Chapter – 1

Introduction

India – Sri Lanka Relations

(Historical Context)
INTRODUCTION

National security is regarded as one of the most important consideration for every sovereign country in the formulation of its foreign policy and determines, to a great extent its relations with other countries. A broad survey would suggest that this is very much true of South Asian Countries.

In the changing global environment at the end of the cold war South Asia is almost alone among regions where cooperation is minimal. It is also where the requirement is more strongly felt, one of the principal reasons for this state of affairs is the continuing concern regarding security between countries of the region. Not perhaps fears of direct conflict except between India and Pakistan but tensions over insurgency, Terrorism, population movements and ethnic uprising to name a few.¹

As we enter the new millennium there is a real opportunity to build a new century of cooperative security, breaking away from the debilitating past of the South Asian competitive security frame work. The region after 55 years becomes one of the most conflict prone in the world. The elite have been obsessed with a national security complex and too distrustful to

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let regional cooperation take off. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pak in May 1998 have shifted the focus of security concerns in South Asia to its nuclear dimension. The issue whether these tests have enhanced in stabilities in the region has gained as ascendancy indeed, the belief is rife that the long subsisting unresolved Indo-Pak dispute over Kashmir could trigger. A conventional conflict – between the two countries that could lead to a nuclear exchange\textsuperscript{2} and the Indo-Pak dispute disturbing the cooperation among the South Asian Countries.

South Asia’s size and population, besides its geographical locations as the gateway to the Persian Gulf land geopolitical importance to the region.\textsuperscript{3} Geographically, the region now constitutes four independent units, India and Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, Bhutan came out of its traditional isolation to be the regions fifth unit in the late 1960’s. The Maldives and Bangladesh emerged as sixth and seventh units in 1968 and 1971 respectively.\textsuperscript{4}

\textsuperscript{2} Mishra R.C. – Security in South Asia Cross Border Analysis (Authors Press, New Delhi 2000) P-1
\textsuperscript{3} Bhargava, G.S. “Super Power Involvement” Seminar No. 324, August New Delhi, 1986 P –39
The "Bay of Bengal in the East", the main body of the Indian Ocean in the South and the Arabian Sea in the West complete the demarcation of the region, known as South Asian Region,⁵ which is also called the Indian Sub-continent. India's policies towards South Asia in particular and world in general in the early years of independence followed two main trends:-

1. One represented India's urge to retain the "newly-won freedom" in the field of foreign policy, in attempting to foster an approach based on independent understanding of world affairs. India laid the foundations of the policy of non-alignment. This meant that India was to keep out of "Cold war politics" of that time and as such avoid colonization by the back door.⁶

2. The second trend shows the application of principles to the problems of South Asia. Indian attempted to build up a regional consciousness.⁷

India identifies two important models for building regional order in South Asia. The first one is the 1947 model which was based on the

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5. Tiwarik, Chitra P.15 op.cit No. 4
7. Ibid, P - 19
inherent advantages of the birth of South Asia and second was the 1971 model which was based on the status achieved out of a war.⁸

South Asia can no more be an area free of extra regional interests even to the limited degree it had been in the seventies, India’s stand reflects this feature adequately. India is concerned about the spill over of the Super Power rivalry and the 70s witnessed significant changes in the major external powers interaction with South Asia.⁹

South Asia is a specific category with some common features these common features, however should not attempt us to make facile generalizations. The region geographically vast, with over one and half billion people and a multiplicity of religions nations, linguistic and ethnic groups has no parallel in any other part of the world. There is futility in attempting any form of forecasting this mosaic of ethnic and linguistic or a religious conflict that is to say, it is taker as agreed that ethnic conflict cannot be reduced to a distorted or indirect reflection of class conflict. It is arrested that such reductionism is false. This is not to deny that class

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conflicts are themselves also fundamental determinants of history but rather to emphasize their intert winning with ethnic issues.\textsuperscript{10}

South Asia inscribes a unique security system within the international security system. Three of its unique features, as a security system, need greater recognition.

1. \textbf{First}, the tensions and instabilities that have marked relations between India and Pakistan since their birth overhangs this region, three conflicts have occurred between them since their independence. An undeclared state of war currently proceeds in Siachen, and a proxy war continuous in Kashmir, Northeast India and Sindh. A state of non-weaponized deterrence promised on their capability to manufacture nuclear weapons at short notice, was believed to exist between the two sub continental combatants.\textsuperscript{11}

2. \textbf{Second}, India dominates the region in political and strategic terms as perceived by the other smaller countries in South Asia. This can be illustrated by their comparative size, population, natural resources economic and military power. The smaller countries

\textsuperscript{10} Bose, Sumantra, Status Nations, Sovereignty Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement (Sage publications, New Delhi 1994) P. 19-20
\textsuperscript{11} Mishra, R.C. P – 16-17 op.cit p. No. 2.
resist this dominance by India by seeking to draw extra regional powers into the region to counterbalance the weight of India in regional polity. The geopolitical fact remains, nevertheless, that the other countries of South Asia do not have common borders with each other, these exist only with India. The security dimensions of this situation is the persistence of dormant tensions between India and its smaller neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{12}

3. **Third**, globalisation and liberalization, which are the new mantras of the post cold war age, do possess discrete security implications, which have not yet been fully understood. So much is clear that the capacity of the weaker countries in the developing world to order their economics and politics independently is being steadily eroded, and they are becoming increasingly dependent on the developed nations.

South Asia has been ridden with internal conflicts in the past, which seems very likely to continue in the future. These conflicts derive from :-

\textsuperscript{12} Mishra, R.C. 16-17, op.cit No. 2.
(a) Ethno-political causes as for example the several insurgencies continuing in Northeast India, (now spread into Bhutan) Chakma dissatisfaction in Bangladesh, Tamil-Sinhala strife in Sri Lanka, Mohajir-Sindhi struggle in Pakistan and so on.\textsuperscript{13}

(b) Communal – religious causes, as for example communal rioting in several parts of the subcontinent, the Sikh militancy which obtained in the Punjab and Islamic fundamentalism which complicates the present militancy in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{14}

(c) Socio-economic causes as for example caste violence and Naxalism in various parts of India and the sectarian violence which persists in Karachi. Clearly none of these causes of Internal conflicts are neatly separable. The Tamil-Sinhala strife in Sri Lanka, for instance, has a Hindu – Buddhist undertone. Similarly, the violence in Karachi has socio-economic (Mohajir against ethnic Sindhi) underpinnings the role of external powers in exacerbating these internal conflicts in evident. Pakistan’s moral

\textsuperscript{13} Banerjee, Dipankar, P-21 op, cit No. 1.
\textsuperscript{14} Jain, B.M. – South Asia in the New World Order (RBSA Publisher, Jaipur 1994) P – 6-7
and material assistance to militancy in the Punjab and Kashmir has been extensively documented. So is the moral and material assistance provided to the several insurgencies in Northeast India, earlier by China and Pakistan, and now by Pakistan, either directly, or through Bangladesh. The terrorist violence, which has taken a steady toll of lives in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka is strongly believed to be encouraged from elsewhere in the region.15

In South Asian region, the non-military threats to national security have steadily increased in their significance over the years. They prominently include:

(i) Migration into India from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and into Bhutan from Nepal. This gets linked to the issue of internal migration and related problems like unplanned urbanisation, crime in the cities and so on.

(ii) Drugs/arms smuggling throughout Pakistan, border states of India, and Bangladesh. Much of this activity is also linked to domestic manufacture.

(iii) Environmental security which is largely a national problem, but can have regional and global overtones e.g. deforestation in the Himalayas causing siltation and flooding in the rivers flowing into India from Nepal and Bhutan.

(iv) A security problem is traceable to the crisis in governance and the problems of internal security.

This afflicts all the countries of South Asia to varying degrees and is an offshoot of the nexus recognizable between criminal elements in the political, business and bureaucratic spheres.16

Finally it is the issue of "distribution" when pressure comes from the domestic society to employ the coercive power of the political system to redistribute income, wealth, opportunity and honour.17

Security Concerns in Relations with Neighbours

India regards South Asia as its geopolitical region of influence and expects that its smaller neighbours pay due regard to its sensitivities. But the elite's self image of a peace South Asia is at sharp variance with its neighbours.18

16. Mishra, R.C. P-19 op. cit No. 2
17. Jain, B.M. P-170 op.cit, No. 14
18. Banerjee, Dipankar, P - 63, op.cit. No. 1
Pakistan bristles when India presumes the right to prescribe what kind of weapons systems are adequate for Pakistan. The Nepalese elite are deeply resentful at how India overruns Nepal, politically, culturally and economically. Bangladesh nurses deep grievances over unequal water sharing arrangements India’s “big brother” attitude provokes suspicion and hostility.19

They see in India’s policy of bilateralism for Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka cannot stand up to India alone for long so domestic compulsions also account for tension among neighbours. Anti Indianism is a big stabilizing and unifying factor for the shaky regimes in most South Asian countries. The smaller countries try to unite against India. In turn, this arouses suspicious and misgiving in Indian minds.

Thus, mutual mistrust and suspicious characterize the relations among neighbours. The interests and designs of the superpowers further add to the sense of insecurity in the region particularly India.

The western powers in following a policy of containment of India, provide arms aid to its neighbours more over instability and power struggle among various groups within a country provide grounds for interference to

19. Banerjee, Dipankar P-63 op.cit No.1
outside powers and contribute to the deterioration of the security environment in South Asia.

India’s foreign policy had been “reasserted in no uncertain terms but added that the major political transformation following the 1977 elections had influenced the content and style of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{20}

The main thrust of the government’s foreign policy was governed by the assumption that India could play an effective and useful role in the world community only if it has peaceful, friendly and productive relations.

\textbf{India as a Regional Hegemon –}

Sri Lanka and other small Indian neighbours have attempted on occasions to recruit external support as a counter balance to Indian regional hegemony. The geo-strategic dynamics of this relationship are examined with reference to the concept of Indian hegemony.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} Phadnis, Urmila, India and Sri Lanka - India, Ministry of External Affairs, Report, (New Delhi), 1977-78, P – 1
India has increasingly exercised an assertive role in its own backyard of South Asia, particularly since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, in which India played a major part. There are numerous contemporary examples of this active regional policy of intervention in the domestic affairs of neighbours, such as Sikkim (1975), Sri Lanka (1987) and the Maldives (1988), although the annexation of Goa (1961) was an earlier example.

India's growing military, naval and nuclear power are cited as further evidence of her role as 'regional policeman.'\textsuperscript{22} Pakistan has perceived this assertiveness as an attempt by the Indian elites to restructure the role of their state in the image of the Raj, and thus as a drive towards regional hegemony.

This perspective is also shared by the right-wing US think-tank, the Heritage Foundation, which takes an alarmist view of Indian nuclear capability.\textsuperscript{23}


\textsuperscript{23} Munro, R. 'Superpower Rising', Time (New York) 3 April 1989, p.11 in (ed) (Allen. J. Bullion, P-41 op. cit. No. 21)
India’s aim now is to secure credibility for its desire to foster relations of sovereign equality among its neighbours and disabuse them of the suspicion that it aspires for a ‘hegemonistic’ role in the region.

The policy is likely to minimize scope for the intrusion of extra regional powers in the ordering of relations among the states of the region without however, limiting the options open to them to diversity their links with third countries.

In this historical salting the geographical configuration of India and Sri Lanka has been a compulsive factor in relations between the two countries. This is but natural considering that the Indian peninsula is the nearest landmass to a lovely Island in the Indian Ocean what is however, of consequence is that in view of the nature of the interaction between the two. Sri Lanka has felt the need to assert its identity again and again in history without being able to sever its links with the main land even when it wanted to do so, in different sectors and at various levels.

In order to examine India’s role as a regional hegemon, it is necessary to briefly review the literature on this subject, from both Indian and Western perspectives.
REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

Though there were cordial relations between both the countries, yet there are some problems which come in the ways of relationship the main problem is regarding the Tamils rehabilitation in the Sri Lanka and so many tiny problems. Various writers have expressed their views on the issue by considering the Indian foreign Policy, internal and external problems in the country and various agreements between both the States. The writers such as Ponnanibalam, Satchi book entitled: Sri Lanka: National Question and the Tamil liberation struggle Chondon, Zed Books Ltd, July 1983\(^1\) provides the deep understanding about the Tamil people’s struggle over the past quarter of a century for equality, justice and dignity. Ponnenbalam a Sri Lanka Lawyer, takes a Marxist view of the Tamil problem. Wriggins, W.H. entitled, Ceylon : Dilemmas of a new Nation (Princeton, M.J. 1960)\(^2\) mentions the alarming riots of 1958, unparalleled in the Island’s history were the direct result of the language Sinhala only Act of 1956.

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2. Wriggins, W.H. entitled, Ceylon : Dilemmas of a new Nation (Young Asia Publication, New Delhi, 1960)
Schwartz, walter, writing on “The Tamils of Sri Lanka”, (London Minority Rights Group Report No. 25, 1983)³ said that only a few leaders men tried to strike a balance between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Kumari Jayawardena, in her article, “Aspects of class and ethnic consciousness in Sri Lanka – II” Mainstreams (Vol. XXI, No. 50, Aug.13, 1983)⁴ writes : the Sinhala Buddhists, who felt economically hammed-in, politically oppressed and culturally deprived, found the racist myths and legends and in their search for identity, indulged in violence against ethnic religious minorities. Shelton Ukodikara, South Asian Strategic Issues Sri Lanka perspectives sage publication, New Delhi, 1990.⁵ One of the major features of this book is the analysis of the geo-strategic scenario in Indo-Sri Lanka in relation to the new situation which has been created by the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement in July 1987, this volume provides what may be regarded as specifically Sri Lanka perspectives on these changing configurations of politics.

Nira Wickramsinghe, Ethnic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1995)\textsuperscript{6} describes Sri Lanka’s current ethnic conflict in terms of historical movement and incisive examination of Sri Lanka’s modern political and social history. Jiggins, Janice’s book, Caste and Family in the Politics of the Sinhalese (1947-1976) (London, Cambridge University Press, 1979)\textsuperscript{7} is a vivid and lively account of Sinhalese politics since Sri Lanka became independent. It fills an important gap in South Asian political studies and also is a substantial addition to the literature on plural society and politics in developing countries. A book written by Wizesinha, Rajiva, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, (New Delhi, Navrang, 1986)\textsuperscript{8} is also a useful addition to the existing literature. It is the author’s firm view that the current crisis in Sri Lanka has a wider political dimension than most obvious manifestations would reveal. It is a study of changing language policies, Indo-Sri Lanka relations during the period under examination and subsequently became enemies of the LTTE. The rise of the BJP in India and the growing importance of caste politics mirror the ethnic polarization of the Sri Lanka policy.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Nira Wickramsinghe, Ethnic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1995)
\item \textsuperscript{8} Wizesinha, Rajiva, Current Crisis in Sri Lanka, (Navrang, New Delhi, 1986)
\end{itemize}
Goomeswardene, Ralh in ‘the people and the lion’ and Siriwardene, Reggie in “National Identity in Sri Lanka : Problems of communication and education.” Desilva, C.R. and Samarasinghe, S.W.R. De in “Economic Myths and historical rights” have thrown light on this problem yet a more systematic approach has still to be formulated. Alan J. Bullion, India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Crisis 1976-1994 (An International Perspective) printer London and New York (1995) the focal point of the relationship between the two countries was the Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord of 1987, the subsequent three year deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force severely compromised the short term consolidation of Indian hegemony. In Sri Lanka the militarization of the Tamil nationalists and the return of the IPKF was to have dire consequences for both states. Yet a more systematic approach has still to be formulated. As far as Tamil scholars are concerned they have articulated the grievances and given expression to their political oppression but the problem of Tamilians in Sri Lanka still remains unresolved and so far no ruling party could find a mutually acceptable solution while refusing to accede to a separate state for the Tamils.

For comparative viewpoint some Indian scholars writings on this relations such as: Phadnis, Urmila in one of her articles on "The Crisis of political order, "World focus, Vol. 5, No. 9, September, (1984)\(^\text{12}\) writes that the present situation in Sri Lanka is essentially a symptoms of the aberration in participatory political culture. Phadnis, Uma Shankar, in his article, "Indian Position; sincere, Helpful." World Focus (Vol. 5, No.9, September 1984)\(^\text{13}\) evaluates the Indian attitude to the Sri Lanka ethnic conflict and the Sri Lanka responses to the compulsions underlying the Indian approach.

India has no intention of intervention in internal conflicts of a South Asian country and it strongly opposes intervention by any country in the internal affairs of any other. Dr. Pattabhi Sitarammaya also clearly (An Interview with Ceylon Daily News 23 April, 1949)\(^\text{14}\) "India and Ceylon must have a common strategy and common defence strength and common defence resources. It cannot be that Ceylon is in friendship with a group with which India is not in friendship, not that Ceylon has no right to make its own alignments and declare its own affiliations – but if there are two hostile groups in the world, and Ceylon and India are with one or the other of them and not with the same group, it will be a bad day for both.

\(^{12}\) Phadnis, Urmila in one of her articles on "The Crisis of political order, "World focus, (Vol. 5, No. 9, September, 1984)

\(^{13}\) Phadnis, Uma Shankar, in his article, "Indian Position; sincere, Helpful." World Focus (Vol. 5, No.9, September 1984)

\(^{14}\) Sitarammaya, Dr. Pattabhi also clearly (An Interview with Ceylon Daily News 23 April, 1949)

In particular, he describes the implications of the Indo – Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 and the role-played by the Indian Peace keeping force sent to Sri Lanka to assist the implementation of the Agreement. Sumantra Bose, States, Nations, Sovereignty Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement (Sage Publications New Delhi 1994)\textsuperscript{16} The book is explicitly comparative in approach and content and adroitly integrates broader. Based on extensive primary research, its highlights include a fascinating analysis of the Tamil Tiger Movement and a cogent critique of the role of the Indian state in the Sri Lanka conflict, Tharyman, P. in his article, "Ethnic Crisis: Tamils Deserve Autonomy: World-Focus (Vol.5, No.9, Sep. 1984)\textsuperscript{17}, suggests that autonomy is the best safeguard against separation.

\textsuperscript{15} Muni S.D. Pangs of Proximity: India and Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Crisis (Sage publications New Delhi 1993)
\textsuperscript{16} Bose Sumantra, States, Nations, Sovereignty Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement (Sage Publications New Delhi 1994)
\textsuperscript{17} Tharyman, P. in his article, “Ethnic Crisis: Tamils Deserve Autonomy: World-Focus (Vol.5, No.9, Sep. 1984)
Mishra, R.C, book entitled : Security in South Asia cross Border Analysis (Authors Press 2000)\(^{18}\) in which author focused on the coercive relations among states and this book exhaustively explores the new challenges to South Asian Security from different view points. Banerjee Dipankar: Security in South Asia (Manas publication 1999)\(^{19}\) recommendations for a comprehensive and cooperative security for South Asia. Kulanda Swamy M.S.: Sri Lanka Crisis – Anatomy of Ethnicity, Peace and Security (Authors Press 2000)\(^{20}\), Writer describes the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has serious implications for India owing to the presence of Tamil multitudes in Tamil Nadu who sympathise with their brethren in Sri Lanka. India’s perception of threat to its security in the Indian Ocean region is largely governed by political and military developments in Sri Lanka. Dixit, J.N: India’s Foreign Policy and its Neighbours (Gyan Publishing House New Delhi 2001)\(^{21}\). This book describes the past and recent events and trends affecting India’s foreign policy and India’s relations with its neighbours.


\(^{19}\) Banerjee Dipankar: Security in South Asia (Manas publication New Delhi 1999)


\(^{21}\) Dixit, J.N: India’s Foreign Policy and its Neighbours (Gyan Publishing House New Delhi 2001)
HYPOTHESIS

The Indo-Sri Lanka relationship has not only geographical base rather it has social, historical as well as cultural exchange programmes. The internal and external politics of Sri Lanka has direct effects on India. India knows it very well that till date the colonial powers which evaded India came through Indian Ocean and Sri Lanka. The geo-political and social conditions of Sri Lanka had been of great significance for India and the security of both States is related with each other. Any activity in Sri Lanka can create worrisome situation for India. Therefore it has been acting in the internal and external matters of Sri Lanka keeping its own security point in view.

India has been making its best efforts for the peace and harmony in the South Asia since long. India is a peace loving country and does not interfere in the internal matters of neighbouring states till there is threatening to its own security. It will not hesitate in using its supreme powers in case its peace and security is threatened by the activities and policies of neighbouring states. On the basis of this policy, when there was internal disorder in Sri Lanka, India provided assistance a number of times so as to restrain the entry of external powers in South Asia. In context with the case
problem in Sri Lanka, India did not interfere in its matters till it challenged the security of India.

From the above discussion it is obvious that the role of India to strengthen its relation with Sri Lanka is based on many factors. Sri Lanka has been a sensitive state for India for political purposes, which cannot be unseen when formulating policies on issues of great importance. For this reason, India has been trying to resolve the Caste problem of Sri Lanka in a peaceful and harmonious methodology.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The present study is not merely mathematical and statistical analysis of certain facts and data but it both analytical and empirical. The methodology used for this thesis is historical and analytical. The study is based only Secondary sources have been consulted. Secondary data is likely to be more fruitful information source. Thus the secondary data will be collected from various libraries, research papers, books and journals having a direct bearing on the subject. In completing this study, various government documents, Reports (official, academic and press) in addition to books and articles have been extensively consulted.
IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

While India has a dominance place among the (SAARC) seven States of South Asia, the India Sri Lanka relations also have a significant role to play in this regard. In the present scenario, when due to their economic, geographical, cultural and Trade conditions, it has become necessary for the member states to be dependent on each other and extend reciprocal cooperation, and the discussion on Indo Sri Lanka relations is an attempt of research keeping in view the cooperative attitudes of member states. Besides discussing the factors affecting the India and its trend towards Sri Lanka, efforts have been made to discuss the factors affecting the Indo Sri Lanka foreign policy the impact of which can be seen in political, economic, cultural and all other related factors.

The base of relationship of India and Sri Lanka is reciprocal self dependence which includes moral as well as business interest.

The cast problem and internal conflicts are spreading widely in Sri Lanka. The Tamils in minority, living in Sri Lanka since long, have started thinking that their existence and progress is in danger due to cast conflict. In the same movement of a fix when social, political, economic and democratic
spheres were affected, a group of Tamils moved on terrorism, the effect of which is seemed to be found in India also.

It was a serious challenge for Indian Foreign Policy makers to maintain peace in Sri Lanka. India had accepted it. In 1983 India started making conversation as middleman which termed as Rajiv, Jaywardane Alliance. Sri Lanka had also taken cooperation from India through peace keeping force in solving Tamils’ problem.

Keeping in view all these historical incidents, it becomes necessary to touch each and every aspect of cast problem of Sri Lanka. Remedial measures may be taken keeping in view the political interest. Therefore, in the topic in hand, efforts have been made to rediscuss the situations of India and Sri Lanka in the changing scenario after analytically examining it with reference to Sri Lanka, a small states of South Asia in the context of present situation because it has become essential in view of the changing situations at national and international level.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Island's Past:

Sri Lanka is a small pear-shaped tropical island barely twenty-five miles to the southeast of the tip of India where the waters of the Bay of Bengal meet the Arabian Sea. For centuries, her position at the juncture of important sea routes has made Ceylon a prize for whatever sea powers held or sought control of the Indian Ocean. Ceylon's proximity to India has been of fundamental import. Her principal racial stocks and her Hindu and Buddhist religion are of Indian origin. However much a distinctive quality developed within Ceylon's civilization, Indian influence has been profound. Particularly up to the fifteenth century, perhaps no important change in Indian civilization has failed to leave its impress on the island.

Sri Lanka culture in the broadest sense has much in common with that of India. Ceylonese art clearly shows Indian sources although peculiarly Ceylonese qualities are also manifest. In the ruins of great cities such as Anuradhapura, where Ceylon's early kings ruled until the eighth century A.O and at Plounaruma the capital until the thirteenth century.

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1. Wrigging, W.H., Ceylon Dilemmas of a New Nation (Young Asia Publication New Delhi 1980) P - 11
The great Indian epic, the Ramayana and Ceylon’s own voluminous chronicles, written by Buddhist monks, attest to the intimate association between India’s culture and institutions and Ceylon’s.²

The whole culture and civilization of Sri Lanka has developed from Buddhism, which had its origin in India, during the time of King Ashoka.³

Sri Lanka literature too has been the off-shot of Indian literature. The art of Sri Lanka paintings, sculpture and architecture have mostly been influenced by Indian arts. Hinduism was adopted during the time of Devdnass-piya Tissa (207-147 B.C.).⁴

It is difficult to assess historically whether the story is mythical or is reminiscent of Aryan invasion of Sri Lanka, but one fact is certain that Sri Lanka had intimate links with India.

Sri Lanka was a part of the Chola Empire of South India in the 10th Century⁵ and since then many Tamils have settled in the Island known as “SRI LANKA TAMILS”.

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3. Ibid.
In fact, the Tamils of Sri Lanka are an ancient people their history had its beginnings in the early Tamils found expression in the rich sangam literature of 100 B.C. to 300 A.D.\(^6\)

Indian and Sri Lanka sources both confirm as do the ruined cities – that from the subcontinent to the north came invading armies as well as religious and cultural inspiration from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries. Ceylon was subjected to periodic invasions from South Indian dynasts. King Vijayabahu-I is a traditional hero of the Singhalese for he succeeded in expelling the Indian chola invaders in the twelfth century, but the new island wide political order established by one of his successors Parakrama Bahui the great, was brief and of fissiparous tendencies soon predominated.\(^7\) The other parts of Sri Lanka are inhabited by Singhalese race the Sinhala people trace their origin to the arrival in Sri Lanka of Prince Vijaya from North India, about 2500 years ago and the Sinhala chronicle of a later period records that Prince Vijaya arrived on the islands on the same day that the Buddha attained enlightenment in India.\(^8\)

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8. Wriggins, W.H., P-12 op.cit, No.1
But Buddhism did not survive in the Indian subcontinent, but it did flourish in the central and southern parts of the Island of Sri Lanka. The growth of the Sinhala language whose script, however, bear some striking similarities to the script of "early Tamil" the teachings of the Buddha were closely interwoven with the culture and the language of the Sinhala people.\footnote{Ibid.}

Afterwards, during the British regime in the "19th and early 20th centuries," many more Tamils went to Sri Lanka as immigrant labourers to work on tea and rubber plantations, on the slopes of the Kandyan hills in central Sri Lanka.

They lived in these plantations and were known as 'INDIAN ORIGIN TAMILS' (as distinguished from Sri Lanka or Eelam Tamils). It is important to note that according to some other scholars, Sinhala in Sanskrit means Cinnamon. Sinhala, therefore was the land of cinnamon. It is mistakenly accepted that India gave to Sri Lanka, the progenitor of the Sinhala race." It was the land of the non-humans, the "Yakshas and Nagas."\footnote{Leary, Virginia, A, Ethnic conflict and violence in Sri Lanka, Report Mission to Sri Lanka, Geneva, International Commission of Jurist, July-August, 1981-1983, P - 7}

But the Sinhalese claim an Aryan origin, and came from northern India. The Tamils are Dravidians, and came from Southern India, the questions as to whether it was the Sinhalese or the Tamils, who were the first settlers of Sri Lanka remains one of the controversy. There are two separate communities in Sri Lanka both trace their origin to India.
Geographical Setting:

The island of Sri Lanka lies in the Indian Ocean in the Southern extremity of the Indian sub-continent, between latitudes 5°, 55' and 9°, 51' N and longitudes 79°, 42' and 81°, 53' E.¹¹

On account of its geographical location this island lies in the South-east coast of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is almost joined to it by the chain of Islands called ADAM’S BRIDGE.¹²


In India and Sri Lanka, for instance, institutional arrangements of the democratic state have survived many political conflicts and tensions- yet they no longer rest on the same social consensus or social contract that was negotiated in the aftermath of Independence. Now are those democratic institutions – formal, constitutionally grounded and associated with parliamentary democracy – any longer the sole or the most efficient and effective net works to constitute state, society linkages?

¹³. Wrigging, W.H., P-93, op.cit, No.1
They have already been paralleled, supplanted and even subsumed by a host of extra constitutional and extra legal organs of power – death squads and vigilance groups – along with increasing deployment of the military to fight counter – insurgency wars.

Geographically, Sri Lanka is one of the South Asian countries. Which attained independence after the second world war.¹⁴ It may be mentioned that both India and Sri Lanka were under the British domination for more than a century.

In India, there was long spell of national movement for independence and its leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Raj Gopalachari, Subhash Chander Bose and many others were a source of inspiration also for the people of Sri Lanka.

People of Sri Lanka have always had special love and affection for Indian leaders dating back to Mahatma Gandhi’s struggle for independence. Sri Lanka leaders have never failed to recognise that it was independence struggle launched by Gandhiji in India, which gave them inspiration to launch a similar struggle in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka nationalist movement for independence started during world war-I\textsuperscript{15} and demands for independence continued till 1947, the year of independence is widely viewed as a significant watershed.\textsuperscript{16}

During the national movement for independence, a leading role was played by D.S Senanayake, hero of the nationalist movement and the founding father of the U.N.P (United National Party) on the other, the Tamil National leaders such as Ponnani-balam, Ramanathan, and Ponnanbala Arunchalam worked together with their Sinhalese counter parts in the Ceylon National Congress.

Thus, when the British Government granted independence to India, it also handed over freedom to Sri Lanka because of the decision of British government to withdraw from south Asia.

**Geo-Strategic Dimensions of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations:**

The geo-strategic environment in which Indo-Sri Lanka relations have been taking place has undergone change in some respects in recent years due to a number of factors, among which the most important being changes in the terrain of global politics, changes in the strategic scenario in South Asia itself.

The new security relationship between India and Sri Lanka which was brought about by the escalation of Sri Lanka’s ethnic crisis after July 1983. But the basic parameter of this relationship, the geo-strategic connection between the two countries, remains unaltered over time. This might be called the locational determinism of Indo-Sri Lanka relations. 17

From the time of British colonial rule, naval strategists have emphasized Sri Lanka’s importance for the defence of India, Sri Lanka, lying in close proximity to India, occupies a strategic position in the India Ocean, and possesses in Trincomalee one of the finest-natural harbours in the world. India regards Sri Lanka as lying within its defence perimeter and its own strategic concerns regarding the island’s foreign policy postures and alignments and the status of Trincomalee have continued. 18

An Indian analyst declared that India’s security interests are conterminous with Sri Lanka, and not vice versa. What might be inferred from this somewhat ambiguous statement is that while Sri Lanka is regarded as being integral to India’s security. India is not viewed in Sri Lanka as being integral to Sri Lanka security.

18. Ibid.
Perceptions of threats are indeed, intrinsic to a small power big power relationship, but India is Sri Lanka’s only near neighbour and in historical times all invasions of the island, barring one, emanated from South India. Hence, threat perceptions of India are ever present in Sri Lanka. They are more or less pronounced depending on variables such as the party complexion of the government in power in Colombo, the personality of the Sri Lanka and Indian heads of government, the pressures of internal politics, and the prevailing international situation.19

These strategic concerns of India became more and more important in the Indo-Sri Lanka relationship. One of the primary factors that has affected the bilateral relationship between India and Sri Lanka is the status of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka, both before and after independence they only constitute. 5.6 percent of the population. Indian Tamils have often been regarded with suspicion and hostility by the majority Sinhalese population, since 1823, when the first tea plantation workers arrived in Sri Lanka. They have accordingly been the subject of contentious negotiations between the two countries for over sixty years.20

Relations between India and Sri Lanka are determined by geopolitical, geostrategic and geo cultural rather than by a sheer accident of geographical proximity.21

Geographical confers a greater flexibility to forge a better understanding and building special ties between two countries in the interest of promoting peace, security and development in the region. But due to the lack of a proper strategic understanding between India and Sri Lanka, the proximity syndrome produced unprecedented upheavals in their bilateral relationship. However the geographical proximity because a natural source of perpetual tension and conflict between the countries.22

Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Structure:

The word ‘ethnic’ is derived from the Greek term ‘ethnos’ meaning tribal or racial.23 In recent times the examination of the role of ethnicity in the developing and under developed countries had led to discussions on the meaning, function and contribution of ethnic groups. Ethnic politics is a heritage of all plural societies,24 and Sri Lanka is no exception. It is a multi-ethnic, multi religious and multi-lingual country like India.25

25. India is a multi religious, multi-lingual and multi ethnic country. It is officially a secular democracy. Secularism is India’s official creed. But communalism has been one of the country’s major and highly complex problems since the beginning of the 20th Century.
All societies, according to a scholarly view, "adopt three well defined modes of incorporating their internal ethnic division. The first mode is the ‘Differential’ mode under which two or more ethnic units with power dispersed among them on an unequal basis. The second mode is the ‘Equivalent mode’. Here the units are exclusive corporate groups and have an equal standing in the society. Individual in this mode participate only as members of a particular group. The third mode of incorporation, i.e. the uniform mode, is different from ethnic grouping and irrespective of the ethnic origin, provides universal citizenship."

**Sri Lanka – India Relations in the context of ethnic problem**

The ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is a domestic problem. But the people of India with historic cultural, ethnic and linguistic ties with the people of Sri Lanka can not remain unaffected by such events there. It is in this context that one should understand the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and its positive impact on the relations between India and Sri Lanka. Both India and Sri Lanka have been facing challenges from separatist movements in the recent years – Sikh, Mizoram and Gorkhaland separatism in India and the Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka.

By virtue of its size and geopolitical location India occupies an important place in the South Asian Region. It had maintained cordial relations with Sri Lanka on the basis of reciprocity and harmony. After independence Sri Lanka faced two major political crises the insurgency turned in 1971 and the ethnic turmoil after 1983.27

India extended support to the Sri Lanka government for combating insurgency India’s role in the ethnic conflict is of more recent memory. Irrespective of divergent views on the issue it is relevant that India has been dragged into the conflict owing to circumstance beyond its control and in several latent and manifest ways of lowing from machinations of forces of international ramifications this lesson seeks to present some of the major dimensions of the issue.

It is not, therefore surprising that successive governments in the island have felt concerned about the ability of the Indian political system to contain its subnational Tamil ethnic element and prevent its coalescence with its counter part elements in Sri Lanka the leaders of Sri Lanka have often enough expressed the fear that if New Delhi should fail to exercise its authority over Tamil Nadu, or to prevent the Tamil subnational aspiration eventually from leading to the secession of Tamil Nadu as Dravidas than, the

Tamil ethnic element in India and Sri Lanka would drive the Sinhalese to the wall and make them a minority in the island.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{India’s role in Sri Lanka’s ethnic crisis sprang from three main considerations:-}

\textbf{First} – the ethnic crisis of Sri Lanka had unpinged on the internal politics of Tamil Nadu and pressure from Tamil Nadu political parties on the problem of Sri Lanka Tamils had made them a part of the domestic political process for India.

\textbf{Second} - Separation in Sri Lanka could have adverse repercussions on India which was itself faced with separatist demands in Punjab, Assam and elsewhere so much so that India had a vested interest in Sri Lanka’s unity and territorial integrity.

\textbf{Third} - It is related to the strategic scenario.

India asserting its right to restrict the extent of the Sri Lanka ethnic crisis to a strictly regional frame work of reference out side the ambit of extra regional powers and also to asserting its right to be considered the role regional arbiter in this crisis.

It is held that the Indian’s in Sri Lanka are primarily birds of passage who come when times are good and fly back to India when times are hard.\textsuperscript{29}


\textsuperscript{29} Wriggins, W.H., P-219, op. cit, No. 1
In addition the Sinhalese fear that one day all Tamils would unite and establish a South Indian colony in Sri Lanka.

**SRI LANKA fears of India Expansionism** –

Sri Lanka feared that India has an expansionist policy and may take advantage of cultural and geographical proximity. It is pointed out, for example, by Sri Lanka Circles that:

“We are an Island, 20 miles from the shore of India, 50 times smaller and with 1/48 of its population. Because of our geographical proximity to India and our overwhelming military inferiority a confrontation with India is unthinkable.\(^\text{30}\)

This threat perception is mutually shared by the majority Sinhalese population in Sri Lanka, based upon the historic tales of Indian invasion of the island over the centuries. Contained in the ‘Mahavamsa’ and other sacred Buddhist texts.\(^\text{31}\)

Sri Lanka appears to be suspicious and fearful of India for the following reasons:

1. Some Indians have made the claim that historically Sri Lanka ought to be regarded as part of India and eventually should be united with the homeland. Even as late as 1945, Nehru had urged that Sri Lanka should join an Indian federation since it was

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“Culturally, racially and linguistically as much a part of India as any province of India,”\(^{32}\) the Sinhalese fearful of India’s hegemonic aspirations.

2. The presence of a strong Tamil minority in Sri Lanka with close social affinity and linguistic identity with about 50 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in India.\(^ {33}\)

3. Disintegration of Pakistan and treaty of friendship with USSR, by India in 1971.

4. Emergence of India, as a nuclear power on 18\(^{th}\) May, 1974 and the possible intention to pressurise smaller nations.

5. Sri Lanka also harbours misgivings about the modalities of merger of Sikkim on 16\(^{th}\) May 1975 as the 22\(^{nd}\) state of India.

India’s role as arbiter in this crisis had the unfortunate consequence of India getting itself involved with questions which was essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of Sri Lanka. India expressed itself openly and unequivocally as being opposed to the Eelamist demand for a separate Tamils state in Sri Lanka.

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But India at the same time brought pressure to bear on the Sri Lanka government to carry out its own pledges to effect a political solution of the ethnic crisis by implementing the principal of devolution of power from the center to the provinces in Sri Lanka.

Before Rajiv – Jayewardene accord, Sri Lanka has been greatly worried by the demand for separate Tamil State (Eelan) which had taken a violent turn since the 1983 communal frenzy and had almost assumed civil war proportions.\(^{34}\)

Sri Lanka was alarmed by India’s possible intervention which had been often demanded by the Tamil groups. The Tamil tigers and the Tamil United liberation front (TULF) would often express great faith in India. A vision of Ceylon federated with India, dominated by India, over whelmed by India.”\(^{35}\)

In this context, similar views were expressed by D.S. Senanayake, when the citizenship bill was introduced in the parliament that “Our attachment to India, our close association with India – makes us feel that it is very necessary for us to be in close relationship with that country but we

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may be a small country, but however small we may be we have a right to our country we do not expect India to play the role of trying to acquire rights where they have no rights”.  

Furthermore, the Sinhalese believe that “They have no motherland other than Sri Lanka. The Indian trade union leaders the Borah traders, the Sindhi traders, other Indian traders and most Tamil workers use Sri Lanka as a mine from which they obtain money and invest it in large houses and lands which they buy in the names of their children and close relatives in India.  

All of them live with one foot in India and the other in Sri Lanka. Their only loyalty to Sri Lanka is as a gold mine. They do not have any sympathy towards the Sinhalese people.  

Thus, the Sri Lankas are very sensitive and have misgivings about Indian role in this region. They believe that this region is an “Indian Lake” for India. Consequently, as a counter balance to India, Sri Lanka adopted a pro US Western and China attitude which created a security problem for India. In this regard the following points may be considered: 

1. Defence agreement between Britain and Sri Lanka in 1947 and implementation of citizenship act in 1948 were against Indian interests.  

37. Ibid P – 154  
2. Sri Lanka – China relations have also been an embarrassment to India, Sri Lanka signed rubber rice agreement with China in 1952 and adopted neutral attitude in 1962 Indo-China war.

3. During Indo-Pak war of 1971, Sri Lanka granted air transit facilities to Pakistan through Colombo and voted against India in the UN on Kashmir issue. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike also did not object to US Warships entering Bay of Bengal in the Wake of Indo-Pak war in 1971.\(^\text{39}\)

4. Nuclear explosion by India in 1974 and merger of Sikkim with India drew adverse comments from Sri Lanka.

5. Initially, Sri Lanka asked for military aid form USA, Britain, Pakistan and others to solve the ethnic crisis.

6. Sri Lanka was inspired to have membership of SEATO and also try for ASEAN membership. It has also called upon SAARC summits to pressurise India not to help the Tamil terrorists.

7. To further consolidated its security measures, both external and internal Sri Lanka signed agreement with, USA to establish VOA transmitters in Trincomalee and also signed Trincomalee oil tank farm deal with western companies.\(^\text{40}\)

Aforesaid developments were obviously a threat to Indian security, which were directly or indirectly created by Sri Lanka to maintain balance of power in the region.

To Sum up, In the years since the two countries became independent, India has been able to manage its subnational conflict and prevent the Tamil ethnic issue from assuming a transnational dimension. However, as both countries are open societies, the linkage element has no occasion caused considerable embarrassment to the two Governments. Expression of sympathy for the subnational cause has often created situations where each country has felt compelled to resist pressures to interfere in the affairs of the other. Thus India and Sri Lanka as neighbours, have been linked by traditional bonds of close and cordial relations for more than two thousand years.