Sinhalese politicized class about the gradual growth of the inevitability of the statehood in the minds of the Tamil people. Anton S. Balasingham, the theoretician wrote:

Tamil nationalism arose as a historical consequence of sinhala chauvinistic oppression. As the collective sentiment of the oppressed people, Tamil nationalism constituted ... revolutionary elements... Tamil national sentiment found organizational expression in the Federal Party ... in 1956 to spearhead the Tamil national movement.¹¹

It is the product of a revolutionary situation generated by the contradiction of national conflict. It caught up at the peak of national oppression and was intensified by police brutality against political activity. The revolutionary enthusiasm of the militant Tamil youth sought concrete political action to register their protest. Thus the seeds of Tamil terrorism began in 1970 with the formation of a militant student body called the **Tamil Students Movement** to protest government plans to limit access of Tamil students to universities. Very soon this movement went underground and turned to overt terrorist activities.¹²

In 1972, introduction of new constitution of Sri Lanka paved the birth of the *Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF)*. The same year saw the formation of three Tamil terrorist groups—the *Tamil New Tigers (TNT)*, *Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO)* and the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). The other groups are the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOT), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS). All these are splinters groups of the original **Tamil Students Movement**. And Tamil youth federation of early 1970s. Of these several groups the LTTE is the most powerful and well-disciplined and well organized with popular support in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.¹³ These groups emerged following the disappointment with the political strategy of nonviolence, practiced by the traditional political parties.

7.2.1 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

The seeds of the Tiger movement began in 1972. Structured as an urban guerilla force, disciplined with an iron will to fight for the cause of national freedom, the Tigers launched a series of attacks against Sri Lankan armed forces during the next decade and after.

7.2.1.1 Leadership

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the unchallengeable leader of LTTE, was born in Jaffna on 26 November 1954. He was the youngest of the four children of Vallipuram Parvathy and Tiruvenkatam Vellupillai. After his schooling, he joined in the Tamil Students League (TSL) and the Tamil Youth League (TYL). In 1974, when the International Tamil Congress was convened in Jaffna, Prabhakaran intensified his activities for developing an organization of his own. Subsequently there formed an organization called Tamil New Tigers (TNT). On

May 1976 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was formed as a successor to TNT and Prabhakaran took over the leadership. He had already prepared a logo for the LTTE with the help of an Indian artist. It showed the head of a roaring Tiger. He was actively engaged in forming a good guerilla force by the time.¹⁴ He went on to form a five member Central Committee of the LTTE putting himself as member of the Leadership Counsel. According to M.R. Narayan Swamy :

... the Tiger supremo was not only a good shooter; he was also a meticulous planer. If a bank was to be raised, he would keep the place under watch for weeks,... the planning for the operation would be done in a systematic way. He would take the lead role in the discussions, but share operational secretes only on a need-to-know basis.¹⁵

From childhood he was inspired by the heroes like Napolean Bonaparte, Alexander the Great and the Indian freedom fighters. Followers of Prabhakaran consider him as a charismatic nationalist hero, while others consider him a common criminal and murderer.¹⁶ An interview with Prabhakaran in 1984, Prabhakaran said,

Tamil Eelam will be a socialist state. By socialism I mean an egalitarian society where human freedom and individual liberties will be guaranteed, where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be abolished. It will be a free

society where our people will have maximum opportunity to develop their economy and promote their culture. Tamil Eelam will be a neutral state, committed to non-alignment and friendly to India.¹⁷

In 1970s a former Journalist Mr. Anton Stanislaus Balasingham became the political spokesman of LTTE. He shook hands politely with Prabhakaran and started giving ideological classes for LTTE members in Madras. It was he who had prepared the written manifesto for LTTE. He has actively participated in all the negotiations of LTTE with Government and as well as with External agencies and foreign governments. Even in the ongoing talks under the mediation of the Norwegian Government, he played a key role.

7.2.1.2 LTTE'S International Relations

There are two aspects for the international relations of LTTE as part of Tamil nationalism. One is the Tamil Nadu factor. The nationalist fervour embodied by the LTTE has aroused some pockets of Tamil Nadu. It is said that in certain interior villages and some sections of the coastal belt Prabhakaran is regarded as a folk hero.¹⁸ Overtly and covertly Tamil Nadu has been continuing to play a major role in shaping the destiny of Eelam Tamil nationalism.

Another unavoidable international aspect of LTTE's relations springs from the large scale migration began after 1983 riots to Europe, Canada Etc. These migrated Tamils occasionally conducted seminars, conferences and cultural celebrations to give the members an idea of the atrocities against Tamils in Sri Lanka. Occasionally they organize protest, marches, demonstrations and video and photographic exhibitions to publicize the atrocities committed against their people by the Sri Lanka government. The collective realization of their identify as stateless people and the refugees, the uncertainty of their residential status in the host country, economic hardship, cultural shock and the yearning due to prolonged separation from their homeland extended families and friends are factors that keep their love for the land alive and firm.¹⁹

The LTTE also uses its international contacts to procure weapons, communication systems and bomb making equipments and technology, to obtain funds and supply it to its fighters in Sri Lanka. Information obtained indicated that LTTE has been working as a pivotal point for the movement of the drugs from Southeast Asia to Europe and other western countries.²⁰

7.2.1.3 Ideology

According to publications of LTTE it has adopted the revolutionary theory and practice of Marxism and Leninism. It believed in armed struggle, sustained and supported by the masses. Adopting Lenin's teachings that armed struggle must be enabled by the enlightening and organizing influence of socialism is adopted. The movement was characterized by its political programme integrating

the national struggle with class struggle and defined their ultimate objective as national liberation and socialist revolution. They conceived armed struggle as the highest expression of political practice and must be channeled into a process of socialist revolution. Based on this Tiger movement from its early stages engaged in developing and building political and military bases among the popular masses²¹.

In the course of Tamil freedom struggle the application of Marxist-Leninist theory flourished a lot. The government of Sri Lanka was alarmed at the growth and strength of the movement. They became angered at the success of its military operations on the government property and personnel, and above all, were horrified by its growing support among wider sections of the Tamil masses. In April 1978, the liberation Tigers launched a tactical attack of self defence and destroyed a party of police personal which was in hot pursuit to track them down. The ruling group utilised this situation to intensify its policy of national suppression.²² A repressive legislation was rushed through the parliament, which proscribed the Tiger movement. At the same time, the government dispatched large contingents of military personnel to Tamil areas to keep them under constant military surveillance and domination. Even with the intensification of the military and the tight screen of surveillance the Freedom Fighters continued with their armed struggle, launched occasional strikes at chosen targets and evade all possible tactics to hunt them down. Though confronted with all odds, and obstacles, the Tiger Movement grew in strength as the armed vanguard of the mass struggle, growing as the authentic national liberation movement to advance the cause of national freedom through armed struggle.²³

7.2.1.4 Objectives of LTTE

Main objectives with the formation of the LTTE are the following

- Total independence of Tamil Eelam. The establishment of a sovereign, socialist democratic people's government.
- Abolition of all forms of exploitation of man by man and the establishment of a socialist mode of production ensuring that the means of production and exchange of the country were owned by the people.
- To achieve these revolutionary tasks, armed revolutionary struggle is the only viable and effective path, to liberate our homeland.

The guerilla warfare, will be gradually and systematically transformed in to a genuine people's war of liberation. To this end, our liberation movement is working persistently to mobilize and organize the broad masses to actively participate in the national struggle.²⁴

7.2.2 The People Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE)

PLOTE was a faction of LTTE which broke away due to an ideological and personal difference with the then leadership of the LTTE. Uma Maheswaran (Mukunthan) who had served as the chairman of the LTTE's executive council broke away from the LTTE with some members in 1979 and formed the PLOTE in 1980. According to them the reasons for the formation of the PLOTE was the non-democratic leadership style of LTTE. It was a high-caste

Vellalar oriented organization. It had obtained adequate finance and was second in strength to LTTE among Tamil militant groups at one point in time.²⁵

7.2.2.1 Ideology

The leader of POLTE Uma Maheswaran once said “Marxist philosophy is the best guide for revolutionaries”. He had cherished a people’s revolution in Sri Lanka and the establishment of unitary Marxist state in the country. Because PLOTE showed a wider interest in the liberation of the oppressed people, including the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, they adopted Marxism -Leninism as their ideology. It advocated that although each social group or class would be playing its role in the liberation struggle it should be led by the revolutionary working class in Sri Lanka.²⁶

The PLOTE laid great emphasis on the mass mobilization programme as it “sees the liberation struggle as a protected struggle in which the revolutionary armed struggle is an essential component. It also stressed the importance of forging unity with progressive force among the Sinhalese and it attempted to show the relevance of the Tamil liberation struggle.²⁷

7.2.2.2 Objectives

- Total emancipation of the Tamil Eelam
- Creation of a sovereign state

- The emancipation of the Tamils to be achieved not only by liberating them from the repressive Sri Lanka state, but also from the clutches of the Tamil bourgeoisie.²⁸

7.2.2.3 Main Activities and Achievements

The PLOTE followed the strategy of mass struggle to attain their goal. They rejected the long -term guerilla tactics to liberate the Tamil. It argued that their past experience had shown there had been always retaliation from the armed force and many innocent lives were lost consequently. So they concentrated on a people's war i.e. a mass struggle.²⁹

7.2.3 Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO)

The TELO was the oldest of the Tamil militant groups in Sri Lanka. It was originally formed in the early 1970s by a group of youths who broke away from Tamil Youth Federation(TYF). In 1974 Thangathurai and Kuttimani alias Yogachandran formed TELO. But both were killed in the 1983 riots at the Welikada prison. In 1983 Sri Sabaratnam took over the leadership of the TELO and reorganized it.

7.2.3.1 Ideology

The TELO was based wholly on a revolutionary ideology and programmes. It appealed to the Muslims in Sri Lanka to join hands with them for an armed struggle to defeat the reactionary forces collaborating with Zionism.

7.2.3.2 Objectives

- Establishment of an Independent Socialist Tamil Eelam.
- Liberation of the Tamils from the Sinhalese communal machinery
- Like other Tamil militant groups, TELO believed in the revolutionary armed struggle of the people to liberate the Tamils.

7.2.3.3 Achievements

TELO became popular after the chavakachcheri police station attack in 1984 in which nearly thirty four police commandos were killed, and the blasting of a passenger train at Kurugam in which nearly thirty one soldiers died. On 9th may 1985 TELO freedom fighters attacked Kokkavil Army camp. That was the largest attack made by them. 48 Sri Lankan soldiers lost their lives compared to nine Teloists.³⁰ At one time TELO was considered a militarily powerfull Tamil militant group second only to the LTTE.

7.2.4 Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS)

It was founded on November 23rd 1975 in London by an economist called Ratnasabapathy. It derived its strength originally from the General Union Eelam Students(GUES) a student group in Madras. It was organized for establishing a separate state, Eelam, which was the aspiration of the Tamil speaking masses. Its strongholds were mainly in Batticaloa and Amparai districts. They said “We are Eelavar, Our language is Tamil, Our nation is

Eelam". Its main end was the interest of the working class and equality and social justice would be guaranteed to each and everyone.³¹

7.2.4.1 Main Ideology

It followed the principles of collective leadership. It had a clear cut Marxist-Leninist ideology towards solving the Tamil problems and their activities were based on that ideology. It put forward the principle of *Unity and Struggle* as its motto. They believe that the plantation Tamils issue was the central point of *Eelam* and focusing on their plight is the foremost duty. But gradually they attained a clear politico-military strategy.³²

V Balakumar and R. Shankar top leaders of the EROS told to Frontline in 1986 that

so far we are the only organization that has exhibited its expertise in handling explosives and until now we have not exhibited our real military might.³³

In their manifesto it clearly stated that they want to unite three provinces. They educate and mobilize the people of that provinces. According to them, their homeland was from Point Pedro to Badula (up country) and from Mannar to Batticaloa including Pottuvil. The people who lived in that region would be categorized as Eelavar. They call these region as Eelam and they believe that the plantation Tamils and Tamils in the North and East constitute a distinct nationality.³⁴ But their struggle began from their

plantations. The plantation labour form the backbone of the Tamil working class. So they strongly believe that Eelam can be formed only through a joint struggle plan that can incorporate the plantation Tamils. It was the only group which gave importance to the Tamil-speaking masses living in the hill country and considered them as the classical proletariat to be included as its front line of the struggle against Sri Lanka government. EROS organized co-operative model farms in the north and the east to rehabilitate the people who were driven from the hill country during the communal riots of 1977.³⁵

7.2.4.2 Objectives

- To spread to other parts of Sri Lanka.
- To demoralize the forces by this activity
- To stop temporarily and the continuous harassment of the Tamil speaking people
- To make the Sinhalese people understand their armed struggle and distract the government³⁶

7.2.4.3 Main Activities and Achievements

The tactics and strategies of Eros are different. They followed the policy of not provoking the army but to attack the troops when they return to the barracks.

7.2.5 Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF)

The year 1970 saw the students and the youth taking over the leadership in Tamil freedom struggle. Their movement was

progressive, because it threw a challenge to the bourgeoisie political parties, who were afraid of the progress made by the movement of the student and youth.³⁷

The youth movement during 1974 had no class content and failed to organize the peasants and workers. They entered in to violence spontaneously. Yet the progressive thinking widespread among the younger generation enriched by never ending conversations and debates put them into right path.³⁸

The peasantry and proletariat of the country were organized, and mutual contacts improved. Thus taking lessons from the 1970 struggles, they organized a evolutionary liberation front called Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF). The selfish revisionists and spontaneous individuals were dedicated from the movement. EPRLF support base was in Batticaloa in contrast to the LTTE's stronghold in Jaffna.³⁹

7.2.5.1 Ideology

EPRLF sought to bring about that true liberation of Eelam, from national oppression by the neo-fascist state of Sri Lanka. The EPRLF is, therefore, committed to the revolutionary transformation of the Eelam national liberation struggle through the build up of a mass base and preparing the masses for an armed struggle. It had its own ideological position based on Marxist-Leninist principle.

7.2.5.2 Objectives

The EPRLF at its first Congress held between the 4th and 10th of October, 1981 presented its political programme and declared its ends and means. They are:

1. To establish complete liberation of Eelam, the motherland of the Tamil speaking People.
2. To found a socialist society to complete the political liberation by continuing to struggle for social, economical and cultural liberation.
3. To fight against imperialism, Zionism and Racism, since the Eelam liberation struggle cannot be separated from the international progressive struggles.
4. To accept Historical and Dialectical Materialism as our philosophy and guiding light.⁴⁰

7.2.5.3 Main Achievements

For carrying out these objectives they organized radical intelligentsia, progressive sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and students under one umbrella. They mobilized all working people of Eelam, in particular, agricultural workers, poor peasants, fishermen and the plantation proletariat, for the struggle against national oppression and class exploitation and towards the raising of political consciousness. They developed social consciousness against caste oppression and to smash the atrocities perpetrated in the name of casteism through all means and to indicate clearly that only the economic

liberation will guarantee a permanent solution to the problem. They raised social and cultural consciousness against male Chauvinism and the economic, political and cultural oppression against women and the eradication of the dowry system which is degrading to, both men and women⁴¹

7.3 The Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF)

The Historical development of these militant groups shows that in April 1984, the EROS, EPRLF, and TELO formed a united Front. It was called the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF)⁴²

They formed a five point programme:

1. To liberate our motherland from Sri Lanka domination
2. Nothing less than Eelam will be acceptable.
3. Armed struggle on a mass level to be our path.
4. To establish a socialist society in the independent Eelam.
5. To Free our nation from the yoke of neo-colonialism headed by U.S imperialists

7.3.1 Minimum Working Programme of ENLF

1. To implement co-ordinated armed activities against Sri Lankan armed forces.
2. To carry on overseas propaganda work jointly.
3. To collect funds from individuals and organizations in support of the struggle and manage it by a joint committee.⁴³ In April 1985 the LTTE too joined the front, while PLOTE opted to stay

out.⁴⁴ At Thimpu talks the ENF, PLOTE and TULF emphasized four points that were

- i) Recognition of the Tamils as a separate nationality;
- ii) Recognition of the areas occupied by Tamils as homeland of Tamils;
- iii) Recognition of the right of self-determination of the Tamils;
- iv) Granting citizenship to all those who wish to make Sri Lanka their home.⁴⁵

7.4 Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)

Apart from the Tamil Militants there was another group of Sinhalese militants under the name of Jantha Vimukthi Perumuna (JVP). In 1965 the party came into being It was started action in 1970's under the leadership of Rohana Wijeweera. He gave birth to a militant organization with the aim of over-throwing the capitalist regime in Sri Lanka through armed forces. The ideology of JVP is based on committed to Pro-China(CP) communist thinking.⁴⁶ They translated a number of communist works including that of Mao Tse-tung and Kim IL Sung into Sinhala language. Camps were organized to practice Karate for self defence and use of arms and other equipment for violent over through of government⁴⁷

Through youth movement he gathered a number of followers and established a revolutionary party of youth. The JVP was supported by various students organizations in the University campuses. The main objective of JVP was to overthrow the government whether it

was UNP or any other party. After the election of 1970 JVP launched an attack on police stations and government property in many parts of the island leaving a trail of bloodshed and destruction in trail. But the movement was crushed by the government forces with some external assistance. A number of young men and women partook in these activities.⁴⁸

The revolution by JVP was a failure. The people of Sri Lanka showed a high degree of political consciousness and they believed in the replacement of government by ballot. So JVP got little mass support. Again the Sri Lankan people were loyal to caste and family rather than class feelings. Moreover, the teachings of leftist ideology were not digested by an average Sri Lankan citizen. Thus the role of JVP in the course of the development of Tamil militant movement were very little. Indeed the organization assumed an anti-Tamil character representing Sinhalese chauvinism.

7.5 Conclusion

From the study of these militant groups we know that initially there was only one group fighting for an independent Eelam. But, later on, it was split up in to factions due to leadership struggle. So, there were different militant groups to fight for the same cause. But they all were committed to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Among these groups the LTTE could claim to have a distinct history and politico-strategic objectives. All others are now either defunct or are considerably weakened.

All Tamil militant movements had offices in Tamil Nadu, mainly the city of Madras. Leaders from Tamil Nadu protected various

groups. The leader of Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam (DMK) M. Karunanidhi had contact with TELO. Former chief minister of Tamil Nadu M.G Ramachandran had supported LTTE and also PLOTE. More over people pf Tamil Nadu had been generally sympathetic towards the Tamil militant after the 1983 riots.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka had wished to stay within the island in harmony with the majority Sinhalese as one nation. But the different subjugating programs of successive governments after the independence and the inability of the Tamil moderate leadership to find an amicable solution, challenged the social, economic and political existence of the Tamils. Confronted with steadily mounting national oppression, frustrated with failures of political agitations demanding basic human rights, the Tamil's movement resolved to fight for political independence on the basis of right to self determination. It was primarily a decision to secede and to form an independent sovereign state. Caught up in the revolutionary situation generated by national oppression and police brutality, the youths were forced to abandon the non-violent form of struggle and various militant groups emerged. Though all these militant groups are under various leaders they came under common name "Tamil Tigers". Most survived is LTTE'S leader Prabhakaran. These tigers are now trying to negotiate with the government. They have considerable support among Tamils in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Now the organization is looking is looking forward to improving its acceptance by the international community. Convert itself into the key and only legitimate actor of the Tamils.

NOTES

- 1 M. R. Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka – From Boys to Guerrillas* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1994), pp.23-24.
- 2 Nithin Belle, "A Island Divided" *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 14 August, 1983, p.5.
- 3 Paul Sieghart, Sri Lanka A Mounting Tragedy of Errors (London: International Commission of Jurists, 1984), pp.9-10. and Ministry of Finance and Planning, Faces of Development in Independent Sri Lanka (Colombo:Lake House Publishers, 1986), p.6.
- 4 *Sri Lanka at a Glance – Profile* (New Delhi: High Commission for the Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, October 1993). p.1., Sujit, M. Ganaga Retna, "Sri Lanka in the mid-1990s" *Australian Journal of International Affairs* (Oxfordshire) Vol.50, No.2, 1996.
Stagflation means rising inflation with stagnant growth.
- 5 James, Manor, (ed.) *Sri Lanka in Change* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p.6.
- 6 A. Jayaratnam Wilson, Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism-Its Origin and Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2000), p.120.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 A.S., Balasingham, *Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle* (Madras: Politcal Committee of LTTE, 1983), p.16.
- 9 Nithin Belle, n.2.
- 10 Bernad, Swan, Sri Lankan Mosaic. Environment Man Continuity and Change (Colombo: Marga Publishers, 1989), p.368.
- 11 A.S., Balasingham, n.8.
- 12 Victor, Gunewardena, "Impact of Internal Ethnic Conflicts on the Region; Sri Lanka Case', *Marga* (Colombo), Vol.8, No.3, 1986, pp.68-79.
- 13 Ibid., pp.12-14.
- 14 Narayan Swamy, n.1. p.59.
- 15 Ibid., pp.59-60.

- ¹⁶ Ibid., and O.N Mehrotra, "Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka" *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol.XXI, No.10. January 1998, p.1532., Bernad, Swan, *Sri Lankan Mosaic: Environment, Man, Continuity and Change* (Colombo: Marga Publishers, 1989), p.368.
- ¹⁷ "An exclusive interview given by V Prabhakaran leader of LTTE to Anita Pratap", *Sunday* (Colombo), 11 Martch 1984.
- ¹⁸ A. Jayaratnam,Wilson, n.6, p.169.
- ¹⁹ Tamil Link (Madras), 29 April 1984, pp.33-36.
- ²⁰ Marshall R. Singer "New Realities in Sri Lankan Politics" *Asian Survey* (Berkely), Vol.XXX. No.4, March-April 1990, p.416-417. O.N Mehrotra, n.16, p.1532.
- ²¹ *Selected Political Documents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Towards Liberation* (Madras: LTTE Publication, 1984). pp.47-48.
- ²² A.S Balasingham, n.8, p.29.
- ²³ Ibid., Ambalavanar, Sivarajah, *Politics of Tamil Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1996), pp.130-131.
- ²⁴ Ambalavanar, n.23, pp.133-134., *Selected Political Documents*, n.21, pp.64-65.
- ²⁵ A.Jayaratnam Wilson, n.6, p.127.
- ²⁶ Edgar O' Balance, *The Cyanide War: Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka 1973-88* (London: Brassey, 1989), p.17.
- ²⁷ C. Manogaran, *The Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* (Honolulu: The University of Hawai Press, 1987), p.73.
- ²⁸ Ambalavanar, n.23. pp.133-134.
- ²⁹ Ibid, p.134: A. Jayaratnam Wilson, n.6, p.127.

PLOTE may have started with Marxist Lenist ideology. But it later resorted to kidnappings and robberies, especially of banks, to supplement merge financial resources. Apparently Maheswaran was a leader who could not get on with his party. He and his followers were divided over the group's political programme, strategy and terrorism. He had committed thirty eight murders and was criticized for his headless and useless strategy. At a PLOTE congress in July 1985 an influential group of dissidents withdrew from the party and

Maheswaran was finally murdered in 1989 by unidentified assassins.

- 30 Ibid., *TELO TIMES*, Official Organ of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation, April- May 1985, No.2, p.1)
- 31 T.S. Subramaniam, "EROS - The Dark Horse" in *Frontline* (Madras) 28 June 1986. p.1.
- 32 *Pamphlet*, EROS is the Ethos of Eelavar (Madras: Documentation Unit, 1985), pp.5-6.
- 33 T.S Subramaniam, n.31, p.2.
- 34 EROS, *Force of Unity and Struggle* (Madras: Tamil information Center, 1985), p.4.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ambalvanar, n.23, p.136.
- 37 Role of Youths in the Eelam Struggle, *Publication of General Union of Youth and Students*, p.24.
- 38 *Pamphlet*, The Political Program of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front, Published by EPRLF Department for Propaganda and Information, 1981), pp.8-10.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 EPRLF in *Eelam Liberation Struggle* (Syndicate Printers, 1984) p.10.
- 41 EPRLF Pamplet, pp.3-4.
- 42 *TELO Times*, March 1985.
- 43 *Tamil Link*, 1984.
- 44 *Eelam News* (Madras: Eelam People's Information Centre Publication), June 1985, issue 8, pp.4-5.

A press release issued by four liberation organization on 10th April stated that the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENF) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had entered into an alliance so as to "chart a joint politico-military strategy to advance the process of national liberation. The press release laid down the political objectives of the newly formed alliance as follows:

- 1) To win the independence and sovereignty of our home and from the Sri Lankan state repression and domination.

- 2) *Not to compromise on any alternative political settlement other than the establishment of our statehood based on the right to national self determination of our people.*
 - 3) *To Pursue the strategy of a popular war of national liberation*
 - 4) *To construct a socialist social formation in liberated eelam*
 - 5) *To free our nation from all clutches of world imperialism and neo-colonialism and pursue a path of non-alignment.*
- ⁴⁵ Deccan Herald (New Delhi), 18 April 1984.
- ⁴⁶ Verinder Grover (eds), Encyclopedia of SAARC Nations (New: Delhi, Deep Deep Publications, 1977}, p.215.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, p.219.
- ⁴⁸ Dayan Jayatileka "UNP, JVP: Who is a Progressive" *Lanka Guardian* (Colombo), Vol.3, No.2, 15 May 1990, p.7.

Chapter 8

Tamil National Freedom Struggle in Sri Lanka

- 8.1 Emergence of nationalism
- 8.2 Nationalism before independence
- 8.3 Nationalism after independence
- 8.4 Economic Underdevelopment
- 8.5 Economic Degradation of Northern states
- 8.6 Role of TULF in Tamil Separatist Movement
- 8.7 Effect of 1983 Riot
- 8.8 Indian Intervention in the Island
- 8.9 IPKF in Sri Lankan Politics
- 8.10 The Tamil Nadu (and Indian) intervention in
 the Sri Lankan Tamil Question
- 8.11 Recent Developments
- 8.12 Conclusion

CHAPTER 8

TAMIL NATIONAL FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN SRI LANKA

8.1 Emergence of Tamil Nationalism

The word Nationalism comes from the root word nation signifying birth. Originally, nationalism meant a social grouping based on real or imaginary ties of blood. *Websters third international Dictionary* defines “the term, nation as stable community of people with territory, history, culture and language in common.” The term nationalism is used to describe the patriotism relating to nations as well as nationalities. The Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka was the product of Sinhalese Nationalism and nationalistic oppression. It became progressive when oppressed masses revealed their aspirations for freedom, dignity and justice. The revolutionary character of this feeling emerged when popular masses recognized their real situation and their future in the country.¹

8.2 Nationalism before Independence

Under British rule Sri Lanka was referred to as the model ‘Crown Colony’. It prospered under plantation capitalism and other benefits of foreign rule. As per the recommendations of the Colebrooke-Cameron commission, the island was put under a tightly centralized administration. The legislative councils were formed by giving representation based on ethnic identity, irrespective of the size of the group in terms of population. The

Ceylon Tamil members of the council spoke on behalf of the Ceylon Tamils in the entire island. Throughout nineteenth century the Ceylon Tamils kept a separate identity with Sinhalese or other groups. Though there was competition with Sinhalese over securing jobs etc., they were not regarded by the Sinhalese as a threat. On the contrary, even in this harmonious situation, each community retained its distinct culture, religion and language. This was supported by the fact that most people in each group tried to settle in places of their own concentration. This slowly developed a sense of national awareness ie., identifying themselves as being Sinhalese or Tamil. By the introduction of territorial representation based on population, the Tamils realized that they too were a minority community along with Muslims, Burghers etc. the transition from a lower to higher level of national consciousness began to grow among the Tamils.

With the revival of Budhism in the late 19th century conflict arouse between Budhists, Christians and Muslims. The first sign of dissatisfaction amongst Sinhalese was blown up when the Sinhalese Budhist bourgeoisie challenged the Christian hegemony in the same period.² At that time a strong Sinhala nationalism emerged against westernism and Christianity. The history of Sri Lanka showed that the first crisis erupted in 1915. They got this idea from the incidents that happened in India at that time.³

Until 1930s the issue of language was not controversial among Sinhalese in spite of the fact that majority of them felt discriminated in their own country because of their lack of

knowledge of English language. Under British rule English was used in administration and it was the official language of the country. The Tamils in Sri Lanka were more willing to learn English and so more of them secured government jobs compared to the Sinhalese.⁴ At that time Sinhalese engaged in trade and plantation. They had no interest in government jobs. Subsequently, the Tamils gained higher education in the professional fields. In early 20th century Sinhalese got awareness about the benefits of the state employment, thus began unhealthy competition between the two main ethnic groups in the country, but there were no severe clashes.⁵

The course of discussions on independence were developed during 1930s in Sri Lanka. The issue of various communities in the future set-up was not considered in those discussions except the Donoughmore commission's advice for the suffrage in the country and it recognized the various communities in the country and guaranteed their interest in the legislative body. In 1944 the Soulbury Commission came to Ceylon to discuss the future political set up of the island. Commission suggested democratic polity, which naturally protects interests of the various ethnic groups.

The Westminister model of Parliamentary system was adopted for the country. This facilitated the Tamils who were concentrated in certain parts of the country, could vote a number of members into the parliament. Soon they realized that the members of parliament among Tamils were minority and their interest were overlooked by an organization sacrificed by the majority.⁶

It is most essential that Sinhalese and Tamil be adopted as official languages immediately, so that the people of this country may cease to be aliens in their own land, so that an end may be put to the inequity of condemning those educated in Sinhalese and Tamil to occupy the lowliest walks of life, and above all that society may have the full benefit of the skill and talents of the people. The administration of the government must be carried on in Sinhalese and Tamil.⁷

8.3 Nationalism After Independence

At the time of independence, like any other colonial country, Sri Lanka also faced the problems of governance and due to lack of a refined constitution, things were not clear especially about its citizens and their laws. Sinhalese nationalism began to grow in a wider dimension after independence. The first victim in this regard was Indian Tamils. The UNP government, which came to power under the leadership of D.S Senanayake, made *the citizenship Act* which disfranchised most of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka. It denied their right to political representation and also the chance of success of the Tamil members to the parliament. And thereby these Indian Tamils became stateless.⁸ It was a clear case of discrimination against minority ethnic group aroused from the subjugating attitude of Sinhalese nationalism. All eight electorates in which Tamils represented came to hands of Sinhalese.⁹

The adamant determination of the chauvinistic bourgeois government of Mr. S.W.R.D Bandaranayake brought and implemented *Sinhala only policy*. It was opposed by the opposition parties including Tamils. Dr.N.M. Perera the LSSP leader declared:

The LSSP's demand for Sinhala and Tamil as the state languages, it should be made very clear at the outset, flows from a very real concern for the interest of the people who speak these languages We have been for *Swabasha*, that is, for Sinhalese and Tamil, ever since we started in 1935. That was one of our items in our first programme issued by the LSSP, that the administration of the country should be in Sinhalese and Tamil ... Our party has taken a consistent attitude ever since.¹⁰

It became a crucial political challenge to the Federal Party. A revival of Buddhist religion started following the celebration of the 2500th death anniversary of Buddha in 1956. There was a provocative book entitled 'The Revolt of the Temple written by D.C Vijayvardhane in 1953. He highlighted the legend relating to the inversion of Sinhalese in the island. It also hold up Sinhala as the language of the country. This language issue led not only to ethnic divide but also to social and religious disputes.¹¹

In early 1970s the effect of another draconian measure, standardization of university admissions and quota system reduced the Tamils contribution in education and employment

sector. The government figures show that in 1970 the total number of Tamils in Ceylon administrative Service was only five percent and in 1978 it was zero percent. In university admissions in 1969 Tamils were seventy eight percent of the Engineering and Medical admissions. But after standardization in 1974 they were reduced to sixteen point three percent and twenty five point nine respectively.¹² It is felt that a minority group without political power and inhabited in sterile lands, career advancement can be achieved only through technical and scientific expertise. For this reason education has become extremely important value for Sri Lankan Tamils. It is generally believed that these specific policies of redistribution along radical lines led to considerable frustration and disappointment among Tamil youth, thus changing the perceptions of the Tamil identity and leading to the declaration of separate state. It is also this frustration which has led to increased political turbulence in the northern region.

8.4 Economic Underdevelopment

Prices soared to dizzy heights. Capitalist policies, and incentives such as tax holidays, multiple exchange rates and convertible rupee accounts granted to businessman, mostly Sinhalese, brought about largest disparity in income wealth, the country had ever seen. From 1965, the country embarked on a series of foreign loans; when these matured in the 1970s, the repayment siphoned away 25-30% of export earnings. Hence more was borrowed, which created a debt economy and deepened the vicious circle. Country's budgetary deficits increased very much. This situation affected mainly the ordinary people.¹³

Economic Summary

Year	GNP at 1959 Prices	GNP per cent Growth Rate per Person at Constant Prices	Terms of Trade	Balance of Trade	Budgetary Deficit
1948	3,149	27.3	100	+17	Nil
1950	3,995	15.0	111	+396	Nil
1955	5,281	4.4	109	+479	Nil
1960	6,288	3.8	99	-128	-430
1965	7551	0.2	75	+475	-430
1970	9,686	2.0	56	-262	-1327
1975	11,167	1.0	31	-1228	-2699
1976	11,506	1.4	42	-62	-3576
1977	12,016	2.6	54	+508	-3074
1978	13,002	6.4	54	-1907	-7165
1979	13,792	4.2	39	-7321	-8791

Source: Central Bank report, Department of census and statistics, 1974.

As opportunities for public service for employment declined and unemployment reached crisis proportions as a result of economic stagnation in 1960 and 1970s.¹⁴

8.5 Economic Degradation of Northern Province

The unequal distribution to Tamil areas was very clear in the allocation sanctioned to Jaffna district. In 1970, the UF government released funds to districts. The criteria for sanctioning were population of the districts, rate of development of the area, the

potential for the development and unemployment rate. But those criteria were not considered in case of Tamil districts, especially Jaffna. For example, Jaffna district was sanctioned Rs.56.98 lakhs in 1974 where as other Sinhalese dominated districts received more.

In 1975 Jaffna was given a total of Rs. 4 million under the decentralized budget and Rs. 56,97,593 for new and old works. But on the basis of parliamentary electorates, area under cultivation, population, inland water resources, number of colonization schemes, student population and fisheries, it should have been sanctioned one-twelfth of the total fund. Similarly in 1976, it was allotted Rs. 14.5 lakhs for each of its eleven constituencies while the average allocation per constituency in other districts varied from 19.2 lakhs to 45 lakhs. The district of Kegalle, Kalutara and Badulla with eight constituencies were granted Rs. 16 million each, which was higher than the total allocation to Jaffna district. Besides, in 1977 the security minister demanded more funds for defense expenditure. Simply by that reason the government stopped all development projects in the northern province and the funds were diverted to defense purposes.¹⁵ When the Tamil members of parliament questioned the government's step-motherly attitudes towards Jaffna, the Minister concerned himself accepted his omission and assured them that a good amount would be released in the coming year.

The UF government's discriminatory policies in funds allocation were continued by the UNP government. In 1981 the total

governments capital expenditure in the Jaffna district under the central budget was only Rs.260 million; it was that was only 2.6% of the national capital expenditure of nine billion rupees. In the district budget for the year 1982 the amount allocated to Jaffna district for few works was only Rs.27 million. As far as the per capita expenditure was concerned, it was Rs.313 in the case of Jaffna district while the national expenditure was Rs.656.¹⁶

Under this situation Sri Lankan Tamils had been demanding autonomy for Tamil dominated areas. Tamil terrorism began in 1970 with the formation of a militant student body called the "Tamil Students Movement" to protest government plans to limit access of Tamil students to universities. Very soon this movement went underground and turned to overt terrorist activities. In this situation we can think, Ted Robert Curr's work on "Why Men Rebel." He pointed out that relative deprivation arises when the individual doesn't attain what he thinks is justifiably due to him. Relative deprivation "is the mechanism that produces frustration of sufficient intensity to motivate people to engage in protest and violence."¹⁷

8.6 Role of TULF in Tamil Separatism

Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike came to power in 1970 under the banner of United Front Government. The new constitution made by them enforcing the 'Sinhala Only' rule also made Buddhism the state religion. Tamils began to protest against the new law. In 1976 the leaders of the Tamil United Front (TUF) met at Pannakam in the Vadukkodai constituency and reconstituted the

party into the Tamil United Liberation front (TULF) and adopted the historic ‘Pannakam resolution’ which declared the liberation of a Tamil nation called “Tamil Eelam”, as their ultimate goal.¹⁸ TULF called for the first time the formation of a separate state of Tamil Eelam covering the North and East provinces, where Tamils were in the majority.¹⁹

TULF was originally using their demands for Eelam as a bargaining tool.²⁰ They worked to achieve some form of federal system in Sri Lanka. The violence intensified and reached high proportion after 1979. There emerged a more militant Tamil movement demanding separate Eelam. Among them more radical Tamil Leaders, their followers and their organizations were commonly referred to as *tigers*. They did not believe that a peaceful solution with the Sinhalese was possible. So with increased level of violence came the radicalization of the Tamil youths. TULF failed to respond to their demands. In early 1984, they agreed to join in an All Party Conference sponsored by the government. Most of the *Tamil* leadership opposed this action.²¹

The continuing provocation by both communities made a compromise very difficult. Each event made new hostility and the gap between the two communities increased. That time the TULF was losing its position as the mouthpiece of the Tamils. The TULF has steadfastly opposed Tamil Militancy and youth Insurgency in Sri Lanka and supported a non violent approach to the conflict.²² As the position of the Tamils eroded 1977, the government took a harder line towards the Tamils and took a number of measures

which the Tamils had opposed. These activities included police and army abuses, increased surveillance and searches in the north and the policy of colonization. After the election of July 1977 UNP government got the majority and Junius Jayewardene became the prime minister. Since then the violence against the Tamils had became a regular feature of Sinhalese Nationalism.²³ By the new constitution of 1978, the new government introduced a Presidential form of government. The Tamils at the same time argued for federal form of government and autonomy of their region. Moreover, in July 1983, a group of armed boys murdered thirteen Sinhalese soldiers. The bodies were brought back to Colombo for a public funeral and riots broke out. As a result thousands of Tamils were killed and so many were injured. For many of the Tamils this was a major turning point. It was pogrom of such intensity that made moderate Tamils convinced that only a separate state could protect Tamils. The Sinhalese government turned to military operations in an attempt to stamp out terrorism, but their activities augmented the military behavior of the Tamils.²⁴

The most important blow to the TULF was the stripping of the parliamentary seats in October 1983. This revealed their position and influence in the political system. They had lost their forum to challenge the government and their legitimacy as the leaders of the Tamils. Tamil youth found it increasingly harder to accept a peaceful approach toward the Sinhalese. So the Tamils were denied access to the government through their legitimately elected representatives.²⁵

There was a major division within the leadership of the Tamil community. The division was not between organized political parties but between the politically dominant TULF and the Tigers. These two groups differ in several important respects. The TULF was a legalized political party until 1983.²⁶

Despite the division in the Tamil leadership, both the TULF and the LTTE appear to have widespread support in the Jaffna peninsula. No other political party has been able to challenge the TULF's dominance in electoral politics since the early 1970s. In the presidential elections of 1982, the TULF called for a boycott of the election while the Tamil Congress now known as the All-Ceylon Tamil Congers (ACTC) ran a candidate of their own opposed to the incumbent President Junius Rechard Jayawardene. In the August 1983 the sixth Amendment to the constitution was passed and it required that all members of the parliament recite a loyalty oath which disavowed separatism. The TULF MPs refused to recite the oath and were removed from the parliament. This was followed by a government publicity campaign stressing the weakness and unrepresentativeness of the TULF. The TULF was left with no legitimate forum, such as parliament, to state their case and as a result, their influence in the North declined while that of the "Tigers" increased.²⁷

Tamil youths began to feel that their leaders had failed to protect their rights and give them an appropriate place in the country. In this condition, frustrated youths came to unite under the leadership of Prabhakaran who mobilized them towards their goal of their own

independent sovereign country of Eelam. Consequently the Tamil tigers launched a terrorist movement to achieve their objective.²⁸

It is in this sense that J.S. Mill wrote against the “tyranny of the majority” in his *on Liberty*:

In political speculation the tyranny of the majority” is now generally included among the evils against which society requires to be on its guard. Like other tyrannies, the tyranny of the majority was at first, and is still vulgarly, held in dread chiefly as operating through the acts of the public authorities. But reflecting persons perceived that when society is itself the tyrant—society collectively over the separate individual who compose it —its means of tyrannizing are not restricted to the acts which it may do by the hands of its political functionaries. Society can and does execute its own mandates; and if it issues wrong mandates instead of the right, or any mandates at all in things which they ought not to meddle, it practices a social tyranny more formidable than many kind of political oppression, since it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrate much more deeply in to the details of the life, and enslaving the soul itself. Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of magistrate is not enough; their

needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by the other means than civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development and, if possible, prevent the formation of any individual not in harmony with its way, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own.²⁹

8.7 Effect of 1983 Riot

In July 1983 countrywide riots and clashes between Sinhalese and Tamils ended with thousands of Tamils dead and several hundred thousand becoming refugees. Large government forces were deployed in the north and east provinces. This period marks the beginning of the LTTE guerrilla campaign against government forces. In the eleven days of violence in July- August 1983, the Tamil community suffered enormous destruction and loss of life. They government adopted a plan to eliminate Tamil extremists through ruthless military action³⁰. And they tried to destroy the economic base of the Tamil community. Jaffna district can be taken as a case for that. In Jaffna about 2,000 Tamils were massacred and over 150, 000 Tamils became homeless refugees. At the same time no harm was done to the Sinhala residents or their property.³¹ About 40,000 Sri Lankan refugees were moved to Tamil Nadu by 1984. An important thing to note here is that there was also a separation between Hindu Tamils and Muslim

Tamils. They clashed in the eastern province in 1985. In these circumstances the Indian government expressed its concern about the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. So India began acting as a mediator between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil groups. Then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi met President Jayewardene and made an agreement that India would stop supply of arms and men to Sri Lanka. It made strict control over military operations against the Tamils. Afterwards representatives of Sri Lankan government and the leading Tamils groups met in Thimpu the capital of Bhutan, to work out a solution to the bloody ethnic crisis. But it was not a success.³²

8.8 Indian Intervention in the Island

The government of Sri Lanka again imposed an economic blockade on Jaffna Peninsula in January 1987. According to Tamils it was for taking control of civil administration of Jaffna. As the situation in Jaffna became serious, the Indian government decided to supply relief to the suffering Tamils in the area. This action was not under the concurrence of the Sri Lankan government. They criticized the Indian action and consequently India supplied only some essential commodities in the Jaffna peninsula.³³

Finally, on 29 July 1987, then Prime Minister of India Sri. Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lankan president J.R.Jayewardene signed the “Indo-Sri Lanka Accord”. As per the terms of the agreement India sent its Army named Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Jaffna to enforce the Accord.³⁴

Under the terms of the Accord, Sri Lanka agreed to the following :

A provincial council scheme was to be introduced in parliament and passed. (It was done). The scheme was not quite like federalism but it devolved considerable power to provincial councils. It also required constitutional amendment, but the UNP government of the time had more than the necessary two third vote needed.

Elections to these new provincial council were supposed to took place before December 1987 (they did take place in 1988).

The Northern and Eastern provinces would be merged in to one provincial council until there could be a referendum on the merger in the Eastern province. (There still has not been a referendum).

For their part, the Indians agreed:

- to introduce a peacekeeping force in to the island to disarm the militants;
- to maintain a cease-fire between the Sri Lankan army and the militant;
- to ensure fair elections ;
- to deport all Sri Lankan separatists from India and not to let them use India as a sanctuary; ³⁵

The terms of the Accords were not accepted by the Sinhalese. Most found the merger of the North and East completely opposed. They also were against the president's decision to accept Indian troops coming in to Sri Lanka and occupying the country. Many Sri Lankans—Tamil s as well as Sinhalese—thought that if, once invited in, the troops would not leave. Indeed the most anti-Indian Sinhalese were sure they would not, that this was just a prelude to taking over the entire country.

While most Tamils recognized the Accord as the best political solution they were likely to get—and a step toward restoring civil order for the first time in several years—on the Sinhalese side riots erupted in Colombo and elsewhere in the South. Sinhalese by the thousands, sometimes led by Buddhist monks, protested “giving away too much to the Tamils”. Even with the government, the two most important ministers – Prime-Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa and Minister for National Security Athulathmudali publicly disapproved of the Accords. Despite all the protests, Rajiv Gandhi came to Colombo on July 29-1987, and with Jayewardene signed the agreements. Immediately afterwards, some 10000 Indian Soldiers and paramilitary force began arriving on the island to police the cease-fire that came in to effect within forty eight hours of the signing of the agreement.³⁶

8.9 IPKF in Sri Lankan politics

The IPKF was not welcomed by Sri Lankans. Gradually they clashed with the Tamil tigers and the alienated local civilian population. By the way the Tamil tigers were reportedly assisted

by the Sri Lankan force to launch attack on the IPKF. During those attacks the Indian armed forces suffered heavy casualties and they were compelled to withdraw from Sri Lanka under an agreement reached in 1989.³⁷ The IPKF's stay in Sri Lanka became a contentious issue and that spoiled bilateral relations between the two countries. Perhaps the Indian leaders believed that Indian armed force could successfully resolve the Ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka as they did in the former East Pakistan.³⁸

Neville Jayaweera in his report of a fact-finding Mission for the international Peace research Institute of Oslo describes the crisis in Sri Lanka in the first half of 1989 in these graphic terms,

Rebel groups in the south could impose curfew and stoppages and will anywhere, for any length of time. They had virtually managed to bring the state apparatus to a complete standstill. Transport, electricity and hospital services had been shut down and Colombo seemed to have been encircled. In a classic Ho chi Minh-like manoeuvre the principal rebel group—Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)—seemed to have progressively “liberated” one district after another and were now poised to “liberate” the capital city itself.³⁹

In 1988 the elections were held for constituting Provincial Council in the Northern and Eastern province. The SLEP had boycotted the election and threats were issued by the LTTE and the militant

Sinhalese outfit JVP against casting votes by electors. That election was conducted by IPKF peacefully. But the civilian administration could not be established against the wishes of the LTTE. So the ethnic crisis continued unabated. Thus, during the rule of the UNP, the divide between the Sinhalese and Tamil was further widened and thereby the UNP lost its popularity and its opponents blamed it for widespread corruption and political power abuse. The UNP was weakened because of a series of assassination of its leaders-President Ramasinghe Premadasa in May 1993 and the party's Presidential Candidate Gamini Dissanayake during the November 1994 election campaign. In this background the People's Alliance led by Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumarathunga won the parliamentary elections in August 1994. She defeated Dissanayake's wife, Srima, in the presidential election. She had made main three campaign pledges that were:

- a. to end the ethnic conflict.
- b. to replace the existing Presidential system by a parliamentary system of government and
- c. to eliminate the abuse of political power by the government

The Kumarathunga government began the peace process with a bang as she could work out an agreement with the LTTE supremo Pradhakaran on 5 January 1995, but it lasted little more than a hundred days as the LTTE resumed its attacks on 29 April 1995. In fact, the LTTE insisted on plans for economic reconstruction in the areas of their control, but the government wanted to do so

only after some progress was made towards resolving the political issues.⁴⁰

8.10 The Tamil Nadu (and Indian) Interest in the Sri Lankan Tamils Question

Indian's interest and the anxiety in Tamil Nadu over the Sri Lanka Tamil Question arise from two facts. Firstly, it is also a problem of the Indian citizens, those who will ultimately be sent back to India. They have been described as people of Indian origin and there is a diplomatic agreement (Srimao-Sastri pact) in operation relating to them. So, when something is done to them whether as labours or as Tamils, it is the duty of the Indian government to express concern.

By extending the language problem to full ethnic proportions and starting to attack them as Tamils, the path was irretrievably paved for Indian concern over the up country Tamil. The economic significance of the plantation labour, was evident from the fact that they were still the sheet-anchor of the economy. The leadership of the Tamils of Indian origin would therefore speak with greater of confidence than the Sri Lankan Tamil leadership.

The sympathy for the Sri Lanka Tamils cause lies in the logic of the history of nationality formation in India during and after independence. Nationality formation within India was on an ethno linguistic basis. Tamils and Bengalis constitute two of the highly conscious ethno lingual groups in India.

The pure Tamil Movement was part of the Tamil consciousness. Post- independence India was reorganized along linguistic basis states (1956). This social psychology of Tamilian consciousness is found in Tamil literature, especially in the poetry Bharathi to Bharathidasan.

With the attack on the Sri Lankan Tamils on the basis of their being Tamils, anxiety about their linguistic brethren arose as a natural expression of extra- territorial ethnic solidarity. This is nothing new in Indian politics. There had been expressions of solidarity with Bengalis living in the Pakistan, and even with Punjabis living in the United Kingdom. There have been instances when the Central government of India had expressed concern over the problem of such groups. Thus arose the demand in Tamil Nadu about voicing Indian concern over the Sri Lankan Tamil issue.⁴¹

To add to this, the strategies of the parties of Tamil Nadu also played a crucial role. DMK supremo, Karunanidhi, had claimed leadership of the Tamils all over the world. Any inactivity by M.G. Ramachandran and his AIADMK government could lead to massive gains by DMK. Tamilnadu Congress (1) could not isolate itself from Tamil sentiments. The same was the case with the two Communist parties who also could not remain silent over the 'legitimate demands' of the Sri Lanka Tamils. Thus there was all-party consensus on the Sri Lankan Tamil issue.

Since 1977 there has been an additional fear in India: the fear of a US takeover of strategically important Tricomalee. And this changed the entire perspective of the problem.

8.11 Recent Developments

After many years of bloody ethnic war in Sri Lanka, the election of Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga as the President of the country appeared as a new window of opportunity. But her initiatives to resolve the ethnic crisis could not produce positive results. She delayed the release of her detailed peace proposals until August 1995, though they were ready as early as December 1994. If these had been released at the beginning of cessation of hostilities, the war-weary Tamil civilians would have been able to bring some pressure on the LTTE to negotiate seriously on those proposals.⁴²

Be that as it may, the Kumaratunga government announced the legal text of the proposals on devolution of power in January 1996. According to them, Sri Lanka would become an "indissoluble" union of regions. It was a modified version of the earlier proposals. It authorized the central government to remove any regional government that would try to secede from the republic and assume direct rule over the region. In the original proposals, the central government was not empowered to remove any regional government regardless of the circumstances. While the Sinhalese appreciated the change, the Tamil expressed apprehension on the misuse of power by the center. The government apparently modified the text of the proposals to accommodate the views of the nationalist Sinhalese. In the process the government alienated the moderate Tamils.

Thus the other devolution proposals like the councils considerable jurisdiction over economic development, education, and the use of land as well as its right to negotiate directly with foreign government for aid and investment; and some control over maintenance of law and order could not make much impact on the moderate Tamils.⁴³

Sri Lankan constitutional Affairs Minister, Prof. G.L Perris presented, on 24 October 1997, president's proposal to the Parliament containing the government draft of new constitution and "riders" on it by various parties. The main feature of the government draft is the proposed conversion of the unitary state in to "an indissoluble union of regions".⁴⁴ It was also proposed that a new Muslim majority south-eastern region would be constituted without a referendum in that pocket of territory, in the event of north-eastern region being formed as a result of a mini-plebiscite in Trincomalee and Batticaloa districts of the eastern part. In view on this reorganization of the administrative setup, the main Sinhala Ampara electoral district would be given an option to either convert itself in to a full fledged region or Join the adjoining Sinhala dominant region"⁴⁵. It was also reported that a major proposal was to confer citizenship on all those permanently resident in Sri Lanka as on 30 October 1964, and their descendants, on the condition that they and their descendants should not be citizen of any other country.

8.12 Conclusion

Though the Tamils of the North-and East are war-weary, they would not easily be convinced about the feasibility of a separate

region for Muslims and Sinhalese in their "homeland". They sincerely believed that the region belong to them and they have became a minority, especially in the Sinhala-dominated area, because of the government policy of colonization of the eastern region. The proposed division of the eastern part is likely to create problems. In fact, there has been a lack of compromise and accommodation amongst both Sinhalese and Tamils. Moderates in both ethnic groups are generally called traitors and thus condemned by extremists who do not hesitate to use violent means to derail any practical solution to the ethic crisis.

The Tamil tigers have enormous confidence in achieving their goal of total independence "Tamil Eelam" (Tamil Homeland)- in the north and east combined. They reportedly use Ethiopia and Israel as their models. After years of fighting, Eritreans could achieve their goal of an independent sovereign country, carved out of Ethiopia. For years the Palestine Liberation Organization had been considered as a terrorist organization but in the recent past it could secure its recognition as the true representative of Palestinians and negotiated with the leaders of the United State of America and Israel on the future status of their place of residence.

The ethnic crisis cannot be resolved by military means only. The Irish republican Army in Northern Ireland of Britain and Hamas in Israel cannot be controlled by efficient armies and police force. The LTTE have may received a setback because it was declared a terrorist organization by the United State. The LTTE had also suffered a defeat in Jaffna as it has lost to the Sri Lankan Army in

late nineties following Kumaratunge's war for peace policy. But such developments have not weakened the spirit of extremist Tamils. In certain quarters it is believed that no solution can be found to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka until Prabhakaran is physically eliminated. Such crisis cannot be resolved by removing of a person. They may be weakened for some time but are likely to revitalize soon.

There is no universal solution to ethnic crisis. Each crisis may be resolved differently. At time it may be resolved by outside intervention like the Indian intervention in the Bangladesh war. A peaceful solution to the ethnic crisis may be worked out if the conflicting parties make efforts to accommodate each other's grievances. It is very difficult to find a solution to a prolonged bloody ethnic crisis. Tamil and Sinhala extremists are likely to frustrate any sincere effort in resolving the ethnic crisis. The recent effort of Kumaratunga may produce some positive result if the Sinhala Opposition political parties and Buddhist monks do not violently oppose her proposal, and she can win the confidence of the Tamil masses. She had to contain her opponents by civilian means and not resorting to military means for achieving her objectives because that would be counter productive. Apparently, she has been making slow but sincere effort in resolving the bloody ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. She has moved in the right direction, but the crisis is a complex one and the path to its solution is tortuous. It may be defused with patiently handling and delicately involving the Tamil extremists.

Though she has been sincerely attempting to have a solution to the problem amidst strong resistance from the Sinhalese Buddhist clergy, the conditions for talks were not acceptable to Tigers. So in this context a third party role of Norway was entertained. Norway had a very good relationship with the LTTE as well as Sri Lankan Government which was developed through the activities of the NGOs and civil societies working there. The NGOs like Cey-Nor and Worldview knew all the paraphernalia of the Tamils problems. But the future of the mediation and the solution to the problem depends on how the militants and politicians of south arrive at a consensus on the devolution of powers.

NOTES

- ¹ *Towards Liberation* (LTTE Publication, 1984), p.33.
- ² Kumari Jayawardena, "Class/Ethnic Consciousness, Seminar (New Delhi), September 1987, p.19.
- ³ G.C Mendis, *Ceylon Under The British* (Colombo: Educational Publishers, 1952), pp.174-175.
- ⁴ D. Thenuwara, Gamage, "How did the British Colonial Policy Influenced the Contemporary System of Sri Lanka Education" *Asian Profile* (Hong Kong), Vol.19, No.5, October 1991. pp.481-482.
- ⁵ O.N., Mehrotra, "Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka" *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), Vol.XXI, No.10, pp.1522-1523.
- ⁶ Ibid.
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Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1 Evaluation

9.2 Objectives

9.3 Findings

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Evaluation

Almost all countries of south Asia have been following divergent strategies for dealing with ethnic movements and all of them have failed to satisfy minority groups in varying degrees. A comparative study of the ethnic policies of the governments reveals that in most of the cases the problems remain unresolved. The people who have ethnic consciousness are more committed to it than is assumed ordinarily by governments. Question of ethnic identity varies and even changes from one historical period to another.

For the last two decades, Sri Lanka has been facing an irresolvable ethnic problem that has even threatened the territorial integrity of the country. The British imperialists seeded a communal cancer in the island. That was the policy of the British in leaving their colonies in a state of turmoil as we had seen in the Indian subcontinent. The British imposed a unitary constitution which envisaged a free democracy by the majority of Sinhalese group. The overall objective of the study is that the spatially unequal and temporarily uneven capitalist development are at the roots of the ethnic cleavages in Sri Lanka. The process of economic development and the growth strategies coupled with the socio-political policies have widened this problem.

9.2 Objectives

The first objective of the study was theoretical in nature, which has been dealt with in the second chapter. The study has attempted to supplement the theoretical foundation with the use of secondary historical materials. It attempted to explain internal colonialism assisted by factors like economic dependence, uneven development and development of underdevelopment. The internal colonial model would therefore seem to provide a more adequate explanation of the ethnic identity among the peripheral groups in a complex society like Sri Lanka. The peripheral group is culturally and economically isolated from the core. For strengthening the study of internal colonial model, Marxist view on society and different models of modernization theory have been touched upon. The modernization theory examines the works of the nineteenth century social scientists, as well as contemporary commentators.

The Political economy of Sri Lankan state is discussed in the third chapter. Sri Lanka is basically an agrarian economy. An important problem facing the third world countries is the difficulty of trying to balance their drives for an increase in national material output and at the same time attempting conservation and renewal of their natural resources. The development pattern of Sri Lanka was mostly centered along ethnic lines. The theoretical study of economic development pattern in Sri Lanka and the colonial legacy on the

restructuring of Sri Lanka's political and economic institution is highlighted in this chapter

Another objective, the status of Tamils in the colonial and post-colonial situations, is discussed in the fourth chapter. Before the advent of foreign colonists the Tamils of Sri Lanka had their own sovereignty, their own language and culture, and they enjoyed equality in all spheres. The Christian missionaries established excellent institutions for education in north and east of the island. The education imparted to the students by these institutions enabled many of them to become doctors engineers and lawyers among others. These circumstances led to the impression being formed in the minds of the Sinhalese masses that the Tamils were enjoying more facilities than what they deserved.

The historical background to the emergence of the ethnic diversity in Sri Lanka is the fourth objective formulated in the fifth chapter. Capitalist development from its beginning and its uneven growth in Sri Lanka is set out in the fifth chapter. The ethnic problem becomes its disreputable form in the uneven development pattern of Sri Lanka state. The ethnic distribution among various districts of Sri Lanka using maps is also included in this chapter for examine the fifth objective.

The sixth objective is to examine the various socio-political programmes of the successive governments which has been set out in sixth chapter. The constitutional developments in Sri Lanka, the educational policies

of British and all the policies adopted by Sinhalese dominated Sri Lanka government after its independence are included in the sixth chapter. By the citizenship act of 1948, language act of 1956, standardization and quota system in university admissions and employment sector and state sponsored colonization programmes the Sinhalese dominated governments marginalized Tamils (Indian and Sri Lankan) in the country. The governments economic planning and its impact on country's development are also summed up in this chapter by using government documents. The various policies and programmes of the state, directed towards the underdevelopment of north and north eastern parts (Jaffna, Batticaloa, and Tricomalee) of the country has also been subjected to study. These districts are Tamil dominated areas. The crucial subject area of defence allocation was also subjected to closer study.

The eighth objective, that is the socio-economic conditions for the emergence of militancy in Sri Lanka, is discussed in the seventh chapter. The oppression against Tamils in Sri Lanka was a continuous process, and it is the main factor behind the underdevelopment of Tamil areas and the emergence of the various militant groups in the country. Among five important militant groups LTTE occupies a key place in the study. The objective of the study also focuses on the main ideologies of the five militant groups and their ends.

The final objective, the development of militant movement in Sri Lanka is summed up in the eighth chapter. The militant movement entered into the mainstream Sri Lanka's history was under the flag of nationalism. Sinhalese nationalism on the one side and the Tamil Nationalism on the other. Following the riots of 1983 a large scale refugee problem was created and this led to the India's active intervention in the island's affairs.

9.3 Findings

The Marxian theories of state have come a long way since their origin. Based on Marx's idea of class perspective the newer theories grouped industrially advanced societies and dependent state of developing societies. Contemporary theories reject a single version of capitalist state but establish a historical analysis within the universalistic conception relating to the state and capitalist societies. The uneven wave of modernization and development over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. The 'internal colonial model' by Michael Hechter is focused in this study. The core periphery relations at international level was applied to the problem of ethnicity within a society. Instead of the relation between the countries, the internal relations between regions inhabited by different groups, has been formed in the case of Sri Lanka. The core group used its advantageous position, to regulate the allocation of resources and social roles. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced or periphery group are denied access to these roles. In Sri Lankan case the Sinhalese dominated government is the core group and

Tamils are the periphery group. The nationalist movement is an ethnic reaction against overt ethnic policies of a dominant ethnic core. This ethnic core became more and more exclusive in economic terms and this change was accompanied by increasingly explicit repression of opposition. Behind the birth of any militant or terrorist group, there may be some dissatisfaction with the policies of the government. Sometimes, they even demanded the displacement of existing political elites.

The militant attitudes are determined by different factors like psychological, structural and positional. By studying these psychological factor it become clear that the aggressiveness is an inherent part of every person. When continuous denial of their interest and there could be a strong leader behind them or in the aware of their state of affairs, they become more militant. For attaining a specified goal militant people sacrifice their life and they become martyrs. The power of the militant group is located solely in the central power. The strength of the military is measured by its ability to use as counter strategy. If sacrifices and the sufferings of militants are very high the militant movements will last to attain their goal.

From political economy of the state, it is found that agriculture was the economic base for many centuries. The western development strategies based on industrialization made far reaching consequences in the country. It could not solve the problems of poverty and frustration among unemployed youth in the country.

Present ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the policies British. As part of the colonialist expansionist policy they started spreading Christianity through Christian missionaries and started schools. English education was provided by these Christian missionary schools. The government policy was one of limiting government schools and granting state aid to private schools. The colonial government recruited local personnel, proficient in English for junior and middle level bureaucratic positions. Hence English education came to be valued and became the primary means of economic advancement, social mobility and elite culture. In this way English education, Christianity, western culture and values became the dominant force in the country. Tamils were more willing to learn English and join government jobs than the Sinhalese. That was because Tamils were inhabited in dry zone areas which were not fertile as other areas in which Sinhalese lived. But in early twentieth century Sinhalese also were attracted towards government jobs and found opportunities to acquire higher education.

Immediately after independence the newly elected government disenfranchised Indian Tamils under the citizenship Act of 1948. The Indian Tamils were virtually declared stateless because they were required to establish citizenship of the country by proving that they were citizens of Ceylon either by descent or by registration. Another major bone of contention between the Tamils and Sri Lankan government was the issue of Language. In 1956 "Sinhala only" as the official language were introduced. This language led to not only ethnic

divide but also social and religious discord. Again other policies by successive government in Sri Lanka such as dry zone colonization, standardization and district quota system in education and employment sector also marginalize the Tamils (including Sri Lankan) in the country. The education policy of Sri Lanka governments was therefore a calculated move to keep the Tamil students from entering professional colleges and universities.

The agricultural policy of Bandaranaike government which intended to help Sinhalese peasants also helped the farmers of north and east to a considerable extent. The government started a systematic scheme of colonization in the traditional Tamil homelands with a Westminster model of parliamentary representation. These colonization programmes were aimed at changing the predominantly Tamil areas in to Sinhalese majority areas. Their aim was to destroy the Tamil traditional integrity.

From the findings set out in the preceding chapters it is clear that the minority Tamil people had an unequal position in Sri Lanka. When the colonialist handed over power the majority ethnic group took over the country. The study found the major socio economic and political reasons for the rising ethnic problem. They have been eliminated from the mainstream of social and political life of the country. The provisions of the constitution favored only majority populations. This created problems for the youth. They could neither enter the universities local organizations or go abroad,

meanwhile the militant movement for a separate state was ground and hundreds of youths joined the fight for an independent Eelam.

The growth of the Tamil ethnic nationalist movement was analyzed in the context of development of underdevelopment in a third world economy. The disparity in relative economic positions of the two ethnic groups within the society exists is because of the unequal and uneven capitalist development along with asymmetrical and disadvantageous distribution of power. According to Marx national oppression would inevitably hold back and divide the working class of the oppressor nation. It is through the oppression and through the hegemony of a national chauvinistic ideology that the ruling Sinhalese bourgeoisie exerts dominance and power over the ethnic minority, namely Tamils. The emergence of a reactive ethno-nationalist Tamil identity was from the political and economic dominance that the Sinhalese sought to establish and extend over the Tamil minorities within an economically developing society. In this process the Sinhalese who enjoy political power at the center tried to develop at the expense of the minority Tamils at the periphery to create an internal colony. The Tamils of these underdeveloped areas, confronted with steadily mounting national oppression, frustrated with the failure of national political struggle demanding basic human rights, protested against the exploitation of the Sinhalese bourgeoisie through armed resistance movement to secede from the center.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

THE CITIZENSHIP ACT (CHAPTER 349) REPRODUCED FROM VOL XI OF THE REVISED EDITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS OF CEYLON (1956)

Act No5.18 An Act To make provision for Citizenship of Ceylon and of 1948, 40 of 1950,13 of 1955

An act to make provision for Citizenship of Ceylon and for matters connected therewith.

[15th November, 1948]

Short title 1. This Act may be cited as the Citizenship Act.

PART 1

Citizenship of Ceylon

Status .2.

- (1) With effect from the appointed date, there shall be a status to be known as "the status of citizen of Ceylon".
- (2) A person shall be or become entitle to the status of a citizen of Ceylon in one of the following ways only:-
 - (a) by right of descent as provided by this Act;
 - (b) by virtue of registration as provided by this Act or by any other Act authorizing the grant of such status by registration in any special case of a specified description.
- (3) Every person who is possessed of the aforesaid status is herein after referred to as a "citizen of Ceylon". In any context in which a distinction is drawn according as that status is based on descent or registration, a citizen of Ceylon is referred to as

" citizen by descent" or "citizen by registration"; and the status of such citizen is the like context referred to as "citizenship by descent" or "citizenship by registration".

Citizenship and nationality

3. A citizen of Ceylon may, for any purpose in Ceylon, describe his nationality by the use of the expression " citizen of Ceylon".

PART II
Citizenship By Descent

Citizenship the case of person born before the appointed date.

4. (1) Subject to the other provisions of this Part, a person born in Ceylon before the appointed date, by descent in date shall the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent, if---

- (a) his father was born in Ceylon, or
 - (b) his paternal grandfather and paternal great grandfather were born in Ceylon.
- (2) Subject to the other provision of this Part, a person born outside Ceylon before the appointed date shall have the status of citizen of Ceylon by descent, if-
- (a) his father and paternal grandfather were born in Ceylon, or
 - (b) his paternal grandfather and paternal great grandfather were born in Ceylon.

Citizenship by descent in the case of persons born on or after the appointed date.

[2, 40 of 1950]

- 5.(1) Subject to the other provisions of this Part, a person born in Ceylon on or after the appointed date shall have the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent if at the time of his father is a citizen of Ceylon.
- (2) Subject to the other provisions of this Part, a person born Outside Ceylon on or after the appointed date shall have the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent if at the time of his

birth his father is a citizen of Ceylon and if , with in one year from the date of birth, or within such further period as the Minister may for good cause allow, the birth is registered in the prescribe manner—

- a. at the office of a consular officer of Ceylon in the country of birth, or
- b. at the office of the Minister in Ceylon.

Certificate of citizenship by of Ceylon by case of doubt.

6. Upon application made in that behalf in the prescribed manner, the minister may, in his discretion, grant, in the prescribed form, a certificate of citizenship of Ceylon by decent to a person with respect whose status as a citizen of Ceylon By descent a doubt exist; and a certificated issued under this section to any person shall be conclusive evidence that person was a citizen of Ceylon by descent on the date thereof, but without prejudice to any evidence that he was such a citizen at an earlier date.

Foundlings

7. Every person first found in Ceylon as a newly born deserted Infant of unknown and unascertainable parentage shall, until the country is proved, be deemed to have the status of a citizen by descent.

Resumption of citizenship by descent. [3. 40OF 1950]

- 8.(1). Any person who cases under section 19 or section 20 to be a citizen of Ceylon by descent may at any time thereafter make application to the Minister for a declaration that such person has resumed the status of a citizen of Ceylon by descent ; and the Minister may make the declaration for the application is made.
 - a. If that person renounced citizenship of any other country of which he is a citizen, in accordance with the law in force in that behalf in that other country; and
 - b. if that person is, and intends to continue to be , ordinarily resident in Ceylon.

APPENDIX II**The Official Language Act No.33 of 1956**

An Act to prescribe the Sinhala language as the one official language of Ceylon and to enable certain transitory provisions to be made (Date of Assent: 7 July 1956).

1. This Act to be cited as the Official Language Act No.33 of 1965.
2. The Sinhala language shall be the one official language of Ceylon. Provided that where the Minister considers it impracticable to commence the use of only the Sinhala language, for any official purpose immediately on the coming in to force of this Act, the language or languages hitherto used for that purpose may be continued to be so used until the necessary change is effected as early as possible before the expiry of 31 December 1960 and, if such change cannot be effected by administrative order, regulations may be made under this Act to effect such change.
3. (i) The Minister may make such regulations in respect of all matters for which regulations are authorized by this Act of be made and generally for the propose of giving effect to the principle and provisions of this Act.
(ii) No regulation made under sud -selection (1) shall have effect until it is approved by the Senate and the House of Representatives and notification of such approval is published in the Gazette.

Appendix III

Bandaranaike's 1955 Statement on Tamil Language Recognition:

1 Legislature

Tamil may also be used in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, and all laws will be promulgated in that language as well.

2 Administration

Sinhalese will be the language of administration in all courts, government offices and local bodies , provided that in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the language will be Tamil.

3 Education

The Medium of Instruction shall be Sinhala, provided that in the Northern and Eastern Provinces it shall be Tamil.

PROVISO 1:

Every pupil should be encouraged (but not compelled) to learn the other language as a second language and , if the parents of one -third of the pupils in any school desire to do so, the school shall be compelled to provide the necessary facilities.

PROVISO 2:

If in any school in the Northern and Eastern Provinces the parents of two- thirds of the pupil desire that the medium of instruction shall be Sinhalese or in the case of a school in any of the other seven Provinces that medium of instruction should be Tamil, this shall be allowed. But in such a school Tamil or Sinhalese as the case may be, shall be taught compulsorily as a second language to all the pupil in that school.

N.B. A parent for this purpose shall be registered voter for Parliamentary Elections.

General

All citizens shall have the right to transact official business in Sinhalese or Tamil in any part of the island.

Transitory Provisions

There should be an immediate declaration of the official language. But in the transition period, until the above policy can be implemented, English may continue to be used. A Commission shall be appointed forthwith to draw up a timetable setting out the dates for dates for the change-over and to what extent, if any, English may continue to be utilized and also indicating, where necessary, the steps to be taken to give effect to this timetable.

APPENDIX IV

The 1966 Tamil Language Regulation, published in Government Gazette 14653 of 2.3.1966.

- 1 With out prejudice to the operation of the Official Language Act 33 of 1965, which declared the Sinhala Language to be the one official language of Ceylon, the Tamil Language shall be used:
 - 2 (a) In the Northern and Eastern Provinces for the transaction of all Government and public business and the maintenance of public records whether such business is conducted in or by a department or institution of the government, a public Corporation or a Statutory Institution and
 - (c) for all correspondence between persons other than official in their official capacity, educated through the medium of the Tamil Language, and any official in his official capacity.
 3. To give effect to the principle and provision of the Tamil Language (special Provisions) Act, and those Regulation, all Ordinance, and all Orders, Proclamations, Rules, By-laws, Regulations, Notifications, made or issued under any written law, the government Gazette and all other official publications and circulars, and forms issued by government, Corporation, statutory Institutions shall be published in Tamil.

APPENDIX V

Dudley Senanayake- Chelvanayakam Pact, March 24, 1965

(An agreement reached Mr.Dudley Senanayake- on behalf of the UNP- and Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam-on behalf of the Federal Party)

Mr. Dudley Senanayakam and Mr S.J.V. Chelvenayakam met on 24.3.1965 and discussed matters relating to some problems over which the Tamil-speaking people were concerned, and Mr. Senanayakam agreed that action on the following lines would be taken by him to ensure a stable government :

- 1) Action will be taken early under the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act make provision for the use to Tamil as the Language of Administration and of Record in the Northern and eastern Provinces.

Mr.Senanayakam also explained that it was the policy of his Party that a Tamil speaking person should be entitled to transact business in Tamil throughout the island.

- 2) Mr. Senanayake stated that it was the policy of his party to amend the Language of Courts Act to be legal proceeding in the Northern and Eastern Provinces to be conducted and recorded in Tamil.
- 3) Action will be taken to establish District Councils in Ceylon vested two leaders. It was agreed, however, that the Government should have power under the

law to give directions to such Councils under the national interest.

- 4) The Land Development Ordinance will be amended to provide that citizens of Ceylon be entitled to the allotment of land under the Ordinance.

Mr.Senanayake further agreed that in the granting of land under colonization schemes the following priorities be observed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

- (a) Land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should in the first instance be granted to landless person in the district.
- (b) Second, to Tamil-speaking person resident in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
- © Third, to other citizens in Ceylon, preference being given to Tamil citizens in the rest of the Island.

Sgd. Dudley Senanayake 24.3.65

Sgd. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam 24.3.65

Appendix VI

The “Bandaranaike- Chelvanayakam Pact”, 26 July 1957

Statement on the general principle of the Agreement:

Representatives of the Federal Party have had of discussions with the Prime Minister in an effort to resolve the differences of opinion that had been growing and creation tension.

At an early stage of these conversations it became evident that it was not possible for the Prime Minister to accede to some of the demands of the Federal Party.

The Prime Minister stated that from the view of the Government he was not in a position to discuss the setting up of a federal constitution or regional autonomy or any steps which would abrogate the Official Language Act. The question then arose whether it was possible to explore the possibility of an adjustment without the Federal Party abandoning or surrendering any of its fundamental principles and objectives.

At this stage the Prime Minister suggested an examination of the Government s' draft Regional Councils Bill to see whether provisions could be made under it to meet reasonably some of the matters in this regarded which the Federal Party had in view.

The agreements so reached are embodied in a separate documents. Regarding by way of an adjustment. They pointed out

that it was important for them that there should be a recognition of Tamil as a national language and that the administrative work in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be done in Tamil.

The Prime Minister stated that as mentioned by him earlier it was not possible for him to take any step which would abrogate the Language Act.

Use Of Tamil

After discussions it was agreed that the proposed legislation should contain recognition of Tamil as the language of a national minority of Ceylon, and that points mentioned by the Prime Minister should include Provision that, without infringing on the position of the Official Language Act, the language of administration in the Northern and Eastern Provinces should be Tamil and that any necessary provision be made for the non-Tamil-speaking minorities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Regarding the question of Ceylon citizenship for people of Indian descent and revision of the Citizenship Act, the representatives of the Federal Party put forward their views to the Prime Minister and pressed for an early settlement.

The Prime Minister indicated that this problem would receive early consideration. In view of these conclusions the Federal Party stated that were withdrawing their proposed satyagraha.