

ETHNIC POLITICS IN SRI LANKA AND INVOLVEMENT OF INDIA

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Abstract:

South Asia has an extensive and exclusive history from the standpoint of identity and population displacement. Ethnicity denotes a sagacity of the harmony of identity and cultural values of a specific cluster. The problem of identity becomes a significant issue for 'locating oneself in society' in contemporary world society. The attitude of identity embodies the image of 'Self' and 'others'. This opinion is multifaceted and evaluated idiosyncratically in several frameworks. Ethnic delinquency rises in national and intercontinental politics in different traditions: a) Civilization of Clashes, b) Tribalism, c) Insufficiency of Resources d) Over-population.

Political characteristic of each group develops a significant political phenomenon in emerging world of the 20th century and Sri Lanka is no exception. Sri Lanka is a multi – ethnic, multi – religious and multi – lingual state in the South Asia. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka has been a portion of land, ranging from the mainland of India disconnected by Palk Strait and practically bounded by oceanic water. It is an exclusive country which was occupied by the different types of governments: authoritarian, fascist and democratic. The final goalmouth of its commanding political organization with centralized presidential system is to set up a stable society in the country.

Present paper opens up the root grounds of ethnic struggle in Sri Lanka and points towards the numerous ways in which this civil confrontation stood the threat to the Indian national security. The ethnic confrontation is between Sinhala and Tamil nationality which has an inference for India's security due to the presence of Tamil nationality in the state of Tamil Nadu.

1.0. Introduction

South Asian cultures and civilization have been characterized by development of their national identities. Geo-strategically, this area is very significant for trade and business in the world. This region not only links the Asia

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and Europe but also joins the routes of transaction between Europe and South East Asian countries. The south Asian countries have been suffering from the calamity of nationality due to presence of the multi-ethnicity, multi-religion, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. The identity developed a significant problem for South Asia after the post-colonial era. The Ethnic identity can be analyzed as a common tradition, mutual civilizations and ethics, analogous history, actions and shared language and areas of origin. In this sense, the issues of identity become a vital issue for 'locating oneself in society' in modern world-society. The attitudes of identity are embodied in the concept of 'Self' and 'Others'. The idea of identity developed a phenomenon of important performances and elementary rights for growing up in contemporary world. India and Sri Lanka have not been out of these glitches.

The notion of Diaspora has been upholding a new dimension of concepts and pieces in the zone of cultural studies. This period has been recognized as an illustration of 'hybridity' in this field of analysis. In this construction, the researcher of social science would like to highlight the several dimensions of migration and immigration in the analysis of culture and identity such as Korean groups in Japan, Indians in Sri Lanka, Irish in England, Algerians in France, and Palestinians in Jordan due to the prevalence of boarding from their own motherland.

2.0. Understanding the Ethnic Demography of Sri Lanka

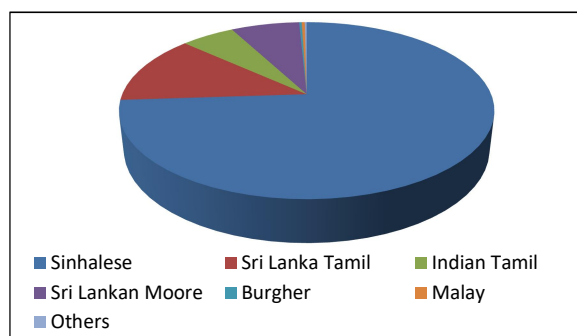
Diaspora is a multi-faceted notion. Diaspora means that a group of people existing together outside of their motherland with their unique culture and civilizations. Diaspora is the outcome of immigration and it can be considered as a massive one. Sri Lanka is a diamond in Indian Ocean. This landmass is a cohabitation of diverse categories of national groups distinguished by their idioms, cultural nationality and customs. Indo-Sri Lankan connection advanced through the religious notion of Buddhism in 250-210 B.C.E. and one more breadth is that of national propinquity. Consequently, traditional connection between Indo-Sri Lanka had been manipulating for each other. The ethnic struggle has wonderful insinuations for India's security structure due to the presence of Tamil populace in Tamil Nadu in South India. This paper will examine the necessity of India's engrossment in civil conflict of Sri Lanka. The paper attempts to explore the response of the following questions: a) how did political disintegration appear with ethnic variances since independence of Sri Lanka? b) Why did civil conflict come into existence in Sri Lankan society?

Sri Lanka is identified with diverse terms. According to Mahavamsa mythological a leading figure Vijaya called it the Land 'Tambapanni'. In Mahabharata and Tamil this island is termed as 'Lanka' and 'Eelam' separately. Greek geographer called it 'Taprobana'. Parsians and Arabs termed it 'Serendipty' which originated its name from the 'cerentivu'. Portuguese Domain baptized the landmass 'Ceilao' in 1505. The British group had assumed the term of island as 'Ceylon'. Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a semi-presidential structure which has been recognized and has extended antique antecedents of 3000 years. It has a variation of civilizations like beliefs, customs, values, religions, and values. These different thoughts had been measured as self-sufficiency in its own self and the cultural varieties have led to the ethnic identity.

Table 1
Population of Sri Lanka, 1981

Ethnic People	Number	Per cent
Sinhalese	10979561	74.0
Sri Lanka Tamil	1886872	12.7
Indian Tamil	818656	5.5
Sri Lankan Moore	1046926	7.0
Burgher	39374	0.3
Malay	46963	0.3
Others	28398	0.2
Total	14846750	100

Chart 1
Population Composition of Sri Lanka, 1981



Source: Census of Population and Housing, 1981, General Report

The most significant ethnic cluster in Sri Lanka is *Sinhala* who are the mainstream and are majority in number. The Sinhala ethnic persons are about 74%. They conventionally migrated from North India during the period of 500 B.C.E. They are of Indo-Aryan ethnic cluster. They were amalgamated with unique populations of Sri Lanka Proto –Australoid and developed as assorted group (Silva: 1997). The Sinhala uniqueness is created by two different behaviours i) Language, ii) Buddhist religion. There are two categories of Sinhalese that originated in Sri Lanka; a) Low country Sinhalese b) Kandyan Sinhalese. Low country Sinhalese are seriously prejudiced by the Western ethos and modernism. On the other hand, Kandyan Sinhalese are traditional in nature. They had been adamant to uphold their conventionalism and cultural values. But internal immigration has expunged the variances between Low country Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese.

The second national assemblage is Tamil group. They reached in Sri Lanka during the colonial period of time. Tamils are fundamentally Hindus and Christian. There are three sub-groups in Tamil community which are based on language, cultural values, customs and provincial ways: first of all, Negombo (Puttalam) Tamils who are found in western portion of Sri Lanka, secondly, some portion of Tamils are from eastern region of the state and finally, Jaffna or Northern Tamils are found in Northern part of Sri Lanka. Tamil persons are mainstream majority in the North-Eastern sphere of Sri Lanka.

The other ethnic groups are Moors who formed the third major ethnic group in Sri-Lanka. They believe in the Islamic religious conviction. All Islamic groups are called as Moors by the Portuguese. They are in maximum number in the parts of Ampara and Trincomallee. They came to the Sri Lanka between 8th and 15th century for Trade and commerce. Their language is Tamil dialectal and they follow Islam as their faith. Their works are fundamentally cultivation, harpooning and trade. Some Islamic persons like Memons, Bohras, Khojas and others originated from India essentially from Kerala and Tamil Nadu states and Malays in the period of Portuguese and British colonial rule for trade transaction tenacities. Memons, Indian Muslims, arrived from Sindh (Pakistan) in 1870s. Bohra are named Dawoodi Bohra. Muslims are third major ethnic cluster in Sri Lanka, as per survey statement of 2012. They founded their populace in Eastern province-

5,69,182, Western province 4, 50,505, Northern western 2, 60,380 and Central province 2, 52,694.

In this background, it is essential to study alternative two small national groups a) Burghers and b) Vaddas. The Burghers are Eurasian national group in Sri Lanka. They belong to the families of Portuguese, Dutch and British. They stay in extremely sophisticated zone of the Sri Lanka like Colombo, Gampaha, Trincomallee and Batticaloa. The Burgher derivatives are from the term Burger means 'citizen' or 'town dwellers'. Their language is English and their home-grown dialects are Sinhala and Tamil. They are colonial varied blood amongst Portuguese, Dutch and English. Vaddas are proto-Austroloid people. They are aboriginal inhabitants of Sri Lanka. They speak Sinhala and Tamil. The People of Veddas are progressively captivated by Tamil and Sinhala. They are professional hunter-gathers and farmers. East shoreline Veddas exist on extended marine harpooning.

3.0. Political Fragmentation and Politicization of Ethnicity

The colonial administrative regime handed over the political and administrative power to the leading Sinhalese elites who were in large numbers. They remained faithful to the colonial government and British monarchs. This history weakened the notion of national unity and recognized the antiquity of majority control over the section of minority which is called as *Politics of Elite's Authority*. The Sinhalese authority, characterized as majority regulation, derived its presence in the landmass. In this category of outspread history, Sri Lanka encouraged the state strategy with self-governing thoughts which shaped the ethnic partitions among clusters, political disintegrations and social partitions. The history of ethnic struggle advanced in Sri Lanka with development of distinctive identity instead of nation building which is distinct from state-building.

The Donoughmore Constitution and its decision-making committee had put some restrictions for the development of political parties in Sri Lanka. Six political parties were formed by year 1946. The first political party was 'Ceylon Labour Party' (1946) which was under the leadership of A.E. Goonesinha (Alexander Ekanayake Goonesinha) who is called the *Father of Labour Movement*. He organized first trade union in Sri Lanka by the year 1922 with 25 members. By the year of 1940s alternative three political parties were formed in that period; Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP), Communist Party (CP), and Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India (BLPI). These political gatherings were founded on the Marxist ideology. LSSP was shaped in 1935 expected to get freedom and believed in socialism. LSSP is the first Marxist political party in Sri Lanka. The Communist party was playing critical part in the arena of trade combination. It remained the communist youth confederation. In 1942, BLPI was formed under the leadership of Dr. N.M. Perera after the fragmentation of LSSP.

Professor Chandra Richard De Silva (1997) correctly pointed out that "Meanwhile personal and doctrinal disagreement in the LSSP" controlled to split between those led by Dr. Colvin R.de. Silva who prearranged themselves under the banner of Bolshevik-Leninist party of India (BLPI) and those who continued under Dr. N.M. Perera in recreated LSSP. The three Marxist parties were therefore absorbed in unpleasant sectarian skirmishes at the eve of Independence. All three parties, nevertheless, remained acquiescently serious of governmental

establishments and supported innovative goals and means. They amenablely declared the necessity to establish their supporters for further governmental actions. On the other hand, sectional clusters were found as political parties like Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC), All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) and others. ACTC was shaped in 1944 under the leadership of Ponnambalam (Ganapathipillai Gangaser Ponnambalam) that signified the Tamil civil rights in Ceylon. ACTC demanded 50-50 representations in legislature (50% for Sinhalese and 50% for other nationalities). This claim was expunged by the British Governor General Lord Soulbury and measured this claim as a Mockery of Democracy.

A new political dimension was instigated in Sri Lankan political arrangement termed as governmental arrangement of British model. This arrangement stimulated the new political assemblies. The further most significant political party United National Party (UNP) was recognized in 1946 under the leadership of Don Stephen Senanayake. On the other hand, Ceylon India Congress (CIC) transformed itself as 'Ceylon Workers Congress' (CWC) in 1951 under the leadership of Savumiammoorthy Thondaman. The CWC is the major Trade Union in the state. Thondaman remained the president and A.M. Aziz was general secretary. But A.M. Aziz shaped a separate congress known as Democratic Workers Congress in 1956. The most significant political party was United National Party (UNP) which was shaped under the leadership of Don Stephen Senanayake in 1946. It was formed with three ethnic groups: Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim.

The Party systems in the Ceylon after the independence were multi-dimensional and it had crucial period since 1950. There were two leading political parties United National Party (UNP) and Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP). United National party had leaders S. W. R. D Bandarnaike and Senanayake's son Dudley. Subsequently after the independence of Sri Lanka, they involved themselves in the Prime Minister's office. UNP party was composed of Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities under the leadership of Don Stephen Senanayake. On the other hand, Federal Party was shaped under the leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam after the split of G.G. Ponnambalam's Tamil Congress (1951). Federal Party under the headship of S. J.V. Chelvanayakam required that only federal structure of Government can defend the civil liberties and rights of Tamil people in Sri Lanka. In 1951 S.W.R.D Bandarnaike shaped the new political party SLFP and founded it on the left thought with the split of UNP. S.W.R.D Bandarnaike highlighted the left thought and has been treasured as an organizer of Sinhala nationalist Sri Lankan freedom party. The significant political groups like Janatha Vimukhi Peramuna (JVP), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) and Sri Lanka Muslim congress (SLMC) had been actually playing very vital role in the ethnic demography of Sri Lanka. JVP was organized in 1965 for accomplishing a socialist uprising in Sri Lanka under the leadership of Rohana Wijeweera. The thought of JVP is founded on the notions of Marxism. In 1990s JVP developed as a popular party in Sri Lanka. In 2004, it attained 45.6% secret ballot and secured 39 seats out of 225 seats.

4.0. Root Causes of Ethnic Crisis

The strategy of the legitimacy of Official Language Act, 1956 developed a new category of political width in Sri Lanka. In 1956 the Sinhala language had been analyzed as official language of Sri Lanka. As the result of the legitimacy of Sinhala

language the Sinhalese were in favour of new constitutional framework. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party got opportunity in 1970 and formed United Front coalition (SLFP, CP & LSSP). This alliance attained 115 of 151 seats in the lower house of the parliament with the assistance of the support of Sinhalese who were in favour of Buddhist religion. The SLFP political leaders supported the republican political structure. The prevailing political structure required a new constitution for fundamental modification. Consequently, ethnic typecasts encouraged the ethnic movement and in the similar sequence of time political organ impacted the formation of the ethnic identity. As Sinhalese people are mainstream and majority in number, Sinhalese control both main parties UNP and SLFP. The political procedure of this state has been subjugated by alternate Tamil speaking ethnic people. Pluralism signifies the presence of substantial and to some extent independent, associational actions. It does not mean ethnic multiplicity, although a diverse order would allow people to encourage ethnic alteration (Gunasingam, 2012: 89).

In 1950s and 1960s the political construction of Sri Lanka was designed on the basis of the propensity to associate the Sri Lanka with Sinhala. Sri Lankan Freedom Party supported the self – Government like Swiss Cantonal Model. The regional and area components should be administered by the local administrative government which can reduce the program of regional prejudice and claim of disconnectedness. Application of Sinhala language as governmental language is accountable for the Tamil distinction and provincial characteristics. In consequence, the political section complicated it with the resolution of ethnic modifications.

The LTTE was established in 1976 under the control of Velupillai Prabhakaran for demanding of Tamil civil rights and sovereignty. It is not a political party, but a military association demanding a separate state for Tamil persons in North Eastern zone of Sri Lanka. LTTE has many non-state armed clusters. In early 1970s Tamil persons were underprivileged in the educational segment and occupation or service field. In this respect LTTE persons in the northern eastern parts like Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Vavunia, Mannar, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara formed an organisation to fight for their rights. On the other hand, the SLMC has been a political party which signified Muslim marginal Voice. It was recognized at Kattankudy in 1981. The Muslim persons in Sri Lanka reinforced the SLMC party for their presence. In 1980s these three national groups like Sinhala, Tamil and Muslims challenged the authority in diverse categories of conflicts.

The Sri Lankan national conflict is to be assumed as civil conflict between majority Sinhala and minority Tamils who are major ethnic clusters in the state. It is revealed that the deficiency and idiosyncrasy are consequences of civil conflict in the social order. In this writing, it is proved that the linking and variances between poverty, ethnicity and marginality evoked these clashes. It is a systematic difference between deficiency and ethnic distinctiveness.

After 1980s, the Diaspora is measured as metaphorical designation to classify a segment of people as immigrants, settlers, ethnic and ethnic sections. In 1990s the notion of Diaspora is examined as a clue of motherland and ethnic community. In the phase of postmodern era, Diaspora is theorized as an evacuated

and shaped phenomenon in an interim condition. But in the 21st century this impression of nativism and motherland developed more authoritative. The notion of *self* and *other* embodies the idea of social dominion over the marginal by the majority public. This observation specifies the marginality in the society. In this phase of globalization, the idea of Diaspora is a serious understanding of connection between homeland and host land.

Ethnic calamity elevated in 1956, 1957, 1959, 1961 and 1974. There were diverse conducts of discernments in precise parts of political, social and educational strategies after 1970s. After 1970s strategy of discernment and ethnic difference has been well-thought-out for the admission in the domain of educational arrangement. The strategies laid down by the Government of Sri Lanka have been representative of the inferior in means. Tamil people got deprived from the state-building as an alternative of Nation-Building. The deficiency plans were:

- Scarcity or unsatisfactory prospects in Government engagement or Government establishments to Tamil persons;
- The Governmental schoolbooks had been altered for the formation of publicity against Tamil nationality and Tamil faithfulness;
- Tamil zones in Sri Lanka were under the vital regulator of Police and military forces of the government;
- The Government had constrained the right of nonviolent assemblage of Tamil people in the land of the country;
- No Tamil leading supporters the right to give up the state. Several Tamil people were restricted within the state;
- There are no essential privileges for marginal groups in constitutional requirements and arrangements;
- Random detention and imprisonments of Tamil persons;
- Legitimate Constitutional establishment for the development and the formation of religious conviction of Buddhism.

5.0. India's Involvement

India has been an influential leading state in South Asia and an important neighbour of Sri Lanka. India's connection in the Sri Lankan civil combat is connected to the diverse conducts and stimulated by numerous influences. India thought-out it as the security manager in this explicit area due to its topographical juxtaposition. India comprehended the expansion of civil war in Sri Lanka due to the presence of Tamil masses in Tamil Nadu. With this background, the India's engrossment is essential for resolving the struggle in Sri Lanka. There is a connection with national people among 55 million of southern Indian state Tamil Nadu with the Tamil persons in north-eastern part of Sri Lanka. Two Tamil national assemblies had been divided by the Palk Strait. But their mutual cultural, language and pious stalemates had come to have great intimacy. India understood that the problem may be resolved within the legitimate outline. India's observation is that the legitimate planning or framework may preserve the regional truthfulness and ethnic harmony. The Elam program in Sri Lanka may influence the whole section of South Asia. India dreaded that ferocious nationalist movement may get extended in the diverse parts of said section.

In this condition, India has improved its external strategy for the founding of harmony initiatives in Sri Lanka. Three states India, Pakistan and China are significant regional associates in this section. They had been organized with the network of political, economic and cultural nature. The Hindu Tamil persons became the empathy from Indian Tamil Hindu. *"India's involvement in Sri Lanka was unavoidable not only due the ramifications of Colombo's oppressive and discriminating policies against its Tamil citizens, but also in terms of India's (own) national security concerns..."* (Dixit, 2002). The foremost aspects are: a) Geo-Political issue; b) Tamil Nadu issue; c) Participation of Western Influences and Anti-India Influences. These issues were foremost problems for the intervention of India in the Sri Lankan national issue. These problems obligated India to get involved in this problem. Tamils existing in Sri Lanka and on the Indian inland have continued consistent interactions all over the history, though interaction in pre-modern periods between the two clusters was not so normal (Ahmed, 1996: 258).

During the period of colonial regulation, there was a recruitment recruit of Tamil persons from the mainland of India for the estate in Sri Lanka. Geo-Political nearness developed into a significant issue for the India's interference and involvement. On the other hand, the Western influences like USA, Israel, Britain and anti- India powers like China, Pakistan complicated the Sri Lankan issues. This connection obligated India to take an essential planned approach towards Sri Lanka. As Sri Lanka appropriated westernized external strategy, India made a planned strategy towards Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu influence had been playing a decisive role and obligated India to encompass in the Sri Lankan difficulties. Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil persons had similar social kinship and ethnic ancestry. Consequently, Tamil persons could not bear the hardship and viciousness against the Tamil attraction. Tamil Nadu of India rushed to Central Government of India to take ingenuities for the total demolition of their miseries and atrophies.

6.0. Conclusion

The nation-building process in Sri Lanka had been impacted by the values of political abilities and progress. Ethnic characters in multi-ethnic cultures became the significant aspect of activating the ethnic calamity/stiffness. The nationality and notion of locating oneself in a society had been measured as the derivatives of the social struggle. This thought destabilized the constancy of civilization. The national divergence between the Sinhalese-Tamil persons had in fact been deep-rooted in the procedure of the contemporary state of Sri Lanka. The post-colonial nation building of Sri Lanka took the pronouncement of monolithic unitary state without its kith and kin of Tamil origin with the equivalent civil rights of citizenship over the privileges of the mainstream community. In the process, the Sri Lankan nation-building procedure turned out with the formation of state building which shaped the divergence in one state. Sri Lanka faced the several categories of challenges in the post-civil war reconstruction in the society. In this condition, India's relations with its neighbouring states influence the relations in South Asian countries. Consequently, peace building procedure is to be settled through the vigorous social order. It will be founded on larger sharing in decision making, fortification of people, organizational responsibility and efficacy,

devolution of power and public statement between state and society. It may lead to the resolve of struggle in the society.

Lastly, it seems that India's involvement in Sri Lanka had been rational to the resolution of the struggle in the state as India is measured as a provincial influence in South Asia. A treaty between Sri Lanka and India government in 29th July 1987 was a significant landmark for laying the foundation of the connection of India in the Sri Lankan civil conflict. It had strongly maintained the unity integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka. It authenticated the recognition of multi-ethnicity and multi-religious character of the society.

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