PREFACE

Myanmar has experienced isolationism of a unique kind which can be studied in the perspective of political development. This study on **Isolationism: A Perspective on Political Development in Myanmar** is the outcome of my intense desire to explain through investigation and analysis certain aspects of isolationism to be the basic ideology of Myanmar’s policy. This work specifically focuses on the analysis on why and how isolationism developed in Myanmar and how it reveals the future prospect of the country. Whether a genuine democracy in its modern sense can be achieved in Myanmar is also a primary focus of analysis in this study. It has always been difficult to assess the politics inside Myanmar due to army’s deceptive behaviour.

This study employs deductive method along with historical-analytical approach. Isolationism becomes a basic factor in the process of political development of Myanmar. The parliamentary democracy era during 1950s and 1960s under prime minister U Nu was in shambles. General Ne Win was the architect of isolationism which was as military documents indicated launched as a means to render modernisation and nation-building so that Myanmar was reconstructed and strengthened, but later it proved to be an end in itself to be prolonged and sustained for Ne Win to remain as supreme ruler of Myanmar. Governance becomes a right for the few at the top echelon of the isolationist state and by virtue of their superior might such right was sustained. He adopted military might through isolationism in other to bring changes in Myanmar on his own model of democracy unlike its existing pattern.

Under isolationism Myanmar faced severe crisis of political development, yet it continued being propelled by democratic process with the voice of the Myanmarese people under the leadership of iconic Aung San Suu Kyi. Continuity of isolationism is no more justified, and it has been on the wane paving the way for reconstructing Myanmar into a modern democratic system sans militarism or military philosophy. Equally important is democracy to go hand in hand with meaningful federalism not
only to bridge confidence and trust but also to decentralise powers and functions between the central government and the states. Certainly Myanmar seems to be as dull as confinement in a dark corner of isolationism and now she has started to go on searching a broader arena to enter into a new era of Myanmarese democracy through employing its prerequisites.