CHAPTER I

ETHNICITY AND NATION-BUILDING: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

1. Introduction: Scope of the Study

Sri Lanka, as a pluralistic society has operationally involved the co-existence of two main ethnic groups: the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The Sinhalese and the Tamils claim their origin from distinct racial stocks of the Aryans and the Dravidians respectively. As the claims were deeply rooted in their consciousness, the ethnic difference was always important in the structuring of plurality in Sri Lanka. There were a number of factors which helped to amplify the original ethnic differences. Of the crucial being religion. Since the Sinhalese embraced Buddhism and the Tamils largely retained their Hindu faith, religion became a divisive factor in society.

Ethnic issues have come to be regarded as one of the most pressing problems facing many countries of the world in modern times. They concern basically with the question of relationship between diverse groups of people often characterised by distinct races, culture and religions living within the political boundaries of a state. The notion of distinction, apart from being evident in some of the objective and tangible facts, is strongly present in the perception of the groups about themselves or in the opinion of others who hold them to be different. The state of relationship between various groups and categories of people varies in each country depending upon such variables as its historicity, political process and the many socio-economic configuration in it. The relationship ranges from a relatively harmonious form to one of antagonism and open hostility of conflictual type. Thus, the status enjoyed by different groups and social categories with respect to their various social, political, economic and demographic rights in different countries varies widely. So, its problems too assume different colour and pitches in their political overtones accordingly.
Though the process of community formation is obviously as old as the recorded history of politically organized human societies, nation-building, as a concept and as a process, is comparatively of recent origin and occupies an important position on the agenda of the rulers and governments in the present century. It is commonly used to denote the overall developmental process for achieving a strong, unified, prosperous and comparatively advanced stage of statehood in developing countries.

Terms like nation-building, modernization, social change, developmental administration and national integration are frequently used in the day-to-day vocabulary of contemporary political leaders, administrators and academicians everywhere. Nation-building is relatively a new phase used to denote the process of overall development. People aspire for it, politicians appeal in its name and administrators cherish to achieve it. However, a plethora of problems hinder the process of nation-building in developing countries. The stupendous task of nation-building that has confronted the political elites and the statesman in the entire Third World has also around immense interests among the scholars and academicians around globe.

In case of Sri Lanka, a typical Third World resource-poor, small country, the social composition of its population is heterogeneous, belonging to different racial or ethnic groups, each possessing some distinctive characteristics based on language, religion and historical antecedents. Ethnic differences between the two major communities the Sinhalese and the Tamils became more marked in the country since the mid-1950s, resulting in communal antagonism and political rivalry which has the doubt, retarded the nation-building process. Inter-ethnic cleavages, competition and conflict appear to have acquired a marked intensity. Ethnic conflicts and movements have posed varied and severe systemic challenges to this country in the process of nation-building. That both the concepts of ethnicity and nation-building are closely
intertwined in the evolutionary process of a political community, is not a debatable point. However, answers to the questions like how, why and when can be attempted only after the premises regarding their structures and functions in varying contexts of time and space are spelt out.

Power and authority play a critical role in the process of social change in the Third world. The inter-ethnic group cleavage being basically political, the ethnic conflict is mainly the competition for power-sharing and its management. The emergence of the problem may be due to the continued neglect or mishandling of the initial demands for linguistic accommodation, regional autonomy, inequitous treatment in educational or employment avenues turns the autonomists into secessionists and retards the nation-building process.

Against this background, a number of issues concern us: the nature of power structure in ethnic/non-ethnic terms, the stakes which the various ethnic communities have on their political system, what is their share in the power cake Who gets what, From whom?' Whose cost is perceived as another's gain'? Under what condition ethnicity of a particular group progressively becomes demanding, competitive and conflictual? Under what situation does an ethnic community assert its status as a "nation" and what are the requirements for its success? Under what conditions does ethnicity impede or/and facilitate the process of state-building and state-centric nation-building And how? In what ways, under what conditions do these two not only reconcile but mutually strengthen each other? In the contrary, What are various approaches pursued by the power wielders to cope with the challenge of plurality?

So the main focus in this project against the backdrop, would be to examine the role of ethnicity in the nation-building process of Sri Lanka; to see whether there is any obstacles to the problems of political development arising out of ethnic composition.
or the multi-ethnic character of the Sri Lankan society. The specific objectives would be: to conduct a comprehensive review of literature on various aspects of concepts such as nation and nationalism, state and nation-building, the process of nation-building in Third World perspective, to trace the difference between the state-building and nation-building process, to identify the reason and requirements for ethnicity that has compelled it to assume the burden of nation-building in developing countries and to conduct a critical survey of the historical background of ethnicity and the process of nation-building in Sri Lanka. Finally, the present Thesis aims to suggest measures to forge the bonds of unity and fraternity for the overall development of the state.

The methodology to be adopted is descriptive normative under a broadly analytical framework. The case studies method is to be followed to arrive at acceptable conclusions. While analysing the framework, an attempt would be made to go into the structure and functions of various ethnic groups and organizations and historically delineate their roles in conflict and cooperation in the process of nation-building. The work has to rely on both secondary and primary sources of materials. Newspapers and magazine reports are to be widely consulted to examine the situation currently at play.

Relating to the limitations of the study, it can be said that this project mainly tries to concentrate on the relational patterns of ethnicity and nation-building. Therefore, it does not cover all the aspects of nation-building put forth by different schools. Rather it would deal with the ethnic obstacles in nation-building process. The sampled area of Sri Lanka may not adequately represent the entire Third World. Other aspects such as political, social, psychological and economic are left to be studied in a greater micro-level of analysis with a nationwide perspective.
The Problem of Nation Building in Sri Lanka: A Review of Literature

Regarding the cause of the process of state formation and national consciousness at the very outset, literature on traditional political science gives us the accounts of different theories such as divine, social contract, force, patriarchal, matriarchal, evolutionary and materialistic as propounded by Karl Marx. But there is very little literature developed so far on the issue of nation-building which of course, became a popular phrase only in the early sixties. Since the terminology itself was coined by the non-Marxist thinkers, the Marxist thinkers still avoid the very concept of the state and nation and some of the Marxist followers comment nation-building as one of the devices developed by the capitalists to impose capitalism on under-developed or developing nations. Therefore, the Marxist literature does not deal with the concept.

Among the early works on nation-building, those by Lucian W. Pye, Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz and Reinhard Bendix are counted as the most important which gave shape to the concept as well as the accounts of a number of experiences in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. Lucian W. Pye (ed.), Communication and Political Development (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1963); Karl W. Deutsch and William J. Foltz., (eds.), Nation-Building (New York: Athenton Press, 1963); Reinhard Bendix, Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order (New Delhi: Whiley Easton Private Limited 1969). Pye's work is concentrated on communication as one of the major elements in the process of political development and nation-building. The editor regards communications as the cause which brought about the downfall of traditional societies and it will be the decisive factor in determining the prospects of nation-building in the future. The work of Deutsch and Foltz endeavours to avoid the conceptual problems involved in the process and also gives a number of experiences of particular countries. Bendix analyses the European experience to develop some guidelines and compares the experiences of
In aspects of Political Development (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1966) Pye developed in 1966 a crisis solving approach on building the nations in a modern sense. He is of the opinion that to become a modern nation-state, every nation must successfully pass through the identity, legitimacy, penetration, participation, integration, and distribution crises. Later on, most of the Western writers emphasized this approach.


In the early seventies, some Asian and African scholars assembled to discuss the problem of nation-building in developing countries under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi with a grant from UNESCO. The work of the whole proceedings is compiled by Rajni Kothari.

In Rajni Kothari, ed., State and Nation Building: Third World Perspective, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1977, attempts were made to arrive at a theoretical frame to the problem. But, it turned out to be an attack on the Western approach and a display of some experiences, achievements and projection of one's own style. The particular cases dealt with were of Indonesia, Japan and South Korea, the African nations, the People's Republic of China, Bangladesh and India.
The pioneering work on Ethnicity and Nation-Building on South Asia has been done by Urmilla Phadnis. Her book *Ethnicity and Nation-Building in South Asia*, Sage Publication, New Delhi 1989, is an exploratory work. This work apart from giving an overview of the ethnic mosaic of South Asian states, also makes a critical appraisal of the various approaches on the theme of ethnicity and nation-building. It examines the constraints of various regimes of South Asian States in coping with the challenges of social diversities and economic disparities; the major strands of the relationship between government, society and economy; and focuses on the causes which lead to the containment of ethnicity in some cases and its exacerbation in others.

It deals with the process of socio-economic change, the ethnic dimensions of the power structure, and the policies, strategies as well as tactics adopted by various regimes to cope with the urges and aspirations of various ethnic groups and above all provide the wider setting for an understanding of ethnicity and the process of nation building in South Asia. As the scope of the work is wide, covering the entire South Asia, the Sri Lankan experience of the role of ethnicity in the nation building process, though touched upon from various points of view could not be treated as an exclusive one. The hypothesis and approaches in the work open the vistas for independent exclusive analysis of the subject on each of the South Asian states for that matter including Sri Lanka as well.

Another authoritative work on the subject is by Paul R. Brass. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1991 in which the author argued that ethnicity and nationalism are not 'givens', but are social and political constructions. They are creations of elites and a modern phenomena, inseparably connected with the activities of the modern centralizing state. Brass is of the opinion that ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of interactions between the leaderships of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant
ethnic groups. This work is primarily theoretical and covers up a macro analysis of South Asia including India, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to substantiate the theoretical arguments. So far as the works on Sri Lanka are concerned, the following need a special mention. One of the earlier works, Robert N. Kearney, *Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon*, Duke University Press, Durham 1967, analyses the ethnic divisions of the Sri Lankan society on the basis of language and treats the problem since Independence in ahistorical perspective. It stresses the origin of the Tamil demand for parity of status for their language with Sinhala and their success and failure in their attempt.

In *Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi 1976, Urmila Phadnis deals the ethnic composition and racial relations, but her main thrust of the study is on the role of Buddhist religion in the Sri Lankan politics. She has also discussed the role of Buddhist organizations in safeguarding the Sinhala language, religion and culture against the immigrants domination. It deals with the direct involvement of Buddhist leaders in electoral politics and tried to show how Buddhism as a religion plays a vital role in the practice of democratic politics.

In K.M. de Silva, ed., *Sri Lanka: A Survey*, C. Hurst and Company, London, 1977, some of the known authors have treated different aspects like religion, evolution of plural Sri Lankan society, politics and political developments, the constitution and constitutional Reforms since 1948 and administration and judicial system in a candid and analytical manner.


Thus, a review of literature mentioned above indicates that the concept of nation-building still suffers from a single and clear-cut approach free of criticism and universally acceptable. So far as the process of nation building in Sri Lanka is concerned, scholars have not paid sufficient attention to devising a coherent approach relating to this problem. While some of the works have undertaken a very limited study confining the scope to a overall treatment of the problem. some others have become region and area specific without developing an approach relevant for the whole of Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is quite pertinent to make an exhaustive study on Ethnicity and Nation-building in Sri Lanka encompassing the genesis of the problem as well as delineating the concepts, the process, the conflict and its present dimensions under a normative-cum-analytical framework.

II(A) NATION BUILDING

Theorists of both Liberal and radical traditions have studied the problems

1. Liberals are those who emphasize on freedom of individual from external constraint. They study individual as a unit in itself, irrespective of the social environments and relations. They believe that the ideal situations for the development of individual are free market economy and representative government. The liberal philosophy originated in the writings of Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith, J.S. Mill, et. al.

2. The radicals, unlike the liberals, emphasize more upon social relationships and environment. They study individual in society and individual behaviour is studied in relation to the social condition of his existence. The radicals view that in a feudal and capitalist society, the social relations are governed by social class, hierarchy, deprivation, subordination and exploitation. Radicals derive their main frame of analysis from the writings of Karl Marx, F. Engels and V.I. Lenin.
involved in nation-building in Sri Lanka. Not unnaturally, the term acquired more complexity at the theoretical level, became difficult at substantive level. Therefore, the study of nation-building demands further enquiry into the related concepts: (nation, State, nationality, ethnicity and class), methods, (Liberal and Radical) and problem areas of study. However, both the liberal and radical viewpoints broadly endorse the general constituent characteristics of a nation: geography, history, economic structure, consciousness, culture, will, common language etc. According to the liberal perspective, nation is an independent political unit determined by certain objective (like geography, history, economic structure) and subjective (consciousness, loyalty, will, common language) characteristics. In other words, nation, according to the liberals, refers to

"a large number of people who see themselves as a community or group and who generally place loyalty to the group above any conflicting loyalties. They often share one or more of the following: language, culture, religion, political or other institutions, a history with which they identify, and belief in a common destiny. They usually occupy contiguous territories."  


The radical perspective also broadly accepts nation as a "historically constituted stable community of people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up, manifested in a common culture."

To radicals, the economic structure, language, territory, culture, character and mentality constitute the distinct features of a nation. These elements are the typical attributes of a nation, and a given people can become a nation by approximating the ideal type.

However, the distinction in both the perspectives - liberal and radical - lies in the modalities of formation of a nation.

A common assumption of liberal approach is that nation emerged into the world scene with the spread of modernization and social communication. Modernization unfolded the process of urbanization, industrialization, secularization, education, rational ideas, media participation and democratization; and social communication. It strengthened the idea of consciousness of mind by establishing

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communication over a wider range of issues, subjects and areas. The operations of such processes, hastened cultural assimilation and social mobilization. As a result, more people became available to new form of identification and integration.

The liberals placed emphasis on the role of social groups - ethnic, linguistic, kinship, religious, etc. - in the formation of a nation. Such social groups, they viewed, maintained definite identity of their own. The ethnic groups were "bound together by common ties of race, nationality, or culture". They specifically stressed more on the racial characteristics than on any other characteristics. Race, for them, was an important factor in determining a distinct category of population in a larger society. Where no marked racial differences exist, cultural differences formed the basic cohesive bond. Sociologists like Frederik Barth and anthropologists like Emile Benveniste defined ethnic groups on the same cultural and biological principles.

The liberal approach assumed that plural societies based on ethnic and tribal consciousness were liable to face problems in the process of nation building. They considered that tribalism tended to be more evocative, carrying with it both the reverence to tradition and elements of contemporary divisiveness. This approach emphasized that tribal society was traditional and was characterized by certain cultural variables - traditions, institutions, customs, values, myths, etc. and predominance of kinship relations. Such tribal consciousness should be channelized in the direction of


national consciousness, according to the liberals, otherwise it might act as an impediment in the process of nation-building. In this direction, the role of nationality and nationalism in the formation of a nation has also been recognized. Nationality, as viewed by the liberals, is a socio-cultural category involving a sense of social unity being reinforced by language, history and literature. Nationalism develops when political consciousness fosters social unity and that social unity is channelized for the achievement of certain political goals, i.e., the doctrine that nation and state should coincide. Nationalism, as a political creed underline the cohesion of modern societies and legitimize their claim to authority. In other words, it can be said that nation-state is regarded not only as the ideal, natural or normal form of political organization but also as the indispensable frame work for all social, cultural and economic activities.

Both nationalism and nation-States are of recent origin and are closely linked with the origins of popular sovereignty, the development of rationalist ideas and the growth of secularism. These ideas are closely related to the emergence of capitalism in 17th and 18th centuries. The old form of political organizations based on the feudal-mode were found to be redundant to accommodate the new developments and new ideas, based on merchant-capital, industrial capital, representative government, nationalism and secularism. Therefore, the need for a new form of political organization, the nation-state arose. The nation states in Europe, evolved upon the


existing national systems, developed to accommodate, promote and consolidate the new developments and ideas.

The whole liberal framework in fact gave a minimal role to state, citizens and social classes in the formation of a nation.

The classical liberal approach did not take into account the recent developments, especially, in the context of the emergence of the independent state of Sri Lanka. It analysed the developments of the nation-state system on the basis of the European experience, where state-system was derived from the national system. It failed to operate in the new realities of Sri Lanka, where national system was to be derived from the existing state system.

The radicals, on the other hand, rejected the liberalist analysis. They considered the liberal framework, on the emergence of nation, as a historical, mechanical and based on Western ethnocentricism. The radical theorists, like Marx and Engels, considered nation as a transitory form of social existence and liable to be superseded by World Communism. The nation-state was evolved to accommodate new developments and once the ground works underwent a change, the whole edifice of nation-state was bound to be eroded.

The radicals viewed that the elements of both 'nation' and 'nationality' were the same and both differed in regard to the degree of their maturity. According to this tradition, nationality referred to the historical and social communities of the period.

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17. Sri Lanka was formerly known as Ceylon. It was renamed Sri Lanka in 1972. In this work the island will be referred to as Sri Lanka and Ceylon interchangeably.

from the disintegration of the tribal system to the inception of capitalism and formation of nation; and people in general, whether a nation, a nationality, a national or ethnic group. In the case of nationality, blood-ties, customs, religion fall apart and in its place come citizenship, law and language.\(^\text{19}\)

Along this line of thinking it has been generally viewed that nation building to a considerable extent depends on a country’s dominant economic structure and on socio-economic class differentiation of society. Multiplicity of economic structures which is characteristic of any society in a state of transition, accounts for the variety of ethno-cultural and ethno-linguistic processes and diversity of forms of ethnic entities. The radical approach recognize the role of social groups like linguistic, religious and ethnic groups in the formation of nation. But the recognition is confined only to the secondary level. The primary units of study of a nation are social classes and their relationships in the processes of production, consumption, distribution and exchange. Marx defined social classes on the basis of their relationships in the production mechanism and analysed their relationship on the basis of class exploitation and class struggle. Later Marxists, like Miliband, added distribution and exchange, class domination and class subordination to the study of social class.\(^\text{20}\)

The radicals viewed that the law of social development would remove the false sense of distinction between people based on ethnicity and religion, and since nations came on the world scene by the laws of social development, the same laws of social development would supersede nation, nationality, nationalism, etc.

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The modernization perspective within liberal traditions believed that new societies like Sri Lanka faced the problems of nation-building because of their economic under-development, high population growth rates, low level of literacy, education and media participation, and underdeveloped technology.

Sri Lanka can be characterized by this school as consisting of "discrete collectives-ethnic, communal, caste, religious, linguistic--that have little sense of identity with one another or with the national whole." Such a situation created imbalance between spheres and systems, resulting in multiple affiliations, cross-cutting loyalties, social disorder and chaos, and political instability. The Sri Lankan society gave more credence to expressive values and norms than instrumental values and norms. As a result, it lagged far behind in achieving the basic functional imperatives of a society: adaptation, goal attainment, pattern maintenance and tension management and integration.

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23. Parsons viewed that expressive values and norms consisted of ascriptive, diffusive, affective, and collective oriented values and norms; instrumental values and norms consisted of those values and norms which were achievement oriented, specific and affectively neutral. Parsons, Talcott: *The Social System*, Glencoe, 1951, pp.58-67.
It has also been believed by this tradition that the main problem of Sri Lanka and the developing world related to lack of political order and public authority.\textsuperscript{24} This perspective, advocated by Huntington and Bendix, believed that irrespective of the form of government, political order and public authority were basic for the development of the Sri Lankan state system into a national system. Political order in Sri Lanka depends on the relation between the development of political institutions and the mobilization of new social forces (ethnic, religious, economic, territorial and status groups) into politics; and the removal of problems like illiteracy, poverty, disease, malnutrition, low morality, etc. Development of political institutions, it is viewed, depends on political community, productivity, authoritative and legitimate government. An interesting implication of this approach is that socio-economic development and political development are two different goals and the achievement of one does not necessarily mean the achievement of the other.

According to this tradition, lack of political order in Sri Lanka is due to narrow support base of its institutions, organizations and procedures. The main problem of Sri Lanka, this tradition believes, is the lack of development of state behind the development of society. As social forces become more variegated, political institutions fail to become complex and authoritative.\textsuperscript{25} The new politico-socio-economic environment becomes conducive for turmoil, disorder and tensions. Huntington place less emphasis on the historical aspects of the problems of nation-building than on the legitimacy and democratic aspects of the political

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\textsuperscript{24} In the developing societies, administrative efficacies and public cooperation were in short supply; there was no consensus or "goodwill" behind the operation of a political community. Bendix, R. : \textit{op.cit.} pp.18-19.
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\textsuperscript{25} Huntington, S.P.: \textit{op.cit.} p. 11.
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institutions in Sri Lanka. Advocates of modernization like Lerner and others believe that "increasing urbanization has tended to raise literacy; rising literacy has tended to increase media exposure; increasing media exposure has "gone with" wider economic participation (per capita income) and political participation (voting)." Once the process of urbanization and social mobility started all the indices of modernization would come into the social scene.

The modernization perspectives offered a model of development which was based on "close options and compulsive sequences." It viewed that once the socio-economic development had been achieved, the necessary political development would follow automatically. It viewed that society ought to be modernized before states and nations could be built. Such analysis was ahistorical and suffered from teleological bias. It viewed history as repetitive. While analysing the problems of the developing world and more particularly Sri Lanka, it never enquired into the causes of its underdevelopment and dependency at present. It ignored the impact of colonialism, imperialism and neo-colonialism on the polity, economy and society of Sri Lanka. This approach denied to the independent state of Sri Lanka, the right to make choices, the right to exercise freedom and autonomy (the centres of independent political capability). This approach believed that Sri Lanka should follow the given western model in order to achieve its national consolidation. Once social and economic developments were achieved, Sri Lanka would automatically follow the

27. Ibid. p.6.
lines of western patterns of institutions and processes. Almond, a modernization theorist, in his system analysis assumed that once a political system developed, it would increasingly seek inputs from a wider variety of groups and that these groups would be increasingly integrated into the decision-making process: once this task was done, communication about political affairs would be widespread. The input side of Almond’s model made no specification about groups whose interests were to be or were being articulated and aggregated.

Likewise, Huntington considered political order as the pre-eminent goal (not even democracy) and in order to achieve national consolidation, political order should be strived first. If democratic institutions failed to achieve political order, then military or authoritarian government might be needed to achieve the same. So the ethnocentric bias of modernization perspective might pose a threat to the nation building process of Sri Lanka. The modernization school of analysis, ignored the major segments of European history - in most parts of Europe, states and nations evolved before societies were modernized. The entire edifice of modernization framework was based at superstructural level. It made no attempt to study the social class and social relations based on production system, and how to operationalize the democratic and secular forces and structures in the existing conditions. The liberal works were mechanical and everything flowed in a mechanical manner: urbanization, industrialization, education, secularization, etc. The liberals considered that such developments operated automatically. They also completely ignored the social change and the role of ideologies and ethnocultural perceptions in Sri Lankan society. Ideology had definite impact upon society. It had more pervasive effect than any

other forces, so it could not be treated vacuously: e.g. Islamic revolution in Iran, Nazi and fascist uprisings in Germany and Italy, respectively. The question was how did one treat such type of situations. The fundamental drawback of modernization theory, according to Rajni Kothari, was its historicist and theological bias: it sees the course of history as repetitious, following a known development pattern. Secondly, it suffers from teleological overview - the source of teleos lie in impersonal and inanimate trends released by technological and industrial revolutions by imperialism and MNCs. Together these fore-closed all options for the new politics. They (developing countries) must urbanize and modernize in a big way, concentrate technological and human resources in the hands of a few 'managers' and the corporate state build massive impersonal bureaucracies and information networks, pursue the goal of economic affluence through supposedly rational control of men and materials, and regulate human lives through a recourse to reason and intelligence which is essentially manipulative of both physical and human nature. Such type of analysis, according to Kothari, provided no scope for political choice and political freedom. Thus, the whole analysis of modernization school become apolitical in the Sri Lankan context.

For Kothari, the political aspect of nation-building was most crucial. This aspect provided the newly developing states the important powers of freedom and autonomy of choices. Such exercises related to two dimensions of nation-building: international and internal. The international dimension of nation-building related to the power centres of the world: the concentration of economic, military, industrial and political powers in a few centres of the world proved to be of major obstacles for the

consolidation of nationhood in the developing states. The concentration of such powers in a few centres, according to Kothari, threatened the core elements of a state: independence, autonomy and free choice. The only alternative for the new states was to restructure the existing conjectures. In the context of the third world perspective, in the domestic sphere, it considered the major obstacles to the problems of nation building were the colonization (both internal and external) and metropolitization of the elite structure of society, authoritarian rule, collectivization of social democracy, non-development of a national political culture and lack of a policy of import substitution.

It viewed that the above trends should be reversed in order to enable a state to base itself on value premises of autonomy, freedom, self determination and independent choices. The Sri Lankan State, in order to consolidate its independence should institutionalize itself in terms of a national community: the establishment of a national centre (inside the national community) which should handle the problems of legitimacy through the process of democratic participation, political conflict and intellectual dissent: the periphery responds to these processes by progressively mobilizing its own social structure and moving centreward through both struggle and coalition-making. This entailed a whole line of political and cultural centres and sub-centres built out of the erstwhile periphery.

31. Ibid. p.8.
32. Ibid. pp. 9-11.
33. Ibid. p.12.
The third world perspective of nation-building is another variant of liberal perspective. It ignored the role of social classes in the polity and economy of a state. It recognized the dominant roles of elites, non-elites and ethnic forces in the state social scene. It overlooked the dimension of inequality based on production and exchange mechanisms. Its offered solutions failed to overcome the dimensions of unequal social relations and dependent development. This perspective is inadequate in the Sri Lankan situation. It treats the problems of nation building from a segmentary aspect and not from an integrated perspective. It stresses more on the political aspect but less on the economic and social aspects: autonomous development of the economy and secularization of the society.

A summation of the viewpoints discussed above were ahistorical and failed to analyze the problems of dependent development and infirmities of democratic and secular structures in the developing state of Sri Lanka. Such problems were particularly more acute in a heterogeneously conglomerated and developing state of Sri Lanka.

The group of theorists coming under the radical perspective were Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Miliband, et. al. and dependency theorists - A.G. Frank, Cordoso, Falleto, Samir Amin, et. al. To these Marxists the concepts like nation, nationalities, social systems etc., were secondary forms of human existence. These forms of existence were primarily due to the development of division of labour, private property and commodity production.

According to Marxist-Leninist theory, nation having originated in the capitalist epoch will not disappear until the stage of communism set in all over the world.  

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Accordingly, they considered nation and national communities as historically transient. Marx recognized that economic, social and political consolidation of bourgeois power involved the coexistence of nation and state within the framework of civil society. The state has as its purpose the institutionalization of bourgeois power, while nationality function as ideological core around which the bourgeoisie both consolidates its domestic power over the working classes and peasants, and solidifies and regiments a nation vis-a-vis other capitalist nations.

The bourgeoisie, according to Marxists, in order to perpetuate its power base always sought an industrial army and consumer market, and effectively identified its interest, with that of the nation, and intimately associated the nascent capitalist revolutions with national and liberal democratic revolutions. As a result, the cause of nationality espoused by the capitalists, was first, to consolidate and later to retain its own power. For Marx, in bourgeois society the interests of the bourgeoisie cannot be effectively identified with that of the proletariat. So, nation building and national integration were contradictions in terms. In a class society, according to the radicals, the interests of the nation were being determined by the dominant class (bourgeoisie), hence the contradiction. Marx viewed that it was in the nature of bourgeoisie to have national interests and to retain them but in the nature of capitalism to dissolve national interests both politically (through the formation of an international


class of proletariat) and economically (through the creation of a world system). For Marx, national problems like national disunity, strife, etc., would continue to prevail so long as the bourgeois economic, political, military and ideological hegemonies have not been destroyed. The only solution to national problems according to Marx was (proletarian) internationalism.\textsuperscript{38} The national problems were further complicated by domineering role of imperialistic forces in the international scene. Imperialism emerged as a major threat to national development externally and the bourgeoisie, landlords and clergies internally.\textsuperscript{39} The consolidation of national development required the removal of all those threats. In the colonial and imperialistic epoch, the culture of subjugated nations contained elements of democratic, socialist and bourgeois culture; and movements for national consolidation and development required the recognition of democratic and socialist elements.\textsuperscript{40} The resolution of national problems, according to Lenin, required the removal of internal as well as external national inequalities, recognition of the right of self-determination of each national unit and the formation of a federation of autonomous national units within a nation.\textsuperscript{41} Lenin viewed that national liberation struggle in the epoch of colonialism and imperialism should not be opposed, rather its role should be recognized even though it was being led by the bourgeois.\textsuperscript{42} Each national liberation struggle, according to Lenin, contained democratic socialist and bourgeois elements, and the working class should join the liberation movement by recognizing democratic and

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. p. 44.


\textsuperscript{42} Lenin, V.I. : \textit{op.cit.} Vol.22, pp.151-152.
socialistic elements. The important question for Lenin was not national statehood, but nations unification in fighting for a state. By recognizing the social basis of a nation, Lenin reduced the importance of the roles of ethnic-religious and tribal forces in society. He viewed that national state was a derivative of economic requirements and the recognizable elements of a nation were economic community, language, territory and history.

Stalin shared the Leninist tradition for the study of national problems. He considered that the economic, political and cultural conditions of a given nation constituted the only key to the questions how a particular nation ought to arrange the life and what form its future constitution ought to take. He viewed that the key to the solution of national problems were the removal of economic, political and cultural inequalities. The remedies to economic, political and cultural inequalities are socialism, cultural national autonomy, right to self determination of the nationalities within the general socialist world movement.

The above mentioned viewpoints failed to account for the crucial features of social reality, such as patriarchy, racism, state and nation building etc., in the Sri Lankan context. They simply viewed the problems from the class perspective.

Miliband viewed national problems in terms of class domination and subordination, class exploitation and class struggle. According to him class domination was based on the ownership of the means of production; and control over

43. Lenin, V.I. : op.cit. vol.31, p.146.
the means of production: means of administration and means of communication. National interest was identified with that of the dominant class. Statism and statization were the means to safeguard the interests of the dominant class.

For Miliband, identification of national problems involved the identification of classes and sub-classes that made a society: demonstration of the precise structure and mechanisms of domination and exploitation: and identification of conflicts between classes.

According to the dependency theorists, the main problem to independent Sri Lankan nationhood was the chain of exploitative relationships within Sri Lanka and its relation with the developed world. This explanation is rather general in character and focused more on the economic ties of Sri Lanka with international capitalism. The world capitalist system, as viewed by A.G. Frank was governed by certain laws of development and underdevelopment: the development of advanced capitalist countries depended on the nature of their ties with the under-developed countries and the development of the satellite countries depended on their satellite status. To Frank, "the capitalist contradictions and the historical development of the capitalist system have generated under development in the peripheral satellites whose economic surplus was expropriated, while generating economic developments in the metropolitan centres which appropriated that surplus and further that this process still continues". The capitalist contradictions stemmed from national development of Sri Lanka.


48. Ibid, p.27.
Lankan state because from the lowest sub-centre (feudal chiefs, traders, peasants, tenants and landless workers) to the metropolitan centres, capitalist system generated under-development for many and development for a few. As a result, the metropoles expropriated surplus resources from the satellites thus promoting its own development and pushing the satellite to further underdevelopment. The satellite status can be reversed only by rejecting the capitalist link and capitalist path of development. National under-development, according to the dependency theorists, meant untieing of national economic and political spheres of Sri Lanka and national development referred to the role of social groups in tying together the economic and political spheres of Sri Lanka. Thus, the unevenness of development between developed and developing Sri Lanka was due to the capitalist accumulation on a world scale, such accumulation transferred surplus resources from Sri Lanka to the developed world by maintaining unevenness of productivity between different sections of the economy (that is e.g. existence of traditional structures side by side with the modern structures, disarticulation of the economy (lack of inter-sectoral or inter-industrial exchange due to the lack of communication), and external defence (commercial and financial dependence). This trend can only be removed by developing a homogeneous (by reversing the trend of unevenness of productivity between sectors), coercive (based on inter-sectoral exchange and coordination) and independent dynamic (against external dependence) economy in Sri Lanka.


The dependency theorists believed that the major problems of Sri Lanka was the prevalence of dependent development and unequal exchange relations between the developed countries and the developing Sri Lankan state. They completely overlooked, knowingly or unknowingly, the dimension of inequality based on productive and distributive relations within Sri Lanka. It can be inferred from their analysis that the Sri Lanka state system was just a mere dependent category having no independent role and it worked as an agent of the metropol capitalist power. Such analysis overlooked the dimension of autonomy of the Sri Lankan State system vis-a-vis developed capitalist powers and international ruling classes. The Sri Lankan states by virtue of its mere existence and autonomous status is quite powerful and retains a high degree of manoeuvrability. It can use one social group against another or one power against another power. As the final arbiter of interest, the state enjoys certain degree of autonomy. The dependency theorists also overlooked the cultural dimension of inequalities between regions and within a particular region in Sri Lanka. The cultural domination and subordination produced the most powerful divisive forces and tendencies. e.g. north-south and east-west divide in Sri Lanka was the manifestation of cultural divisions. Such problems if not tackled properly might in future produce a potential time bomb for Sri Lanka. The dimension of inequality and exploitation not only confined to unequal production relation, but also to unequal power relations, e.g. the domination of one group over another in Sri Lankan bureaucracy, in officers, corps of military, civil, academic etc., and in political power equation it was the vice versa.

However, the radical approaches to national problems provided useful and critical analysis of the problems of neo-colonial dependent development in Sri Lanka. The radicals also described the laws of social development and
underdevelopment in Sri Lanka. Their analysis served as powerful tools for undertaking study and inquiry on issues of autonomy and development, and the nature of inherited colonial social relations in Sri Lanka.

The radical approaches neglected the role of such factors like race, religion, language, etc., in the Sri Lankan state system. Only passing references were made to such forces with the belief that the laws of social development would automatically remove such problems. The radicals failed to underscore the importance of subjective factors like irredentism, and ethno-centrism in the political power process of Sri Lanka, which manifested in the ethnic conflagration in the Sri Lankan state system.

None of the theories focused their analysis on the problems of nation-building from an integrated perspective. Their approaches to the problems were fragmentary while the radicals emphasized on the aspect of social relations and the issue of autonomous development: the liberals, on the other hand, stressed more on political and ethnic aspects of the problems of the nation.

Therefore, an integrated perspective is very much required and need to be developed to study the problems of nation building in Sri Lanka. This perspective stresses that the state system in Sri Lanka is the basic unit through which the nation-building task has been carried out. The state system of Sri Lanka has been accepted as a social-economic-political fact. It is the state system which has got international recognition from the international community and not any other system below the rank of the state system. Secondly, the policies of the Sri Lankan state have pervasive impact on the politico-economic and social lives of its members. Thirdly, the state in Sri Lanka is the final arbiter of conflict and cooperation among various social classes and groups. Therefore, the major duty of the state is to organize its members within a broader framework of socio-economic political activity
and make them true and conscious participants on the affairs of the state. The role of 
Sri Lankan state depends to a considerable extent on the prevailing social group 
configurations. In this direction, the crucial question is who exercises influence on 
the formulation of state policies, and whose interests, the state serves the most. 
Answer to all these questions require a study of the social relations and the problems 
hindering development, democratization and secularization in Sri Lanka. Such a 
study would help us to analyze critically the social (social group forms: ethnic, 
religious, tribal, social classes etc.) economic (structure and processes), political 
(level of participation in decision-making, power concentration and dispersion etc...) 
and cultural (linguistic patterns, ideological patterns, customs, mores, behaviours 
etc...) aspects of Sri Lankan State and social formations.

With the backdrop of a theoretical module, the various problems of nation 
building in Sri Lanka can be analyzed. The challenges of nation building in Sri Lanka 
are of wider ramifications and of deeper imprints. The problems are related to certain 
crucial issue areas of Sri Lanka such as social, political, economic and finally its 
ethnic configurations. These issues are quite crucial in a heterogeneously 
conglomerated and colonially subjugated state like Sri Lanka. These issues are to be 
studied in the context of the inter-play of the inherited colonial social relations and the 
state apparatus of the post-Independent state system of Sri Lanka.

The adopted integrated perspective stresses that the problems of nation 
building in Sri Lanka were related to certain crucial issue areas: dependent 
development of the economy and non-development of democratic secular structures 
and processes in the polity and society. The problematic issues of nation building 
emerged upon conditions provided by the inter-play of colonial social relations and 
state apparatus. These forces were inherited by the post-Independent state system of 
Sri Lanka. The restructuring of the inherited colonial social relationships requires the
resolution of the above mentioned problematic issues.

The state system in Sri Lanka would be reorganized into a national state system through the forces unleashed by democratization and secularization because of the developmental pattern over there is autocentred and autonomous. Secularization challenged the very basis of the patterns of inter-linkages between modern state structure and primordial state structure. Democratization after independence overlooked the dimension of primordial groupings through the recognition of human values, rights and democratic institutions and processes which led to severe ethnic problems in Sri Lanka. This ethnic problem in the seventies and eighties has not been tackled and resolved in proper perspective which in turn led to insurgency and secessionist movements, as a result it has challenged the nation-building process in Sri Lanka. With this background the issue of ethnicity should be analysed from definitional to operational perspectives with a hindsight to historical legacy.

B. ETHNICITY

Ethnicity plays a vital role in the origin, composition and character of the modern state. Like all social categories, the ethnic group is an "approximate characterization or description of a given segment of humanity marked by a trend prevalent within it." Generally, an ethnic conflict is defined as a pattern of hostile interaction among individuals and groups within a state. The origin of ethnic conflict is mainly attributed to conflicting socio-cultural and ethnic relationships between different groups within the state. Moreover, the ethnic conflicts are unique combination of all dynamics that constitute an individual identity, a group or a national identity. These conflicts are endemic in the underdeveloped societies of the

Third World. The dominant characteristics of these conflicts are protractedness, fluctuations in intensity and frequency, and lack of clear demarcation between internal and external sources of conflict.

The term 'ethnicity' etymologically derived from the Greek word 'ethnos' means 'nation'. This concept has undergone several modifications. Some have treated it as a biological concept and others as a cultural one. In the contemporary social science literature, however, 'ethnicity' refers to a combination of both biological and cultural attributes.

Scholars like Shibutani and Kwan considered ethnic characteristics as derived from common descent and denied role of culture in it. Warner took a similar line when he viewed ethnicity as based on race relations. In opposition to these views socio-cultural anthropologists like Gluckman, Mitchel and Epstein put emphasis on culture as the basis of ethnicity. According to Parsons, "Ethnicity is a primary focus of group identity, that is, the organization of plural persons, into distinctive groups and of solidarity and the loyalties of individual members to such groups. The members of the ethnic group have a distinctive identity of their own which is rooted in a distinctive sense of its history. For Francis and Gordon, the sense of "we


55. Ibid

feeling" or "peoplehood" that is shared by the members of a group is basic to the idea of ethnicity. 57

Gordon is credited with the formulation of the idea of sub-structure and sub-culture of the ethnic group. He viewed sub-structure as a web of social relationships that allows the members of an ethnic group to remain confined to it in so far as all of their primary relationships and some of their secondary relationships are concerned. 58 Subculture, for him, is the cultural patterns of a sub-society that has parallels with the wider society in the sense that it provides for network of institutions and organizations for the members of the ethnic group for the whole of their life. The sub-culture of an ethnic group is distinct from that of the wider culture as well as from the other ethnic group. 59 Inter-ethnic group relations are based on this aspect of the ethnic group. In order to apply the concept of ethnicity to the modern complex society where a person is associated with various ethnic groups. Gordon formulated the competing models of ethnicity as concentric circles in which there is a competition among different ethnic groups for the allegiance of the individual.

Cohen analysed ethnicity in a multi-ethnic social system. He defined it on the basis of the degree of conformity of its members to the values and norms on the process of social intercourse. It is a kind of social interaction among different cultural groups in a common social situation. He also showed the role of ethnicity as a means

57. Gordon, op.cit, p.34.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid. p.39.
Barth is of the opinion that, there are discrete groups of individuals on ethnic units associated with every culture, and even though transportation of individuals may take place across the ethnic boundaries, these boundaries do not disappear. They are persistent, stable and important social relationships may often be maintained across them. Ethnic differentiations are not due to the absence of social interactions as social relations are based upon this dichotomized ethnic status. Behavioural dimensions have a major role to play in the boundary maintenance of the ethnic groups. The ethnic groups have been defined by him as categories of ascriptions and identifications by the actors.61

Deshen, Frideres and Goldenberg expressed their views regarding the "situational ethnicity". According to them the meaning of ethnicity can undergo changes situationally on the basis of the relevance and significance that people relate to their identity.62 Despress treated ethnicity as a mechanism for social organization of competition over resources in the context of plural societies.63 Bonatch took a


class approach towards ethnicity and viewed it as an expression of class conflict. A similar view was put forward by Hechter who analysed it as a product of internal colonialism.

The idea that ethnicity has been derived both from culture and descent has been propounded by social scientists like Glazer and Moynihan. Morris felt that the self definition of the ethnic group or the other definitions of it, may be based on the criteria of race or culture or nationality. Dashfsky described ethnicity as based on presumed socio-cultural experience or identical physical features. These groups may be perceived by the members or the outsiders as having religious, racial, national, linguistic or geographic characteristics. Apart from listing down physical similarities and customs, Weber mentioned common experience under colonization and migration as the elements of ethnicity. Weiner analyses ethnicity at two levels, viz., the national and the local. In his view at the first level, the multiethnic societies passed political identity that is different from ethnicity whereas at the local level, the ethnic


groups have an exclusive claim to a territory. According to him, whether a person is local in the cultural sense is defined by nativism. In other words, the natives are identified in terms of their linguistic, religious, or tribal affinities rather than in terms of their birth place. Oomen has related ethnicity with the role played by a particular group, i.e., the group upholding the mainline culture. According to him, the peripheral communities have ratified their primordial collectivism in response to the processes of expansionism and exclusivism practised by the majority community. This involves tension between the community that claims itself to be the cultural mainstream and the other primordial collectivities who are at a peripheral position.

Categories of Ethnicity

Ethnicity is conceptualized into different categories on the basis of its basic attributes. First, the distinction between attributional ethnicity and interactional ethnicity. The first one is fixed in which it is not possible to choose ethnicity across physical types. In the interactional ethnicity, on the other hand, there is the possibility of shifting one's ethnic identity and thus, it is fluid in nature: Second, the conceptualization of the distinction between encompassing ethnicity and disaggregative ethnicity. The encompassing ethnicity refers to a cluster of ethnic groups who are lumped together under a single label either by the state or by the majority community or by the ethnic groups themselves for socio-political expediency. However, inspite of such a common label, the constituent ethnic groups perceive themselves as having separate identities which can be recognized through the concept of disaggregative

70. Weiner, M. , Sons of the Soil : Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India. (OUP, New Delhi), 1978, p.300.

ethnicity. The third distinction is between symbolic ethnicity and instrumental ethnicity. Through symbolic ethnicity the privileged ethnic groups identify themselves symbolically with one's own group or a different group having a high social status. On the other hand, through the use of instrumental ethnicity the deprived ethnic groups turn into minorities by taking recourse to political action. 72

Therefore, in recent years the concept of ethnicity has been advanced as a generic term covering conflict and tension arising out of the cultural diversity in a territorial state. Ethnicity, thus, may be defined as the tendency of groups bound together by consciousness of common ancestry, religion, sect, language or cultural tradition to strive for the protection of the interests of their members in relation to other groups and the state. This feeling of group solidarity and together sharing common symbols and a structure of discourse, are understood to provide the intimate cohesion so much essential for a distinct ethnic identity. Very often, ethnicity derives from some real or felt sense of common deprivation and denial. 73

Ethnicity, Nation-State and Pluralism the Linkages

The nation is defined as a group which has a sense of belongingness that arises out of a 'common heritage' and a 'common destiny' for the future. 74 The attributes of a nation are common descent, history, language, religion, region or other features


74. Emerson, R., From Empire to Nation. (HUP, Cambridge), 1960, p. 95.
that have been acquired by the members from birth onwards.\textsuperscript{75} A nation meant by Brass is a relatively large group of people sufficiently coherent in terms of cultural orientation, historical experience, and association with a particular geographical area. Such a group is either aspiring for or exercising self-rule. He further argues that when objectively distinct groups (i.e. those sharing common ethnic characteristics) become aware, subjectively of their separate identity and organize themselves politically for the attainment of autonomy or independent statehood they become a nationality or nation.\textsuperscript{76} Anderson describes a nation as an "imagined community". Such a community comes into being as a result of the vast extension and expansion in communication. People sharing some common cultural traits can develop ties of affection even if they never come into contact with one another.\textsuperscript{77} All definitions of nation emphasize its essentially political nature.

A conceptual distinction between nation and state, however, is in place. Whilst the nation is a cultural entity identifiable by its "character" the state is a judicial-political entity identifiable by its sovereign right over a territory. The two often coincide and the term nation-state captures this relationship. The idea of state refers to a politico-legal doctrine which has the authority to command loyalty and obedience from its citizens through the use of force within a particular territory.\textsuperscript{78} However, sometimes, the terms 'nation' and 'state' are mistakenly used in an

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{75} Peterson, W., "On the subnations of Western Europe" in N. Glazer and D.P. Moynihan (eds), \textit{Ethnicity : Theory and Experience}, (H.U.P. Cambridge, 1975), p.181.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Brass, P.R., \textit{Language, Religion and Politics in North India}, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge), 1974.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Anderson, B. \textit{Imagined Communities}, (Verso, London). 1983.
\end{itemize}
interchangeable manner. The nation in certain cases becomes the edifice on which the political structure of the state starts taking shape to be a political device through which the assertion of the cultural identity of the nation is expressed. With nation becoming the base for the emergence of state on the principle of 'one nation - one state' in western Europe, a 'new socio-political formation' termed as 'nation-state' came into being. This is an ideal typical concept that refers to the presence of the combination of a common culture and a common territory. It is a politically organized society having a historically legitimate claim to independent existence. But there is a possibility which has been proved historically that the process through which the nation state is formed is reversible. "Not only the nation can be constituted into a state, but a state can dismantle and destroy nations. Further, a state can create a new nation, in that it can accelerate the process of endowing a people with nationhood. It seems, the eclipse of a nation as a cultural unity is almost complete and it has invariably come to mean a political unity. Yet, it is necessary to place the nation in its historical context so as to understand the difference between nation and state."

In order to show the linkage between the nation and the state, Oommen describes the varieties of situations that can be found in the nation-states of the contemporary world. These situations may arise when:

(i) One nation constitutes one state;
(ii) Parts of several nations are grouped together to form a state;
(iii) A single nation is divided into two or more States.


(iv) One part of a nation is in one state and the other part in another state;
(v) A nation is divided into two states and are constituted as the part of these states alongwith other nations:
(vi) A number of nations join together to form a state, and
(vii) A group of migrants from various nations form a state. Thus, the popular tendency to equate nation with the State is not tenable.

The relationship between nation state and ethnicity is made clear by Oommen by conceptualising ethnicity as a 'product of conquest, colonialism and immigration' which has 'emerged through interaction between different peoples'. But, a nation generally refers to a group of people belonging to a particular region who have a legitimate moral claim to political authority over this region. A whole nation may get uprooted from its own territory and turn into an 'ethnie' or 'a people without a common territory and citizenship'. According to Oommen, ethnicity is due to the rupture between territory and other primordial attributes. The process through which a nation is transformed into an ethnic group and an 'ethnie' takes the shape of a nation, is an important subject of analysis because an 'ethnie' having legitimate political authority over a territory gives rise to a nation state. It is not possible in the methodological sense to point out the crucial attribute of ethnicity because its attributes are contextual. According to Oommen, "it is not so much the attributes of ethnicity which are important, but the property of the situation in which they obtain and operate. No particular attribute of ethnicity can assume stable importance, which varies with historical circumstances and existential conditions. In contrast, the

82. Ibid, p. 334.
83. Ibid, p.335.
84. Ibid, p. 335.
concept of homeland and territory are crucial in the case of a nation.\textsuperscript{85}

A nation undergoes the process of `ethnification' which it lacks the territory and legitimate claim to political authority over it. Thus, according to Oommen, ethnie nation and state have a processual relationship with the legitimate claim over a particular region an ethnie takes the form of a nation and with the possession of political rights, a nation becomes a political entity called State.\textsuperscript{86} An ethnic group can remain within a nation-state or be spread over more than one nation-state. Oommen feels that a state having different nations has multiple cultural centres. However, with the interaction and co-existence of various ethnic groups and nations certain new attributes may spring up that will give a "collective self-definition" and a "new meaning to them."\textsuperscript{87}

The concept of `pluralism' is based on the multi-national or polyethnich character of a social system. This idea of plural society is in opposition to the view, that favours consensus on common values as pre-condition to social integration.\textsuperscript{88} Furnivall observed that the ethnic groups in the plural societies mix but do not combine. Every group sticks to its own culture, language or religion. But it is a plural society in the sense that they exist separately within the same political unit. For him, nationalism in a plural society is a disruptive force and not a unifying one.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid. p. 336.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid. p. 336.
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. p. 337.
\textsuperscript{89} Furnivall, J.S., Colonial Policy and Practice, (New York, Univ. Press), 1956. p. 313.
Vanden Berghe has made a distinction between structural or social pluralism and cultural pluralism, while defining plural society. He defines plural society as a compartmentalization into quasi-independent sub-systems on the basis of cultural and/or social segmentation.\textsuperscript{90}

According to him, "Societies are pluralistic in so far as they are segmented into corporate groups that frequently although not necessarily, have different cultures or sub-cultures and in so far as their social structure is compartmentalized into analogous, parallel, non-complementary but distinguishable sets of institutions."\textsuperscript{91} In addition, he listed down some more characteristics frequently associated with pluralism such as,

1. Relative absence of value consensus.
2. Relative presence of cultural heterogeneity
3. Relative presence of conflict between the significant corporate groups.
4. Relative autonomy between parts of the social system.
5. Relative importance of coercion and economic interdependence as basis of social integration.
6. Political domination by one of the corporate groups over others.
7. Primacy of segmental, utilitarian, non-effective and functionally specific relationships between corporate groups and of total, non-utilitarian effective, diffuse ties within such groups.\textsuperscript{92} According to him, cultural pluralism


\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Race and Racism: A comparative Perspective}, J. (Willey and Sons, New York), 1967, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, p. 35.
springs from the existence of several ethnic groups or of distinct types of same culture such as class-based subcultures. Whereas, social or structural pluralism is present when "a society is structurally compartmentalized into analogous and duplicatory but culturally-alike sets of institutions, and into corporate groups which are differentiated on a basis other than culture." In an extreme case the subsystem of a plural society may have very specific spheres of interaction such as being under a common political or economic system.

**Ethnicity And Minorities**

The meaning of the term 'minority group' is to be made clear in order to avoid the confusion between the term 'minority group' and the 'ethnic group' which are often used interchangeably. Wirth defines minority as 'a group of people, who because of their physical or cultural characteristics are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who, therefore, regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination.' He holds the view that the presence of a minority group in a particular society has relevance in the context of the existence of a "dominant group" which enjoys a privileged status in the society. Laponce makes a division of the minorities into two categories, viz., minorities by will and minorities by force. He defines minorities from a political viewpoint as 'a group of people who, because of a common racial, linguistic or national heritage which singles them out from the politically dominant cultural group, fear that they may either be prevented from integrating themselves into a national

93. Ibid. p.35.
community of their choice or be obliged to do so at the expense of their identity." In a recent publication of the United Nations, it is stated that "an ethnic religious or linguistic minority is a group numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the state to which it belongs and possessing physical or historical characteristics, a religion or language different from those of the rest of the population." 97

Thus, from the above definitions of the minority group and the previously discussed views about ethnicity, it is clear that though these two concepts have many features common to them, an ethnic group is not necessarily a minority group. The vital difference between the two being the deprived nature of the minority group. An ethnic group can be a deprived one or a privileged one. The deprived ethnics get transformed into minorities when ethnicity becomes a political device for them. Thus, there exists clearly a distinction between the ethnicity of the deprived and the ethnicity of the privileged. When the State, dominated by a particular ethnic group, pursues certain policies as "affirmative action" for the benefit of the group concerned, it gives rise to a sense of relative deprivation among other ethnic groups. So it paves the way for the rise of nationalism in the nature of majority minority complex in society which undermines the unity and integrity of the state.

**Ethnic Nationalism and National Integration**

Nationalism may be defined as a sentiment, loyalty or sympathy which binds a group of people together through common institutions and culture and thus creates an unity among them. In other words, nationalism is a sentiment leading to the deepening of group or national consciousness and unity on the basis of common ideals


and belief. Ethnic nationalism emanates from an aspiration for the regeneration of a collective identity, unity and autonomy and from the demands for popular participation and cultural authenticity, including a return to symbolic roots, past myths, and historical memories. Ethnic nationalism may also be precipitated by the ideological-political differences between the core (or dominant) and peripheral (or dominated) ethnic communities and by status stratification among various ethnic and the general insecurities or feelings of exploitation and oppression that this may create. Over centralization, a persisting sense of solidarity with a community, and a feeling of rootedness in a territory and its lifestyle are traditional factors contributing to the generation of ethnic ethos and, thus, ethnic nationalism. Finally, the level of ethnic assimilation in the greater national culture also impacts on ethnic nationalism. Generally speaking, the lower the level of assimilation, the more intense ethnic nationalism would be.

Political mobilization of all ethnic groups involves formation of an ideology based on 'values' of nationality and solidarity with a mass appeal. In a multi-ethnic state, the prevalence of a dominant group's regulating others into a secondary position, results in some kind of discontent in society. Ultimately, the state and its policies are a potential benefit to some groups and communities, but they are also a threat to other groups. The process of modernization unfolds related social changes in the nature of ethnic consciousness and group solidarity within the society. This paves the way for politicization of ethnicity and assertion of the group interests and aspirations. So, in the Third World states, the interplay of ethnicity and ethnic

98. Royal Institute of International Affairs, 'Nationalism'. London, Oxford University Press, 1933, pp. XVI-XX.

movements results in the "competitive-turned-conflictual assertion of ethnic nationalism against state centred nationalism."\(^{100}\)

National integration is used for the process of increasing governmental capability to penetrate throughout the nation. When it is referred as political integration, it is taken as a process leading to a political community a condition in which people recognize mutual obligations and some notion of a common interest and ultimately form a political community. In the presence of different groups in a society, the separate group identity and interests are articulated in the arena of the state in the nature of elite competition for power. Hence ethnic groups develop their own self-consciousness and identity in the competition for state power and resources.\(^{101}\) Therefore, a pluralistic society, where different groups compete in the arena of state, there arises the conflict between the group interests and the state policy. The groups sought their primordial sentiments which run counter to the civil politics of the state. Moreover, different ethnic groups, seeking to forward their own interests clash with each other. It is only through 'an integrative revolution' by which all the ethnic groups can be integrated to the state as a whole.\(^{102}\)

So, broadly speaking, ethnicity emerges as a dividing force due to the failure of national integration. It appears as a disintegrative factor as an obstacle to national unity and development. This problem of ethnicity seems to be acute in traditional and


modernizing societies. In these societies, there has been an increasing tendency to rediscover or invent ethnicity for "personal identification, emotional security and communal anchorage.\textsuperscript{103}

**State Building and Nation Building**

State-building though closely associated with nation-building, is generally viewed separately as an institutional or structural development such as "the creation and concentration of authority and emphasis on the role of government in the social process.\textsuperscript{104} Recognizing the authority of a government over a specific territory and the people who live there constitutes the formal establishment of a state. Such change is usually accompanied by a recognition of the sovereign and independent status of the new state by the world community. A territorial framework, a bureaucratic and military infrastructure and a body of political institutions represent the state. For most practical purposes, the state is complete and in gear to proceed with its multifarious activities.

Almond and Powell consider penetration and integration as the problems of state-building. They believe that the state-building function may arise out of a threat from external environment as well as from internal revolutionary pressures challenging the stability and survival of the existing political system. State-building occurs when the political elite create new structures and organizations designed to penetrate society in order to regulate the behaviour and extract a larger volume of


resources with the development of a centralized and penetrative bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{15} State-building functions, therefore, include the concentration of authority, maintenance of law and order, economic development and the establishment of an efficient administrative apparatus.

Nation-building, though not possible without state-building, is viewed as a cultural or psychological aspect of political development. It is defined as a process through which people transfer their petty commitments and loyalties from groups, tribes, villages, regions on petty principalities to a larger single national system. Though complimentary to each other, it is useful to view them separately. For there are a number of cases in which in spite of centralized and penetrative bureaucracies, commitments and loyalties have not emerged. Failure to enhance nation-building policies in spite of success in other sectors endanger the viability of the state. There occurs an imbalance in the distribution of power among the numerous sub-national groups and only one or two groups monopolize administrative, economic and political power. Politics is characterized as the politics of status and linkage between elite and other groups is found lacking. The elites seem reluctant to share their power with newly mobilized groups. The sub-national feelings are not integrated into the national mainstream.

So the new state has to establish a structure of obedience among the people because no state can hope to function in the long run through the employment of coercion alone. Obedience is relevant not only in relation to the general requirements of law and order, but also for the regulation and orderly sustenance of the production, ownership and distribution of the material needs of society. It has to create a

structure of loyalty which transcends other emotional bonds to which individuals are tied: family, religious community, and so on. Most centrally it is the educational system that can be employed to build a nation compatible with the state. Nation-building, however, is a dialectical process: on the one hand, it is universal in relation to smaller units within the state, on the other, it is a new particularist identity which seeks to connect the individual to the state, but distance him from the world around.

Nation-building, therefore, refers to both conscious ideological propaganda and political policy as well as the more general efforts at economic and political development which are expected to create conditions facilitating the expansion of equal opportunities to all citizens. Both types of processes, however, proceed in the context of existing class structures, internal power distribution, and external linkages of the various groups. This means that allocation of resources, employment opportunities, and influence over the state will hardly be even and just for all groups, classes and people.¹⁰⁶

This unevenness may actually be even more noticeable in the ideological sphere of nation-building. A language has to be selected to effect communication between the state and people, and emotional symbols have to be chosen which can be shared by the nation-in-formation. Obviously the selection of symbols and language is the most sensitive.¹⁰⁷ The ruling elites, therefore, cannot ignore with impunity the existing cultural heritage, social composition and other cultural factors in the selection


of emotional symbols.

On the whole, it can be said that though State and nation-building are two different processes they are complementary to each other. In order to achieve the objective of both, a careful balance is needed. Therefore, the developing countries like Sri Lanka should be aware of this bitter fact and try to maintain this rather delicate and difficult balance. Unless carefully balanced, they work at cross purposes and undermine each other.

As discussed earlier, ethnicity plays an important role in the nation-building process of the developing states in the Third World. These states with a weak socio-political structure strive to consolidate by forging a domestic political and social consensus "to create a nation so that the state and nation become co-terminus." But in multi-ethnic societies, the state uses ethnicity to maintain political order by exploiting ethnic divisions to its advantage. This undermines the stability of the state. Racial ethnic divergences are sharpened to point that the state only commands the 'conflictual loyalties' from the masses. People sharing common characteristics such as language or religion do not necessarily share a sense of common political destiny. The state system generates a broad range of economic and political interests to which people may attach greater importance than to abstract unity based on culture. The preservation of their interests may entail the sustenance of the state. Thus, people united in culture may neither give priority to the state in which they live, and share no or little enthusiasm for its amalgamation into some greater political unit.

On the other hand, state in principle, being an organization which society has itself established to manage its affairs is bound to devise all such conditions to create a structure of loyalty joining it with society. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the state must, of necessity, seek a tightly-knit linkage between itself and the people. In fact even mass participatory democracies do not always include a high level of participation of the citizenry in the political process. Communities and groups may choose to abstain from involvement in the democratic process. In short, state may rather choose to refrain from active and concerted nation-building and prefer a more pliable relationship with the population.

A direction towards greater integration and assimilation, however, may be taken by a state as it embarks upon a programme of development and modernization. In a culturally homogeneous society, nation-building may not be problematic. In a heterogeneous society, the need to build a strong socio-political base may become imperative. Nationalism and patriotism are virtues relevant mostly in connection with the external interests of a state. Conscious nation-building in some form, therefore, becomes imperative for the state. However, as Hettne correctly points out, the nation-building process carries with it the possibility of failure. The emergence of separatism among sections of the indigenous population, therefore, is reflective, more of a serious crisis of the state, rather than of some innate tendency of cultural minorities to seek exit from it. 109