Chapter IV

Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka and Cross Border Terrorism

For almost two decades from 1983-2001, Sri Lanka be involved in a bitter civil war that comprised a number of different phases and even different protagonists. The Sinhalese comprising 11 million people of 74 per cent of the population in 1981. The Sinhalese claim to be descendants of prince vijaya and his band immigrants from Northern India, but it is probable that original group of Sinhalese immigrants intermarried with indigenous inhabitants. The Sinhalese gradually absorbed a wide variety of castes or tribal groups from the island and from Southern India during the last 2,500 years. In 1988 approximately 93 percent of the Sinhala speakers were Buddhist and 99.5 per cent of the Buddhist in Sri Lanka spoke Sinhala. In 1981 Tamils numbered 1,886,872, or 12.7 per cent of the population. Tamil is spoken by at least 40, million people in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and by millions more in neighbouring states of Southern India and among Tamil emigrants throughout the world. Some 80 per cent of the Sri Lanka and 90 per cent of the Indian Tamils are Hindus Muslims who make up approximately 7, per cent of the population.¹

The consequences of the war have been devastating. The Tamil civilians face the brunt of the conflict because the in waged in the Tamil homeland already 65000 Tamils have perished and hundreds of thousands have either fled the country or are internally displaced. Despite the fact that the Southern Sri Lanka did not experience the war in direct form, it had nevertheless also suffered heavily from a violent campaign of insurgency and counter-insurgency between 1987 and 1990. That had a particularly devastating effect on the civilian population of the North-East, most of who lived through extended

periods of acute physical and economic insecurity, and suffered repeated episodes of dislocation. The civil war in Sri Lanka is predicated on two basic issues that surfaced during the early years of independence. It uses the metaphor of ‘surfacing’ deliberately both issues are a concatenation of pre colonial differences and shifts there in during colonial period, namely shifts in the relationship between the two main populations inhabiting Sri Lanka, the so-called Sinhala and the so-called tamil.2

In the South there are suffered constant spillover effects of the war in the North-East and was regular stream of devastating suicide attacks and assassination to constant atmosphere fear and tension.3

4.1. Historical Background to Present Ethnic Conflict

The present racial tension between the Sinhalese and Tamil populations in Sri Lanka has deep historical roots, dating back to the first century A.D. It is claimed that the Sinhala race was founded in Sri Lanka in the fifth century B.C. by an exiled prince from Northern India and that the Sinhalese are of Aryan origin. The Tamils are Dravidians and came from Southern India. There are two separate Tamil communities in Sri Lanka; the “Jaffna” or “Ceylon Tamils” and the “Indians” or “Estate Tamils”. They are both of the same ethnic origin and speak the same language. The “Ceylon Tamils” came at the date disputed by historians. But there were Tamil incursions from South India at least by the first century; A.D. major Tamil invasions took place from 700 A.D to 1300 A.D. culminating in the establishment of the Tamil kingdom in the North.

The roots of the Sinhala-Tamil problem go back more than two thousand years. The contrary historical perceptions of the two communities have occurred their perceptions of the present problems so much that the rational dialogue between them seems well-high impossible. The Sinhalese hug their beliefs, their

2. Ibid
3. Ibid
prejudices buttressed by the religious sermons of the Bhikkhus and by the lessons in the school textbooks that Sinhalese Aryan by race was the original inhabitants of Sri Lanka having migrated from North India 2500 years ago. Buddhism in their religion and Sinhalese is their language. Sri Lanka is the haven for both the religion and the language and the Sinhalese were ordained by Lord Buddha himself to protect the race and the religion.4

The Tamils are looked down upon as invaders from South India and their language, Tamil being of the Dravidian stock exacerbates the racial divide. The myth is maintained that it was because of the recurrent Tamil invasions from south India.

The identification of the Buddhist religion with Sinhalese nationalism is also an important element in understanding the roots of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka is regarded as one of the major world canters of Buddhism. It is widely believed that Buddha himself consecrated Sri Lanka; a relic of the Buddha’s tooth is enshrined in Kandy in central Sri Lanka, Buddhist temples abound. The Sinhalese population is overwhelmingly Buddhist. The Tamil speaking population is predominantly Hindu although there is a substantial minority of Muslims and Christians, the constitution provides that the republic of Sri Lanka “shall give to Buddhism the foremost place” and that it is the duty of the state to protect and foster the Buddhist faith. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in the constitution but other religions are not mentioned.

Buddhist historical chronicles report frequent wars between Sinhalese and Tamil kings. At the time of the Portuguese conquest in 1621 an independent Tamil kingdom existed in the North. The “Indian Tamils” were brought to Ceylon as indentured labourers by the British to work on the tea and rubber plantations in the 19th and early 20th century. At present, Ceylon Tamils

constitute 11% of the population of Sri Lanka and Indian Tamils 9%. The two Tamil communities have remained largely separate with the Ceylon Tamils concentrated in the Northern part of the island, particularly in the area known as the Jaffna peninsula. A substantial number of Ceylon Tamils however are resident in Colombo and some Southern areas. The Indian Tamils are primarily resident in the hill country in the central part of Sri Lanka. The Ceylon Tamils are, in general, prosperous and well educated groups; the Indian Tamils live and work in conditions of misery and poverty. At independence in 1948 the Indian Tamils were deprived of citizenship and disenfranchised. Under the agreement with India in 1964, Sri Lanka agreed to repatriate 60% of the Indian Tamils and to grant citizenship to the remaining 40%. The agreement has been only partially carried out. The ethnic conflict, until recently, has been largely between the Ceylon Tamils and the Sinhalese. In August 1981, however, and to an extent in 1977 the Indian Tamils were attacked when communal violence broke out.  

The traditional Tamil area in Sri Lanka – the Northern and Eastern provinces of the island-being the dry zone unlike the low country Sinhalese area which is the fertile wet-zone, the Ceylon Tamils necessarily turned to state employment and professions much more than a plantation agriculture and trade in their search for new avenues of employment. While the low country Sinhalese exploited economic opportunities in trade and plantation, the Tamils turned to government in professional services. The establishment of an efficient network of missionary schools in the tamil homeland, unlike in the Sinhalese – dominated areas, under the British Raj, facilitated the spread of higher-English education among the Tamils who were thus well equipped for government

employment and professional jobs. Inevitably therefore the British government favoured the Ceylon Tamils with high positions in administration, even in business, with the result that they stood disproportionately represented in public services. But since the low country Sinhalese were conspicuously successful in exploiting the economic opportunities available in trade and plantation, no significant competition developed, at least till the end of the nineteenth century, between them and the Tamils for finding berths in public services. When by the early 20th century, the low country Sinhalese also leaned towards state employment, unhealthy competition began between them and the Tamils who resented this new encroachment upon their hitherto regarded exclusive jurisdiction. Hence, the inevitable clash of interests ensued.

Situation tends to worsen after the island regained its independence in 1948. Since then, the successive Sinhalese dominated governments have passed legislation discriminating against the Tamils in the field of language, educational opportunities, employment and religion and have encouraged Sinhalese settlers to colonize the traditional Tamil territories. The Ceylon citizenship act no. 18 of 15 November 1984 left the Indian Tamils virtually stateless, and, therefore, sans the right of franchise, the scheme of citizenship either by decent or by registration as embodied in the above act was very much restrictive. Citizenship was in effect, restricted to the persons having family connections with the country for at least two generations. Most of the Indian Tamil immigrants found it very difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the Sinhalese authorities that their fathers were born in Sri Lanka by the production of birth certificates. Hence, the inferior status of statelessness hung like Damocles, Sword over the heads of a large segment of the Indian Tamil population as a result of the act.  

6 The Constitution of 1978 has since eliminated the Distinction Between citizenship by descent and citizenship by Registration by providing for the treatment of citizens by registration at par with Sri Lankas nationals by descent. The Constitution eliminated second class citizenship and created only one status for all citizens.
The discriminatory government policy towards the Ceylon Tamils in matters of language, education and employment, the vary fields of advancement traditionally higher priced by them, produced an adverse reaction among them.

4.2. Language Policy - An Area of Discrimination

The Sinhalese perception of the problem is largely based on the concept of the “historical polity”, that Sri Lanka is a special haven for the Sinhalese language. The language policy of the Sri Lankan government was treated by the Tamils as an instrument of ethnic discrimination. This concept is augmented by a sense of historical deprivation during the British colonial era. English had been the official language or the language of administration. English has then also been the language of professions, commerce, higher education, and until in to the 1930s, even of politics.7

For obvious reasons, those literate in English enjoyed a privileged social status and singular occupational opportunities. In contrast to the early Sinhala nationalism with its battle-cry for the assertion of the new collective identity based on the Sinhala language. Tamil perceptions until 1956 were greatly coloured by the nature of their leadership during the twentieth centuary saw Sri Lanka only in terms of a modern nation state as described by western liberal scholars the creation of the nation-state as a political unit transcending ethnic, religious and linguistic differences.

Needless to say, such a status and such opportunities then favoured the educationally advanced Tamils who learnt English in missionary institutions, opened in the Tamil dominated north while the Sinhalese, who were denied the same facilities for learning English, consequently remained educationally backward, compared with the Tamils, and lagged behind them. The Sinhalese, who constitute the highest percentage of their country’s population found the

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climate intolerable and turned towards taking steps for changing the status quo in the existing educational policy. A ‘Swabhasa’ (or own language) movement prior to independence had led to the decision that English was gradually to be replaced as official language by both Sinhalese and Tamils. Shortly, after independence, however, a national resurgence among the Sinhalese, with roots extending back to the late 19th century, burst into the political arena, with the result that demand of the majority of the Sinhalese turned from ‘Swabhasa’ to ‘Sinhalese’ only as the official language of the island. An official language bill was accordingly introduced by the (SWRD) Bandaranaike government in 1956 in the Sri Lankan parliament which finally passed the bill on 6 July 1956. The bill was entered in to the statue book under the title “official language Act no. 33 0f 1956” which declared Sinhalese as the sole official language of Ceylon. The Act, no doubt, favoured the Sinhalese - Speaking people who would now have the most desired professional careers open to them. Their satisfaction was that “under the colonial rule, disproportionate numbers of Tamils has entered government service, particularly in the administration and professional grades, assisted by the early availability of education in the English language in the Tamil speaking north. The Sinhala only, demand for propelled in part by the desire to correct, and compensate for (often grossly exaggerated), the communal imbalance in government employment during the colonial era.\(^8\)

The official language act of 1956 stipulated that its provisions should be implemented by regulations to be made by the Minister in charge of language policy. The regulations under the Act of 1956 known as the Tamil language (special provisions) regulations approved by parliament in 1966 when the bill was being debated in the House of Representatives, there is serious communal riots occurred in Colombo and the eastern province. On 5 June disturbances occurred at Colombo when about 200 Tamil led by 12 MPs staged a silent

styagraha demonstration of protest outside the parliament building. They were assaulted, even stoned, by the Sinhalese mobs. Rioting then spread through the city, mainly Tamils were assaulted, and the shops of the Ceylon and Indian Tamils were looted.9

The Tamils however, saw the legislation and the emotions behind it as a threat not only to their very means of earning a living. They would be at a great disadvantage in future in securing employment in the administration where knowledge of Sinhalese would be a sine guenon. Language being now the determinant of national consciousness, their national integrity and ethnic identity stood alarmingly jeopardized.

The federal party reacted by threatening in December 1956 that it would launch Styagraha on 20 August 1957 in support of four demands, one of which was the repeal of the official language act and the grant of equality of status of Tamil language with Sinhalese to persuade the federal party to abandon the proposed styagraha campaign. Today’s ethnic alignments cannot simply be read off from the animosities identified in different parts of the chronicles. The main formal criterion of membership of the rival Sinhala and Tamil communities today is linguistic, but in the colonial period the most silent identities - at least as far as riots and disturbances were concerned - were religious. Catholics who were pitted against Buddhist and Hindus in colonial conflicts are now divided into Sinhala Catholics and Tamil Catholics. Yet, Muslims a group who are predominantly tamil - speaking and as such might be thought to have suffered as much as anyone from linguistic discrimination since 1956, have stubbornly maintaining their ethnic separateness from their fellow tamil speakers and have

pursued their own distinctive political course in recent years, while remaining aloof until very recently from the central ethnic conflict.\textsuperscript{10}

A schematic explanation of the immediate historical root of the current tragedy would have to start in what Rogers describes as a ‘age of mature colonialism’, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Victorian racial theory held that the world was divided into distinct races or kinds of people, and both Rogers and Gunawardana trace the growing dominance of this assumption in both colonial and Sri Lankan understanding of the islands history. As Sri Lankans were gradually admitted to the higher levels of colonial government. It was assumed that each section of the population could only be effectively represented by a person of the same ‘kind’. So, for example, in the 1980 a move to allow separate representation for Muslims on the legislative council was opposed by a leading tamil figure who argued that they were ‘really’ only Tamils; the Muslims responded with arguments ‘proving’ their Arabian descent. The incident displays in exemplary from the effect of a particular set of colonial assumptions which linked the possibility of access to political power to racial criteria, and looked history as the arbiter or racial authenticity. What the colonial assumptions ignored was the huge social and cultural gap which existed between the small elite of wealthy English educated Sri Lankans - supposedly the natural representatives of their various ‘races’ and the mass of the population. The second factor in the making of the modern politics of identity is the composition of Sri Lanka’s political class and enduring relationship with its political subjects. In other colonial contexts the political ambitions of the elites forced them to build an anti-colonial alliance with the population. As Nairn puts it is in analysis of the global rise of nationalism. The new middle class intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite the masses into history and the invitation card had to

\textsuperscript{10} Kearney, Robert, Op. cit, p, 8.
be written in a language they understood. Exactly how that invitation card was written, just what this mutually intelligible language consisted of, varied with the particular context of different nationalism. In India, congress had to win the populations participations in the mass struggle against a government reluctant to hand over power. For congress leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, this meant using symbols and rhetoric which would, they hoped appeal to all sections of the population. The fact that all the trials, tribulations, problems of regional opposition, and recent dangerous toying with the forces of internal division - congress is still seen to some extent as the embodiment of national political will is the measure of their achievement. In Sri Lanka there was no such mass struggle against colonial rule. The colonial was granted universal franchise in 1931 to the dismay of at least some elements within the political elite. These elite had to enlist the new voters - the masses - not in order to forge the widest possible alliance against the colonial ruler, but instead in order to win over sections to support their own particular local candidature.¹¹

The conflict is ethnic in organisation, with both separtits and dogma producing an era ripe with plenty of historical background leading to 20th century conflict including the terrorist preying upon the innocent. Given its history, the small country combines some of the dynamics of the Indo - Pakistan struggle, thankfully without the nuclear option, as well as separatist problems.¹²

Sri Lanka has benefited from the traditions of the rule of law and constitutional governments that emerged during 150 years of British colonial rule. At least until the early 1970s, these traditions fostered the development of a political system characterised by broad popular participation in the political process, generally strict observance of legal guarantees of human and civil

¹². Sharma, Dr. Ghanshyam, Yadav Dr. S. N, “Encyclopaedia of Contemporary World Conflicts”, Volume 1, Jnanda Prakash (P&D), 48372 24, Ansari Road, Daryagang New Delhi, 2009, p 415.
rights, and an orderly succession of elected governments without the intervention, as has occurred in several; neighbouring states, of the military.

By the early 1980s however many observed feared for the future of Sri Lanka’s democratic institutions. Some observers contended that constitutional government, rather than curbing the arbitrary use of political power, seemed itself to be shaped by aggressively narrow sectarian interests whose manipulation of the constitutional amendment process excluded large numbers of persons from politics and contributed to ethnic polarisation and violence. To put it bluntly, Sri Lanka is facing a crisis, of perhaps their own making. And quite familiar to reader by now, the seeds of the problem lie in ethnic groups found in the country; the Sinhalese, the Tamils, the Muslims and the burghers. Language, culture and border create the dissent in Sri Lanka, less so than race or religion, however, integrated those two have become with the cultures over the years.

The Sinhalese perception of the communal problem is largely based on the concept of “historical polity”, that Sri Lanka is special heaven for the Sinhalese language and the Buddhist religion. The concept is augmented by a sense of “historical deprivation” during the colonial era and a belief in protective legislation as a remedy to correct historical wrong. The concept of “historical polity” has its basis in the myths and legends of ancient and medieval Sinhalese chronicles. The myths are also expressions of the self perceived historical role of the Sinhalese nation.

It is also said that vijaya had Aryan ancestors. The perception that a Sinhalese form a distinct “lion” race whose homeland is Sri Lanka provided a basis for an assertive independence from the Indian peninsula. Historians have

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13. Ibid
pointed out to the fact that the term “Sinhala”, which was initially a political term referring only to the ruling family became a phrase implying a separate racial, cultural group by the sixteenth century. The notion that the Sinhalese were “Aryan” is constantly employed to differentiate between the Dravidian tails and the Sinhalese majority. Again it has been noted that the concept of “Aryan” is rarely mentioned in Sinhalese historical wiring and it a product of nineteenth centuary linguistic analysis by Max Muller, Cald – well etc. Nevertheless, despite dynasties of inter-marriage of these communities, the belief that the ancestors of the Sinhala race were from Bengal of the North-West of India with an Aryan “pedigree” formed the basis of much of the racialist writing of the 1920s and 1930s. Racial differentiation was thus introduced along with religion and language as a basic element of present day ethnic conflict.

The second component of the Sinhalese national identity which affects perfection with regard to the communal problem, is the belief that the Sinhalese are defenders of the “the Sasana”, the Buddhist faith Gananath Obeysekera writes that two ideas developed very early in Sri Lankan history, that Sri Lanka was consecrated by the Buddhist himself and the Buddhist relics would become associated with Sinhalese sovereignty and the legitimacy of kingship. The relics symbolised the idea of the Sinhala Buddhist state and gave credence to the belief that the king was a future Buddha or bodhisattva, Obeysekera focuses on Buddhism as being the principle “cultural maker of the all inclusive moral community” of the Sinhala. According to the Obeysekera and other social scientists, Buddhism in Sri Lanka is the most important sociological mechanism which has created a sense of group ethnic consciousness. However, during

16. Ibid pp23-24
colonial rule, Buddhism lost its prestige along with political and economic power. Therefore nineteenth and twentieth century nationalism saw a period of Buddhist revivalism which was more aggressive than pre-colonial Buddhism in that it was an attempt to reconstruct and recurrent a disintegrating ethnic identity. As a result Sinhala Buddhist “claims Sri Lanka as a Sinhala Buddhist nation”\(^\text{17}\). The group consciousness which evolved as a result of the nationalist movement was a progressive mobilisation against colonisation but it was not multi-national nationalism. Instead it was an exclusively Sinhala expression of historical rights and values. Though served the purpose of mass mobilisation it also created barriers to a pluralistic solution to ethnic issues in Sri Lanka.

The third component to the Sinhalese Buddhist identity which in recent years has reached paramount importance is the uniqueness of the Sinhala language. The aspect of the identity along with racial classification of united Sinhala Christians in the assertion of what is believed to be historically deprived rights. It is recognised that until, recently language was never conceived of as the crucial criterion of the basis of the Sinhala identity. The ancient chronically were written in classical Pali and even during the reign of Parakramabahu VI, cosmopolitan culture and fluency in many language ages was considered an important aspect of a scholar\(^\text{18}\).

The Sinhalese Buddhist chronicles which are taken as authoritative sources of ancient history - the Mahavamsa and Culavamsa - present the view that “defeating Tamils is for the glory of Buddhism”. The myth of king Duttugumunu (2\(^\text{nd CENTURY}\) B.C) who defeated the Tamil king elara and who marched into battle with five hundred ascetic monks to ‘bring glory to the doctrine of Buddhism’ is an important aspect of Sri Lankan’s political mythology. Infact, in this depiction, there is explicit justification of war and

\(^{17}\) Obeysekera, Op. cit, pp 279-313
\(^{18}\) Gunawardana, Op. cit, p 12
killing of unbelievers. The presence of South Indian rule whether chola, pandya or pallava from the tenth century onwards had conveyed to the Sinhalese majority the need for a historical sense of vigilance against Tamil influence.

In contrast to the early Sinhala nationalism with its battle - cry for the assertion of a new collective identity based on the Sinhala language and religion, early Tamil nationalists envisaged a totally different society. Tamil perceptions until 1956 were greatly coloured by the nature of their leadership during the colonial era. The British educated Tamil leadership in the early twentieth century saw Sri Lanka only in terms of, a “modern” nation state as described by western liberal scholars-the creation of a national-state asapolitical unit transcending ethnic, religious and linguistic differences. The Tamil leaders were greatly influenced by British liberal, utilitarian philosophy. While there Sinhalese counterparts were begning to react to the cultural impact of the west, they were only interested in negotiating “home rule” and a liberal republic.

The approach of the Tamil leadership to ethnic conflict may have been conditioned by their perception of Sri Lanka as, a truly, (plural society) and not a special haven for Sinhalese Buddhist culture. The classical description of a plural society is given by J.S. Furnivall in his colonial policy and practice. “Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways ....with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately within the same political unit”.

The classical doctrine of a plural society did not acknowledged the ‘uniqueness’ of any community but accepted the theory of separate but equal communities living in a peaceful equilibrium. The doctrine inevitably led to a demand for a secular society with equality in law and for the political sharing of power among ethnic groups. It may be this perception of ‘pluralism’ as a

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‘sharing of power’ among communities, and not equal suffrage, that made the
tamil leadership request communal riots balanced representation and sections in
the constitution with regard to the protection of minorities, all except the latter
were refused by a soulbury commission, though numerical weightage was
conceded in actual electoral delimitation.

By 1956, this classical concept of pluralism was radically challenged and
over-ridden by Sinhalese perceptions of Sri Lanka as a special haven for the
Sinhala language and the Buddhist religion. The disenfranchisement of the
estate Tamils prevented Tamil voting power (33% of legislature in 1948 to 20
% in 1970) from effectively challenging Sinhalese policy on language and
religion. In the face of their exclusion from political power, Tamil perceptions
of their identity began to change. The vision of a minority operating in a
pluralistic society was gradually transformed into a vision of a separate
historical polity, with a territorial base and distinctive manifestations of a race,
religion and language.20

4.3. The Roots of Communal Conflict

Communal violence first appeared in Sri Lanka in 1958, ten years after
independence. The early history of Ceylon was replete with the history of wars
between Sinhalese and Tamil kingdom, but the 1958 conflict was the first in
which individuals of one ethnic attacked members of the other group.

There is growing opinion that communal conflict cannot be solved and
can only be managed. Let history be the arbiter of that question, the task before
Sri Lankan leadership is to improve communal relations between the Sinhalese
and Tamils to the point where the measure thrust of state power and initiative
can be released away from communal issues toward tackling of enormous
problems of development, of creating a wealthy and just society. The first step

20. Tiruchelvam, N, “The making and Unmaking of Constitution”, in the Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies,
is to realise that terrorism is but a symptom, a vicious one of a deeper malady that afflicts the country that spawned it. The key to improving Sinhalese - Tamils relations is not to focus on merely wiping out terrorism, a symptom, but to get rid of the cause of terrorism.

The roots of communal conflict lie in the differing perceptions Sinhalese and Tamils which arises from the fact of a separate Sinhalese identity that over the centuries grew and hardened in opposition to that of Tamils. The fact is that the Sinhalese and Tamils speak different languages, and have different cultures and interpretation of what happens. Thus, the victory of Duttugumunu meant that the defeat of elara; the period of Sinhalese decay in Rajarata corresponded to the rise of tamil power in the Jaffna peninsula; the historical privileges/rights of one community have smelled of discrimination of the other; democratic majorities to the Sinhalese has meant the despotism of a communal majority to the Tamils; and “terrorists” to the Sinhalese are ‘boys’ to the Tamils. Such striking differences to perception are not limited to Sri Lanka. In Northern Ireland, for instance, when Catholics and Protestants were asked whether they are aware of discriminatory practices, over 75% of the Catholics said yes while a similar proportion of Protestants said no.\textsuperscript{21}

The next outbreak of communal violence occurred in 1977, only a few months after the election of the present government. The violence began as an aftermath 1977 elections and was first directed against the loosing political party but quickly became communal violence. It appeared to be related to events occurring during the preceding administration but was also linked to the first evidence of political violence by Tamil youths. During the 1970-1977 government of Mrs. Bandaranaike there has been increasing tension between

Tamils and Sinhalese, particularly between the primarily Sinhalese police force in the Northern Tamil area and Tamil youths.

As mentioned earlier the “official language” act was adopted in 1956 and agitation by an extremist Buddhist group resulted in the failure to adopt provisions for the use of Tamil. The Tamil launched a “Styagraha” or peaceful protest which resulted in the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam pact making certain concessions to the Tamils. The pact was not carried out after another peaceful protest, this time by Buddhists. According to Commentator, the schedule Tamil national convention and “an announcement that the Sinhalese was killed in the East by a Tamil (although not for political reasons) sparked for nation-wide communal riots”. Accentuated by false rumours, criminal elements took advantage of the break down in law and order to murder, loot and plunder. The violence continued unabated for six days, May 2nd to May 27th (SIC). The spread of communal violence resulted in a tremendous problem of refugees”.

Hundreds of persons, primarily Tamils, were killed in this first episode of communal violence. Over 25,000 Tamil refugees were relocated from Sinhalese area of Tamil areas in the North. The government was criticised for failing to declare a state of emergency early enough. From the point of view the violence of the youths and the demand for separation were the consequence of increasing discrimination against them. The allegation was the reaction to the Tamil demand for a separate state.22

4.4. Communal Identity and Conflict

In communal terms the question then become “who are we” and “who are they”. More by their actions that their swords the Sinhalese mobsters with swords and firebrands in hand were asserting their awareness of identity, that they were Sinhalese and belonged to community that had lost thirteen of its

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members to the Tamil collectively. While at their deadly work the mobs cheered the passing convoys of the armed forces, who often cheered back, and made it known that they were destroying Tamil establishments that a gesture of communal solidarity and vengeance to retaliate the killing of the thirteen. In the communally sensitive and threat-laden atmosphere of that week in July communal pressures so escalated that individuals were emotionally impelled into aligning their behaviour with that of the community as a whole; Sinhalese peacefully and tolerant in ordinary life, united emotionally with hoodlums.

Communal identity is an extension of individuals identity that gives people a sense of belonging. Identity, to quote the American social psychologist Erik Erikson, “is a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture”. Apparent in the search for riots in Africa by American blacks in the search for a communal past that will lend continuity to the individual life. Even a name can be used to associate an individual who can be anyone with a sense of belonging of time and place, and with unique values and behavioural standards. Communal identity eases the problems of anonymity and weakness.

No community can maintain a viable identity without symbols and values that point to a distinctive identity. In 1981 even the armed forces stationed in the north recognised, unconsciously perhaps, the importance the communal symbols when they burned down the Jaffna public library and destroyed status of Tamil heroes and poets. Some symbols, language for instance, are relevant to differentiate between groups. Others such as caste hierarchies are meaningful only within the group and have little relevance to outsiders. When reinforced by a co-extensive history, language is usually the key marker of distinctive identity, and consequently is focus of communal loyalty. In addition to its obvious role in communications, language has a powerful emotional aspect that
stems from its particular sound and familiarity as the mode of conveyance through the centuries of the thoughts and experience of the community.\textsuperscript{23}

The Sinhalese speakers constitute 70\% of the population of Sri Lanka while the Tamils are about 20\%. The Muslims who speak Tamil but consider themselves a group apart of 7\%. The overwhelming majority of the Sinhalese are Buddhist and the Tamils are Hindu. The Sinhalese population speak an Indo-European language (Sinhala) while the Tamil speak a Dravidian one. Underlying language and religious differences - Buddhist versus Hindu - are strong cultural and racial similarities. Physically the two groups cannot be differentiated. Though the initial Sinhala migrants were probably Indo-Europeans language speakers who arrived over 25,000 years ago, practically all later arrivals were South Indians (mostly Tamil speakers) who were assimilated into the Sinhalese Buddhist community. The South Indian influence is omnipresent among Buddhist. On a level of popular religiosity Buddhist propitiate Hindu gods like Vishnu, and Skanda, the son of Shiva. However the Buddhist view these gods have totally subservient to the Buddha while the Tamils view the Buddha as an avatar of Vishnu. Kinship and marriage patterns among the Sinhalese are also part of a larger Dravidian pattern. It is these cultural and subdoctrinal similarities that permitted the assimilation of South Indians through long periods of historical time, into the Sinhalese Buddhist social structure.

The core of the Sinhala identity was Buddhist; the destiny of the ethnic group and that of the religion were inseparable. Myths and historical events conformed the twin facets of this identity. Historically, almost all the invasions of Sri Lanka came from South Indian kingdoms. Thus opposing the Sinhala Buddhist identity was that of the Tamil Hindu identity. In times of historical

stress these identities were reaffirmed to mobilise popular support. When the Portuguese arrived in Sri Lanka in 1505 there were several contending kingdoms in the country among which were the Tamil Hindu kingdoms in Jaffna, the Northern peninsula of the island.24

The Tamil kingdom of Jaffna has ceased to be an independent unit in the sixteenth century when it was captured by the Portuguese and then by the Dutch. The Sinhala - Buddhist kingdom is the interior of the island remained independent till 1815 when it was taken the British. The Tamils of the east coast and part of the north central province traditionally owed suzerainty to the Sinhalese kings of Kandy and trade routes connected the east coast with the kingdoms of Kandy. Sinhalese Tamil intermarriage, exceptional in the north, was accepted and practiced in the east coast until recent times. When the British took over Sri Lanka they introduced yet another complexity. They brought in large numbers of South Indian tribal and often low status groups as coolie labour on the tea plantations of the central highlands. Thus there were three Tamil Hindu zones well established by the end of the nineteenth century; in the North, in the East and in the central highlands. Though outsiders (as well some Sinhalese) see the Tamil problems as one, the internal reality is very different. The Northern Tamils were much more orthodox Hindu than Tamil elsewhere and were strongly matrilineal; the east coast Tamils came from Kerala and were divided into matrilineal clans; while the Tamils of the central provinces were recently introduced groups from South India, alienated from both the other groups. Besides they were thrust into the modest of a surrounding Sinhalese population from whom too they were alienated.

During the nearly twentieth century when constitutional agitation against British rule gathered momentum, Sinhalese and Tamils however presented a united position. In 1919 the ceylone national congress was founded by both

24. Ibid p 71
Tamils and Sinhalese. But political parties soon began to gravitate along to communal lines. The Sinhalese increasingly felt threatened by Tamil control of business and the professions while the Tamils became increasingly - self conscious of their majority identity. The political democratization of the state exacerbated the tendencies. Universal adult suffrage was introduced in 1931 elections and these mobilised communal issues into public voting patterns. When independence was declared in 1948, there were several Tamil political parties with an exclusively ethnic base, while Sinhalese parties though formally nonethnic, were in reality committed to Sinhalese nationalism. A further escalation of the problem of Sinhalese and Tamil occurred in the post - 1956 period which saw the massive electoral, success of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka freedom party (SLFP) over the United National party (UNP).  

4.5. Tamil Demand for a Separate State

The ethnic agitation born on the iniquitous and discriminated treatment meted out to the Ceylon Tamils for years together to the ultimate and inevitable turn to the direction of a demand for a separate Tamil homeland in the Tamil – speaking North and East of Sri Lanka. The Tamil demand for a separation state is predicated on the conviction that as an identifiable people with the defined territory, they are entitled to self determination under international law. They claim that the sovereignty of the Tamil nation which existed in 1621 at the time of Portuguese conquest reverted to the Tamil community when the legal ties with Great Britain were served in 1972 and that they are thus asking for restoration for sovereignty. The Tamil ethnic agitation, in other words, took the shape for movement for Eelam or an independent Tamil state, an imperium, in imperio, as it were. “Thani Arasu Thamil Ilankai, Samashtiyo Suyechaivo Selvakinpadi”, (independent Tamil lanka, federal on independent, as decided by the consensus of the people). The sansoni report notwithstanding, the Tamil

25. Ibid p 2
leaders kept in view their cherished objective of living a separate homeland for themselves sooner or later. The pursuit of the objective initially led to the formation of such Tamil political groups as the TULF, the TSF and the TNT. The TUF (Tamil United Front) was formed on 14 May 1972 when five parties joined hands at a meeting in the Tamil port of Trincomalee to protect the freedom, dignity and rights of the Tamil people. The TUF confined itself to an idea of the Tamil autonomy within the ceylone entity. The political structure of the TUF founded on a conservative bourgeois ideology could not provide the basis for the articulation of the revolutionary situation created by the concrete conditions of intolerable national oppression, the revolutionary youth sought desperately to create a revolutionary political organisation to advance the task of national liberation.26

In 1976 the TUF was renamed the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) and the TNT and LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). A resolution adopted by the TULF at their first national conference in 1976 was the first clear commitment of the Tamil party to a separate state of Eelam. Before the elections of 1977, the UNP showed concern for the Tamil problems. But once the party came to power with the landslide victory with the massive support of the Indian Tamil voters, it did not keep its electoral promises in full. Though Tamil was made a national language, Sinhalese continued to be the sole official language, as evident from the constitution between the two kinds of citizenship - citizenship by birth and citizenship by registration - no doubt elimination second class citizenship and created only one status for all citizens. But these touched only the fringe of problems of the Tamils. In the face of the economic and political squeeze, the cry of Eelam acquired a desperate tone. the race riot of 1983, radicalism of tamil militant groups, particularly of the LTTE, and the alienation of the Indian Tamils, who suffered most during the ethnic crisis.

disturbances of 1983, all lent further impetus to, and urge for Eelam, the tamil felt that their demands could not be met within a unitary state and so, they demanded a separate state or Eelam to themselves. The 1977 elections and its results reinforced the idea of Tamil Eelam. The TULF represents primarily the ceylone Tamils resident in the Northern and Eastern provinces to set up “an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam”.\(^\text{27}\) In 1977 general elections, the TULF secured 17 out of 22 seats it contested in the Northern and Eastern provinces which led to a claim that the Tamils had voted for a separate state in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The TULF won the 14 seats in the North and 4 in the East. The Eastern province, Tamils are in a majority in five constituencies. Only one of these was lost, by hardly 500 votes, to the UNP candidate who was himself a Tamil. In the North every UNP candidate was trounced by the TULF two of the successful candidates however defeated to the UNP later on.\(^\text{28}\)

The Tamil federal party founded in 1951 accelerated the Tamil demand for autonomy. The TULF demanded autonomy, based on federal principles of the Swiss or Canadian model, for the Tamil dominated North and East and was reluctant to adopt the Eelam slogans. It was in October 1976 that the TULF supporting the principles of establishing Eelam for the ceylone Tamils. In other words the demand for Eelam or a separate state was first formally proclaimed by the TULF in October 1976 and purported to represent the views of its constituent units. The federal party, the ceylone workers Congress, and all ceylone Tamil conference. It was Suntharalingam’s who was, Infact the originator of a idea of a separate state in the Sri Lanka. The Indian Tamil leader, Thondaman’s Adhesion to the TULF was largely motivated by his political

\(^{27}\) Leary, A. Virginia, op. cit, p 15.  
opposition to then Bandaranaike government and not out of any conviction in regard to the separatist ideology which Infact, he promptly disclaimed.29

At a subsequent stage, the central secretary of the federal party declared that it was time for the Tamils to move from beyond their demand for federalism to that for a separate state like Bangladesh and that in their inevitable struggle they should not hesitate to obtain foreign assistance. The founder of the federal party, Chelvanayakam, was described as the Mujiber - Rahman of ceylone and the saviour of the Tamils. Despite an appeal made by the Sinhalese Prime Minister, the federal party continuing agitating for a separate Tamil state which it wanted to rename Yaldesh, derived from Yalpanam, the Tamil name of the Jaffna Peninsula. The Tamil racial movement in Sri Lanka gradually turned out to be Eelam oriented. Nothing but Eelam, it appeared would be welcomed as an acceptable solutions to the Tamil problems of how to survive of a separate political entity. The more entitled among the Tamils, though distrustful of Eelam, saw it as the only way of achieving their ends. Rajendra a Colombo lawyer said we do not think it; (Eelam) is the solution of our problem. We wish to live in the country with self-respect and dignity. But if we are harassed and humiliated we have no alternative but to describe to Eelam. We are against dismembering this beautiful country through Eelam but every self-respecting Tamil sees it as the only way.30

The TULF’s demand was thus creation of a Separate Tamil State. The Tamil Eelam, Amrithalingam made it quite clear in 1977 that the all party conference of Prime Minister Jayewardene, may be the last talk we have with the government since we know full well that such talks will never pave the way for the establishment of a separate state. The TULF’s ambivalence was best expression in the formal rejection of a demand made by its youth organisation

for appointing a national assembly to draft the constitution for Tamil Eelam in July 1978, and its dissociation from the call given by the youth front to boycott the schools in the Tamil region in February 1979.31

The TULF gained strength for fighting for Eelam as the Indian Tamils ultimately moved closer to the ceylone Tamils in common opposition to the government. Originally separated by caste - barriers, a legacy from their Indian past, they moved closer together during the period of ethnic struggle. After each riot in the plantation labourers areas the Indian Tamils who were mainly the plantation labourers fled to the Northern and Eastern provinces were the ceylone Tamils provided them with shelter. Make and subservient by nature hundreds of the plantation labourers, unable to defend themselves against the Sinhalese rioters resorted to the relative safety of Jaffna and Trincomalee where they were settled on government-owned wastelands. Such estate labours were given implements to clear two - acre plots in the jungle areas for cultivation, as also materials with which to build a hut and were also provided with facilities for drawing water from wells. The TULF’s ambivalence survived even the gruesome riots in August 1977when almost a hundred Tamils were killed and more than 40000 Tamil refugees were evacuated to the camps in Colombo and Kandy. The backdrop to the riots was provided by the inflammatory speeches made by the Tamil leaders during the election campaign the 1977 riots were provoked by the clash in Jaffna between students attending a school carnival and the police. There were four Tamils shot dead by the police and the police man was injured by the mob.32

4.6. Rise of Tamil Resistance

Terrorist acts by Tamil youth have exacerbated the already tension between Sinhalese and Tamils. In Sri Lanka the Liberation of Tigers of Tamil

Eelam (LTTE) is unlike to settle for anything less than a Separate Tamil State, which the Sri Lankan government and the Sri Lankan people never accept. The LTTE is formidable revolutionary organisation and is perhaps the most well organised guerrilla force in the world. It has well trained cadres to conflict the Sri Lankan army, and scores of suicide bombers ready to assassinate for Sri Lankan leaders. The LTTE combines guerrilla warfare and terrorism to great effect. The LTTE’s demand is the separate state or otherwise, the LTTE has indulged in the most heinous terrorist act it is the only terrorist group to have be assassinated two heads of the government-former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991 and President Premadasa of Sri Lanka in 1993. The conditions that give rise to the armed resistance movement. We argue that the Tamil reserve the right to armed defence against the military repression and genocide waged very craftily by the government. The image of the movement of LTTE as projected by the government is not all correct. It is Sri Lankan government false propaganda that the Tamil struggle is the mode of terrorism; rather, it is an armed campaign and a form of legitimate political struggle for self-determination.

The foundations of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) made a significant impact on the direction of the ethnic insurgency. The LTTE, popularly known as the Tamil Tigers, grew out of the Tamil youth guerrilla movement launched in the Northern and Eastern provinces in Sri Lanka by the Tamil Student Union (Tamil Manavar Peravai) and the Tamil Youth Federation (Tamil Illangnar Peravai). Initially it was only of more than 35 comporting groups, but gradually the number was whittled down, and by the 1990s five groups had achieved dominance over the others – the LTTE, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), and Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students (EROS). The latter four
were, in turn, marginalised and then ruthlessly crushed by the LTTE to the point where today, it stands unchallenged as the voice of Sri Lankas Tamil minority. The objective of the LTTE is to establish an independent socialist Tamil state, Tamil Eelam by violence and terrorism.\(^{33}\)

While the formation of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 1972 by its present leader, Mr. Velupillari Prabhakaran, the mode of the Tamil political struggle underwent a radical change.

The LTTE’s objective in fighting for political independence of the Tamil nation is not an arbitrarily decision on the part of the organisation but rather the expression and articulation of the collective will and aspiration of the Tamil people.\(^{34}\) The LTTE’s armed struggle is based on a clearly defined political programme. This political project aims at securing the right to Self-Determination of the Tamil people.\(^{35}\)

Ethnically all members of the LTTE, all Sri-Lankan Tamils. The participation of other minorities such as Muslims and the Indian Tamils are either nominal minimal. There is no evidence of the mobilisation of Muslim youth and not surprisingly, given the terrorist violence unleashed by the LTTE in the North and East against the local Muslims community. And thus for there in no substantial evidence either of the participations of Indian Tamils within the LTTE, s rank and file. In terms of religion, a majority of the members of the LTTE are Hindus. However, there appears to have been some involvement of Tamil Christians in the movement.

The exact number of LTTE members is not known. But the LTTE is estimated to have 8,000 to 10,000 armed combatants with a core of trained guerrillas in the order of 3,000 to 6,000. It also has a significant overseas

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33. Sengupta Dipankar and Singh Sudhir Kumar, “Terrorism in South Asia”, Jawahar Park Laxmi Nagar, New Delhi, 2004, p 58
34. Ibid
35. Ibid
support structure of fundraising, weapons procurement, and propaganda activities. The current LTTE leadership, who started out in the 1980s as young men and women, are middle aged now. But their main catchments for conscription remain adolescents and youths. The LTTE seen no moral problem with recruiting children as soldiers, however the organisation is most notorious for its seasoned cadre of suicide bombers, the ‘Black Tigers’.

The top leadership of the LTTE has remained unchanged for years under the leadership of Velupillari Prabhakaran. Generally it embodies the two tier structure; a military wing; and a subordinating wing; overseeing both to the central governing committee headed by the supreme leader Prabhakaran, which also directs and controls the organisation’s specialist subdivisions such as the `sea tigers, air tigers, a Charles Anthony regiment, the black tigers, a secretive intelligence group, a political section and an international secretariat which monitors the outfits global network. As well, the LTTE draws on the support of a number of mostly overseas-based front organisations, the most active being the World Tamil Association (WTA), the World Tamil Movement (WTM) , the Federation of Association of Canadian Tamils (FACT), the Australian federation Tamil association, the Swiss federation of Tamil Association, the French-federation of Tamil Association, the Illankai Tamil Sangam in the United States, the tamil coordinating committee in Norway, and the international federation of Tamils in the United Kingdom. These front bodies engage in publicity and propaganda, fundraising activities and arms procurement. According to Peter Chalk, by 1988 the LTTE had offices and cells in at least 54 countries.

But the bulk of LTTE funds come from the Sri Lanka communities in Switzerland, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the

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37. Chalk, peter, “the LTTEs international organisation and operations – a preliminary analysis”, Canadian security intelligence services (CSIS), commentary no. 77, 17 march 2000 ,[http://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/com77e.htm]
Scandinavian countries.\textsuperscript{38} It is estimated that the total number of refugees funding of the LTTE worldwide has averaged about $ U.S 2 million a month since December 1995.\textsuperscript{39}

The strategy and tactics of the LTTE is a vital aspect of its insurgency. It has a definite strategy to achieve its political objective. The basic objective of the organisation is to defeat the government forces in the North and East through a projected armed struggle. According to the LTTE, guerrilla warfare ifs the hall mark of a true peoples war, and the only effecting means of winning a separate state. They have integrated a battlefield insurgent strategy with a terrorist programme, which targets civilian but also political leaders, activists and members of the police and army intelligence services. Political assassination and bombing are part and parcel of the strategy and tactics of the LTTE.

The terrorist acts have been attributed to a group called the Liberation Tigers, estimated to include fewer than 200 persons by government forces. The terrorism by Tamil youth’s primary against the police in Jaffna area began substantially in 1977. The terrorist activities of the LTTE should be examined and analysed in the context of the insurgency popularly known as the Eelam war, but this was actually three distinct campaigns. The first phase of the Eelam war, which started in the mid 1970’s a government pamphlet published in June 1981 that the group of terrorists had involved in over 200 acts of violence in the previous three years including the killing of politicians, 18 police officials and the robberies of banks. As the movement expanded and gathered momentum, a distinct pattern of protracted rural guerrilla warfare laced with acts of terrorism emerged. The Eelam war one lasted from the mid 1970s to march 1990. The ethnic riot of July 1983 marked the turning point of the phase. The riots broke

\textsuperscript{38} Davis, Anthony, “tiger international”, asiaweek, 26 july 1996, pp 30-8.
\textsuperscript{39} Peiris, G.H “secessionist war and terrorism; transactional impulses, in the global threat of terror; ideological material And political linkage”, buwark books, New Delhi, 2002 pp 85-126
out as a backlash against the ambush of governs and military troops by the LTTE at Thirunelveli in Jaffna on 23 July 1983, resulting in the deaths of 13, army personal. After the men’s funeral in Colombo, Anti – Tamil riots spread throughout the city and the suburbs. About 400 Tamils died in the violence, and many more were injured or were victims of arson and looting. From 1987 to 1990 in the second phase of eelam war, one the LTTE fought against the Indian peace keeping force (IPKF) in the Northern and Eastern provinces.

The period from July 1991 to December 1994 marked Eelam war two, which began with the killing by the LTTE of more than 600 securities personal. After a full, the LTTE revived hostilities by blowing up two naval ships in Trincomalee harbour in April 1995. Although the LTTE signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the government in February 2002, its programme of assassination of political opponents and intelligence personal; has not ceased. This latter campaign constitutes Eelam war three.40

There are other resistance militant groups collectively forming the militant organisation dedicated to the cause of establishing a Separate Tamil homeland. The Tamil resistance groups began to appear in the early 1970s many being then just be small, politically motivated armed gangs. The TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation), formed in 1974. It came to prominence during the riots of July 1983 when the Chief Thangathurai and military commander, Kuttimani were both killed. In 1979, Uma Maheswaran a former associate of Pirabhakaran, ultimately broke with him and founded the PLOTE (People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam). Maheswaran a Marxist ideology was more politically oriented than most other Tamil separatist leaders. The year 1980 was the formation of the EPRLF (Eelam people’s revolutionary Liberation Front) by K. Padmanabha who also preached a Marxist ideology.

The EPRLF is more intellectual than military. Its more significant unit is the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES) which works towards uniting the Tamil students residing abroad.  

The training centres of Tamil militants are in India and abroad - in Assam, Tamil Nadu and Salem, Lebanon. The chief of the PLOTE, Uma Maheswaran, went to Lebanon for training in 1978. The late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramchandra was like a political patron to the TULF and lent sincere support to the movement demand movement demanding Tamil Eelam. In March 1984, there 2000 armed men belonging to the various groups of the Tamil insurgents were ready for battle with Sri Lankan security forces. There are another 2000 - 3000 Tamil recruits was trained but they wait for arms shipments from foreign sources basically from the soviet - backed leftists guerrilla groups.

Ethnic violence like that of July 1983 prevailed upon many Tamil leaders and their followers to resort to madras government were most liberal and accommodating about visa and immigrations regulations. Some of the Tamil militants on their arrival in madras went aboard on Indian passports.  

4.7. Political Violence or Terrorism

Terrorist acts by Tamil youth have exacerbated the already tense relation between Sinhalese and Tamils. The insurgency led by the Tamil Tigers (LTTE), began in 1983 with communal massacres by both sides. The political violence or terrorism by Tamil youths, primarily against police in the Jaffna area. The terrorist acts have been attributed to a group called the “Liberation Tigers,” estimated to include fewer than 200 persons by government sources. Initially the tigers received some support from their 55 million cousins in Tamil Nadu in Southern India. This is largely cut off after Mrs Gandhi’s assassination in 1984.

42. Indian Today 31 March 1984, p 88
because her son Rajiv Gandhi, who was elected to succeed her, feared that supporting secession of Sri Lanka Tamil might encourage other secessionists. There is a group of terrorists which have been involved in over 200 acts of violence including the killing of politicians, 18 police officers, and acts of homicide and robbers of banks.

The tamil insurgency had cost some 6,000 killed and at the end of july Rajiv Gandhi persuaded The leadership of the Tamil Vellapillai Prabhakaran united liberation front has condemned the violence and does not advocate violence to achieve the Separate State of Eelam, although allegations have been made that individual members of the TULF have advocated violence as means of achieving a separate state. The terrorist youth gangs are acting independently from the policy of the Tamil party and there is no evidence that they have substantial support from the Tamil population in the North.

On March 25, there was robberd a bank in the town of Neerveli in the Jaffna peninsula area and two police man were killed. The robbery was attributes to the terrorist gang and one month later, the police, arrest 27 youth Tamil men under the prevention of terrorism act for implementation in the robbery. In the May, the further violence developed during the campaign for district development council elections. These elections were to be significant steps towards decentralisation and were resulted as a positive act by the government in responding to the demands of the Tamil population for more control over their own affairs. Unfortunately, in Jaffna the elections turned into a tragic event further exacerbating the racial conflicts. On may 24, Mr. A. Thiagarajah. Since the UNP is the governing majority party in the country and a predominantly Sinhalese party, the killing was perceived as a threat to Tamil politicians not to enter the UNP lists. On June 9, 1981 Mr. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of lands and land development, stated the parliament that “those who
take to politics opposed to the Tamil United Liberation front run the risk of death”.

According to some sources, terrorist groups of about 15 persons attacked a police station in Anacostia, six miles out of Jaffna. There were one police man was killed, and another, who was seriously injured, and died latter. The terrorist groups escaped with firearms including 17 rifles, two shotguns, a sub machine gun and a thousand rounds of ammunition. The attack was the first attack against a police station in Sri Lanka since a Sinhalese youth insurrection in 1971. It was immediately condemned by the leadership of the TULF who described it as a senseless act of violence. The government reacted with a number of strong measures. Police personal was pulled out of six stations in out lined areas and replaced by armed officers. During the visit of the ICJ observer in early August, Armed units were moved into Jaffna. Trucks and armed vehicles carrying army personal on patrol in Jaffna were evident. The police department request the defense minister to permit police to require national identity cards as all times in the Jaffna.

The government is deeply concerned about the problems of terrorism in Sri Lanka. They have applied the provisions of the prevention of terrorism act to detain a number of youths. The government issued a regulation, under emergency regulation, on August 25 providing for the death penalty of life imprisonment for unlawful possession and transport of weapons and explosives in four Tamil areas.

4.8. Indian Peace Keeping Force as a Fighting Force against the LTTE in Jaffna

Indian army had to gone Sri Lanka interms of the agreement of 29 July 1987 which stipulated that in the event that the government in Sri Lank requests

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44. Ibid
the government of India to afford military assistance to implement these proposals, the government of India will cooperate by giving the government of Sri lanka such military assistance as and when necessary (part 2 (16) C). On his return on Colombo after signing the agreement, Rajiv Gandhi made a statement on 32 July 1987 both in the Raja Sabha and the Lok Sabha, justifying the despatch of Indian army to Sri Lanka in accordance with the above stipulation. The president of Sri Lanka made a formal request for appropriate Indian military assistance to ensure the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms in the Jaffna peninsula and in the eastern provenance as well. He also requests for air-transport to move some of the Sri Lankan troops from Jaffna to the south.

The first batch of the army, better known as the Indian Peace-keeping Force (IPKF), landed at Jaffna at 30 July 1987 under the command of Lt. Gen Deepinder Singh who was succeeded by Lt Harkirat Singh. Later, Lt. Gen Amarjeet Singh Kalkat took over as the overall commander of the Indian peace keeping force in September 1987.

The Indian army was to re-establish peace at Jaffna, as mentioned earlier by crushing the Tamil militant including the LTTE while giving protection to the Tamil civilian’s population and civilian property. But only two month later, the IPKF found itself locked in a clash of arms with the Tamils, militant and civilian as well. In the course of their fight with the militants supported by the Tamil civilian population at Jaffna, the IPKF realised its weakness as fighting force operating in a strange land.

The IPKF had no experience of the kind of urban guerrilla warfare in which it came to be involved in Jaffna. This experience together with its lack of the knowledge of local terrain proved a great obstacle to the IPKP’S confronted the guerrilla fighters, many barely in their teens including young women, in a
densely populated urban area already fortified and extensively mined during the years of strife between the Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan security forces. As admitted by L.T Gen. Deepinder Singh, “urban guerrilla war is comparatively new phenomenon so far as the Indian army is concerned”.45

The Indian peace keeping force was deputed to Sri Lanka when the country was gripped by an armed struggle between the government security and the Tamil militants. Those who seek to justify India’s military help to Sri Lanka have their own argument.

The IPKF was also hamstrung by the strict orders issued to it to avoid heavy civilian casualties and extensive damage to buildings. “it has also been our endeavour”, said the Lt Gen, “at a considerably risk to our officers and jawan, to keep damage to civilian property and life to the minimum... but if soldiers return fire and direct it at a house from which they were fired upon, you cannot accuse them of killing civilians. They cannot distinguish between civilians and LTTE cadres in that house.”46

In addition, the division’s commander, Major General Harkirat Singh, only received as his orders a copy of the ILSA and the Indian army order of the day. The infantry division deployed without its heavy equipment of weapons because its task was limited to taking the surrender of weapons and supervising the ceasefire.

According to Lt Gen kalkat, “there was large scale mining of the Jaffna area, and almost every building was booby-trapped. The LTTE made extensive use of these buildings and used the civilian population as prophylactic protection. Our progress was, therefore, necessarily slow.”47

45. Indian Today, 15 November 1987, p 34
46. Ibid p 36
47. Ibid p 34
Jaffna was recognised as the emotional and intellectual heartland of the Tamils and symbolized the LTTE’s power and authority. It contains the LTTE’s headquarter, training facilities, ammunitions and administrative bases. The LTTE’s has successfully defended Jaffna against SLA military offensives. The Indian army under estimated the LTTE’s abilities to resist an offensive by the Indian peace keeping force. Indian armed command believed that the LTTE could be rounded up in a little as 72 hours or, at the longer end, between seven and fifteen days. In fact occupying the Jaffna peninsula took the IPKF more than a month.

The IPKF, moreover, appeared to have misjudged the resistance put up by the Liberation Tigers and also under estimated the extent of the weapons in their possession. Another weakness or deficiency of the IPKF in Jaffna was its inability to distinguish between the Tamil tigers and the Tamil civilians, one senior officer was reported to have entered a house at Jaffna for search under “house to house operations programme”. He found the house empty except for a young woman inside. The moment the officer turned his back to leave the place, the young woman ‘whipped out a stengun’ and shot him in the back. According to the evidence of Sepoy Govindan of the madras regiment, “it was impossible to say who tiger was and who was not. Everyone, male or female, above the age of 10, could be armed and dangerous. We saw little girls producing guns from under their frocks and shooting at us. How do you fight them?”

Deputed to Jaffna to restore peace in the riot-torn peninsula, the IPKF had to wage a full scale battle against the Tamil militants there early in October 1987. In fact, the IPKF, s first offensive against the LTTE string hold at Jaffna was launched on 10 October 1987. The offensive, better known as battle of Jaffna or siege of Jaffna, ended after 16 days on 26 October.

48. Ibid p 35
On 9 October, the Indian chief of staff, General K. Sundarji, assured the senior military officials in Colombo that Indian troops were securely positioned to deliver a quick and decisive blow against the LTTE, next day the IPKF launched a major operation against the LTTE positions in the Jaffna positions. For two weeks the IPKF slowly just steadily inched its way across the heavily-mined and booby-traps set by the LTTE hampered the progress of the IPKF as did the unexpected strength of the LTTE resistance. The Indian forces have made some progress by 20 October when they claimed to have brought under control large areas of the Jaffna city and on 25 on 26 October, the IPKF declared Jaffna as a free city. A large percentage of its 1, 30,000 inhabitants had, however, fled to the outlying districts. Though the IPKF had succeeded in capturing Jaffna temporary, it could not, however, arrest any LTTE leaders. Some 1200 of the LTTE fighters were suspected to have escaped from the Jaffna city.

The IPKF won the Jaffna war, though a great cost of life and loss of money. The daily cost of the 16 days battle was estimated at Rs three crore. The Jaffna victory was, indeed, a pyrrhic one.

According the Defence Minister Statement, 21 LTTE militants in camouflage uniforms were killed in the Eastern Kattuparichan in Trincomalee after they had destroyed massive ammunition and explosives dump. Government troops killed 54 Tamils during a major assault on LTTE bases in the Eastern districts of Amparai, Batticaloa and Trincomalee over the 24 hours, were 10 soldiers were killed and 22 wounded.

According to the tigers, over 200 civilians were killed by the IPKF and numerous building including the Jaffna hospital, destroyed. Some western journalists entered the city of Jaffna after the battle had started. On their return, they gave out the horrors of the operations of the IPKF who went berserk after

49. Ibid p 33
their comrades had been killed. They shot innocent people and were accused of raping Tamil women. The tigers despicably referred to the IPKF as the ‘innocent people killing force’. One of the key aides of General K. Sundarji however, remarked, “We would like to change our nomenclature from IPKF to the accord implementation force. This is our main brief to ensure that the accord was fully implemented pulling out before that be political and military suicide.\textsuperscript{50}

During the battle of Jaffna Rajiv Gandhi is reported to have instructed the IPKF ‘not to use tactics or weapons that would cause major casualties among the civilians’. He had a satisfaction to announce to the Lok Sabha that the Indian army had carried out these instructions with outstanding discipline and courage, accepting, in the process, a high level of sacrifices for protecting the Tamils. Commenting on the above statement, S. Rajapa wrote; “the level of that discipline and sacrifice was brought whom by brigadier Khalon when asked about four of his men served in Jaffna who were-martial led for rape. The officer said Indian soldiers are not angels. We are not devils either-rape takes place even in the west. In spite of its ‘strong arm tactics’, the Indian peace keeping force failed to instigate the tamil civilian population against the tamil guerrillas are to cause disaffection between them. Rather, as Rajapa further commented, “as the war intensified, popular support for the LTTE increased, and the civilian population turned against the IPKF. With a view to winning to Tamil civilian to its side, the IPKF resorted to the airdropping of thousands of leaflets, informing them that the indo Sri Lanka accord served them, while the LTTE leaders, were bent upon serving their own personal interests. The LTTE was projected as selfish, and India, as the selfless guarantor of the interests of the Tamil people. There were no takers of this propaganda offensive. It is then decided to wipe out eight of the top leaders of the LTTE, including Mr.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{India Today}, 15 December 1987, p 82
Velupillari Prabhakaran, so that the residual terrorist problem could be tackled by the IPKF”.

After along cease fire between the security forces and the LTTE, tension began to surface. On 11 June the Tamil militants ambushed an army truck; killing ten soldiers and surrounded eleven police stations in eastern Amparai and Batticaloa districts.

During the Jaffna campaign, Pirabhakaran and his deputy, K. Mahendrarajah, Alias Mahattaya were reported to have gone into hiding in the vanni jungles bordering Mullaitivu. All routes of escape of the LTTE leaders were closed, and then an entire division of soldiers were deployed to capture the LTTE leaders dead or alive, but in vain. Prabhakaran and other leaders like Mahattaya, Dilip Yogi, and Anton Balasingham were believed to have slipped out of Jaffna to regroup in one of their hide-outs in the mannar, Batticaloa and Vadamarachi, areas.

India today’s special correspondent, Sekhar Gupta, was assigned to visit the battlefield and interview scores of Indian fighting personal from generals in Delhi to the jawan in the jungles of Jaffna. The report he submitted throw a flood of fight on the battle of Jaffna. He reported inter alia that the Indian army had never seen a war like this, waged in an alien land against militant Ceylon Tamils who wore no uniforms knew no Geneva Convention on ethics of war but carried deadly modern weapons and fought routinely from behind the cover of woman and children.51

After occupying the main Tiger-stronghold of Jaffna, the Indian army followed the strategy of pushing the Tamil militants out of the congested urban areas into the thinly-populated countryside where the advantages of the LTTE and the IPKF would be more even. The Tamil militants knew the local urban

terrain but the IPKF had the experience of guerrilla warfare in thinly populated non-urban areas only. The strategy of the IPKF might put a great military and psychological pressure on the hare-core Tamil supremo, Pirabhakaran, whose arrest in the thinly populated areas might be an easier task for the IPKF. The IPKF also resorted to the strategy of quickly fanning out into another LTTE stronghold, vadamarachi, and also in to the LTTE supremo’s home-town, velvettithurai. To ensure that Pirabhakaran and his close followers could not slip out of the noose, the IPKF to care to block the now bolt-holes. The tiger hideouts in point Pedro, mannar, etc. were secured. Again, to prevent the tamil militants to from using the eastern province, especially Batticaloa, as their new centre for activities after having lost ground in the northern province, IPKF strengthened its position in the eastern province by bringing in 2,000 additional troops into Batticaloa.

The LTTE lose the battle of Jaffna by the IPKF could not have regarded as living really won it unless it succeeded in restoring normal conditions of life and living in the peninsula. In fact, normalcy was very slow in returning to the ravaged area. After the operation pawan, the first stirring of normalcy could be seen in the vehicular movement, slow and staggered but nevertheless seen. The Jaffna secretariat starting functioning again Banks and shops reopened their doors. Market places were again found getting busy with business activities. Fish and cigarettes could be seen on the stalls. Food grains moved in, onions moved out. Education suffered most during the battle of Jaffna. With the end of the battle, schools were reopened on 25 November, though with a very poor attendance of students. Most of the schools had been converted into military camps with required to be abolished without delay.

Living could not be expected to be easy and normal overnight, immediately after the operation pawan had ended. So, the people have still to endure the drudgery of the imposition of curfew of long duration. The non-
resumption of electricity, affecting water supply, caused no trouble to the people. The innumerable check - posts at an interval of one mile, till then in existence, proved galling to the people. Tamils passing through check - posts had to get off their cycles for a search of their belongings, silently enduring the humiliations in the process.\(^52\)

Unlike the jawan, the IPKF officers from the rank of captain upwards were reported to be “really nice, polite, and helpful.”

The IPKF boasted that it had broken the back of the LTTE ‘what the Sri Lankan army could not to do in a decade the IPKF managed in a month’. LTTE, communication network was smashed. They ran short of ammunition for a sustained confrontation. The former bellicose attitude of the LTTE gave away, under changed circumstances to a conciliatory mood. This is brigadier R.I.S. Kahlon, the then town commandant of Jaffna, by the LTTE deputy leader Mahendrarajah, Alies Mahattaya.

The points made in the letter of 14 November were; (1) on declaration of cease - fire by the IPKF, the LTTE would immediately lay down arma. (ii) The IPKF should move back to its position prior to 10 October 1987 and patrolling and search operations should be stopped. Later, LTTE said that this was negotiable. (iii) The functioning of hospitals, food supplies and transport should be handed over to the civilian authorities. (iv) The LTTE is prepared for the resumption of negotiations immediately. (v) Amnesty should be invoked and ban on and LTTE be lifted, the aware of one million rupees declared on Pirabhakaran’s head should be cancelled. (vi) The LTTE members should be allowed to live a normal life in dignity, and the rights of the Tamil people be resorted. (vii) The LTTE looks to India for a solution of the problems of the Tamils.

\(^{52}\) *India Today*, 15 December 1987, p 79
In the second letter of 21 November 1987, Mahattaya welcomed the 48 hour cease-fire and promised not to use arms even after the expiry of 48 hours except to defend them in case of an offensive by the IPKF. He argued India to create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and ended the letter with the comment that “the major issue is about the rights and security of our people, and if there are assured, handling over arms in not a problem.”

The experience of Indian peacekeeping force led to major changes in the nature of the Sri Lankan conflict and it contributed to so re-writing to Indo-Sri-lanka relations that had seemed unlikely.

4.9. Connections and Procurement of Weapons

There is an abundance of evidence, which indicates that the LTTE is being constantly enriched by organisational networks engaged in clandestine operations in some of the major cities of the west, notably that in Canada, Britain and France. Despite the likelihood that these organisations have tended to move away from, the gang land transactions of dealing and muleing in drugs and indications numerically small groups of tamil migrants residing in these countries have continued to be engaged in a variety of illegal activities such as smuggling, counterfeiting and forgery and that at least some of the profits they generate and channelized into the LTTE, s secessionist campaign. According to authoritative western analysis, it was the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Islamic revolution in Iran which distributed the main traditional drug routes between the golden Crescent and Europe. This made the Pakistan based drug cartels turn to alternative routes of delivery via South Asia. The west coast of India along which surveillance was weak, is believed to have provided many safe transit points which the Indian work force in West Asia providing a reservoir of countries. It was evidently in this wider constant that the pro LTTE

53. Ibid p 82
with the experienced that they already possessed in contraband operations in South Asia were drawn into the matrix of transcontinental drug trafficking.\textsuperscript{54}

The city of Toronto has an expatriate Sri Lankan Tamil community of about 130,000-the largest of its kind outside Sri Lanka. Being the venue of two close-knit crime syndicates know respectively as the Kannan gang and the Vvt Gang, both having connections with the LTTE, Toronto is also probably the most important centre of these Tiger-directed clandestine operations in the western world. According to the Mackenzie institute report referred to above, the mounted implicate these Tamil criminal groups in a staggering variety of activities, including extortion, home invasion, arms trafficking, production and sale of counterfeit passports and money laundering. The heyday of LTTE, s association with drug dealings and muleing was in the aftermath of the anti-Tamil mob violence in Sri Lanka in July 1983 which initiated a massive exodus of Tamil refugees of the country.\textsuperscript{55}

As the source of the basic where withal of narco-terrorism, drugs and ammunition the Golden Crescent has a standing of global pre-eminence. The area so named stretches across the North was Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, central Afghanistan and Eastern Iran. An analysis of the Tiger operations in Sri Lanka, the extent to which the LTTE has succeeded in its attempts to tap the potential of the golden Crescent cannot be assessed with precession. The relation information is not only fragmentary but also in relation to certain aspects mutually incongruent. But such information does point to the likelihood that, although Pakistan’s official policy has throughout been unequivocally against the LTTE campaign. Over the year, there have been several major arms deals between the LTTE s the suppliers of Pakistan/Afghanistan. There were the occasional reports from about the mid

\textsuperscript{55} What could be considered the commencement of serious media attention to the LTTE involvement in transcontinental Drug trafficking is represented by Crellsamer (1985) and an article carried in an Asian wall street journal of Sept. 1985.
1980s on shipments of firearms dispatched from Karachi reaching the tigers and of Sri Lanka Tamils serving as conveyers for Pakistan drug dealers. Then by the about early 1990s, such transactions appear to have become more substantial. The LTTE acquisition of shipping capability appears to have been a vital ingredient in its advances. By the mid 1990s these dealings had become important enough to attract the attention of intelligence agencies of the India. A retrospect written in July 2000 by Raman on a general theme of support for terrorist groups in Sri Lanka contains the information on subject of the tiger links with Pakistan at that time.\textsuperscript{56}

There is a long list of the countries from which the LTTE reported to have purchased arms since the time leading towards the onset of the second Eelam war (resumption of hostilities following the breakdown of peace negotiations between president premadasa and representatives of the LTTE in mid 1990).

There was also the report of the U.S intelligence officials that the arms and ammunitions found on the LTTE ship carrying Kittu were actually given to the LTTE by Pakistan narcotics baron in return for the LTTE, s help in transporting narcotics consignments to western ports in its ships registered in Greece and that these arms and ammunitions were loaded into the ships carrying Kittu were actually given to the LTTE by Pakistan.\textsuperscript{57}

More specific information is obtained from various Indian publications dealing with militant political movement. Some of these suggests links which the LTTE has forged over these years with insurgent groups and other communities in the Indo - Burma periphery might have facilitated the consolidation of its emerging weapons connections with the golden triangle into the turbulent politics of indias Northeast and made a passing reference to visit

\textsuperscript{56} Raman, B, “\textit{U.S and Pakistan Terrorism in Perspective}”, South Asia Analysis Group, New Delhi, Paper No. 1, 2000, p 7, link WWW.saag.org.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.
by LTTE agents to Assam in the late 1980s and into their attempts to establish an LTTE-ULFA (United Liberation Front of Asom) link. Special mention is made of a brief visit to Assam in 1990, possibly as a gesture of fraternal that there was no further progress in the LTTE-ULFA connections, a report furnished by Sharma 1997 to the Indian express refer to meetings between the operatives of the two groups in tamil nadu, and of training in guerrilla warfare imparted by the tigers to the assamese in the early 1990. Again Debahis Mitra in his, Newsletter from Kohima’ for the New Delhi newspaper the statesman dealt mainly with what he saw as an “LTTE - NSCN (National Socialist Council of Nagaland) nexus”. The increasing importance of trans-Indian routes in the outflow of narcotics from the golden triangle should be looked at alongside the concurrent growth of links between the LTTE and certain insurgent groups of the sub - continent.58