CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the recent trends in Indo-Srilanka relations. The main intention of the study is threefold. First of all it intend to study India's relations with Srilanka. Secondly it aims at examining the recent ethnic problems in Srilanka. Thirdly it tries to analyse the Indo-Srilanka agreement and its consequences. Finally it makes an attempt to evaluate the role of the I P K F in Srilankan politics.

Ethnic politics has emerged as a significant factor in the global system. In recent years antagonism among indigenous ethnic communities in Ceylon, Cyprus, Canada, Iraq, Ireland, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, etc., has wrought important changes in the relations among the states. There are perhaps as many as 862 ethnic nations living within the nation states of the world. 1

The term ethnic has its derivation from the Greek word "Ethnos" meaning tribal or racial. Ethnic identity is in essence a past-oriented form of identity, embedded in the cultural heritage of individuals or a group. This form of identity contrasts with a sense of belonging linked with citizenship within a political state, or present-oriented in affiliations to specific groups demanding professional occupational or class loyalties.

In general ethnicity is symbolically represented in self-conscious variations in language, religious, or customs. It is symbolised in the ritual practices which are its affirmation, particularly by dramatic symbolic representation of a past. In general ethnicity is explained by primordial sentiments of a group. Here to know one's origin is to have not only a sense of provenience, but perhaps importantly a sense of continuity in which one finds to some degree the personal and social meaning of human existence.

Generally in all Nation States today, there is a demand for greater equality among the ethnic groups. In general all educationally and economically disadvantaged ethnic groups are demanding fair play on the part of the Government towards their needs. Again, more often than not, the suppressed ethnic groups also demand preferential policies. The intensive action or negligence of action by the government concerned brings about a complex multi-ethnic conflict which leads to a drastic political struggle, peaceful or otherwise.

The study of development and underdevelopment of various ethnic groups in a multi-ethnic society needs to be undertaken from an ideological perspective. It is possible and desirable to look into the dominant ethnic groups of post-colonial societies, as possessing well-entrenched ideologies working towards their dominance.

In Sri Lanka there has been clash of ideologies between the dominant and other ethnic groups, each having its own notion
of history and progress Sri Lanka is multi-ethnic and developing but ethnic loyalties have been acting as a fragmentary force there. All ethnic groups vigorously compete for the fruits of nature. The inequalities between them, arising out of historical and socio-political factors, force the dominant and lesser ethnic groups to disaggregate national loyalties and force the freezing of the prevailing system of social stratification. Exhorting the individual not to forget his collectivity and ethnicity these groups trace their history to a putative common genealogy in order to workout an ideology, and when the ideologies of the dominant and lesser ethnic groups clash, parleys between them become sour, and politics of violence is resorted to. The ideology of nationhood contrived by the dominant groups and the ideology of independence held by the lesser groups eventually have made them seek extra-constitutional and extra-territorial remedies. And the options and consequences that have emerged out of their exercises have satisfied none. And the ideological struggle has continued on and on between the various ethnic groups of Sri Lanka.

Almost half of the countries in the world, especially those populated with diverse ethnic groups have either experienced already inter-ethnic group conflicts, or are likely to experience them in the near future of this century. Ethnic politics, it is maintained, have been the single most important source of large-scale conflict leading to civil war, insurgencies, instability and even to the disintegration of states. This phenomenon
has manifested itself in the developing countries of Asia and Africa and it is not surprising that over the next few decades, a major pre-occupation of leadership in many of these countries would to be cope with the problem of managing such conflicts.

Ethnic groups are especially numerous in countries inhabited by people of many different national origins. South and South East Asia is ethnically the most heterogeneous of the world's regions. Centuries of largescale migration, successive waves of religio-cultural movements, wars, and trade, and most recently colonial conquest have produced an ethnologist's paradise in this part of the world. Sri Lanka, like India and other developing countries, and many other societies around the world, has been experiencing a revival of ethnicity. In the light of these observations it would appear that in a plural society like that of Sri Lanka, ethnic politics holds out a threat to national integration.

Historically India is one of the oldest countries. As she has freed herself from the British and has known suffering under imperialist expansion, she has no desire to rule over others. On the contrary she wants to eliminate all traces of imperialism. She desires to be a partner in building a common world order based on the ideals of panchasheel founded on such principles of mutual benefit as equality, non-aggression, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and peaceful existence for the entire human world. India has been consistently against regional military alliance and pays due respect to the U N O . India is devoted
politically to a policy of Non-alignment, and does not believe in war as an instrument of policy. On the other hand, she has firm belief in the peaceful settlement of all international disputes.  

Sri Lanka, from a geo-political point of view, lies within the periphery of India, which stands in relation to her as a big power. India has never behaved like a big power in relations with any of her neighbours. Indo-Sri Lanka relations over the years since independence stand out as a unique example of the manner in which two neighbouring states in South Asia have succeeded by and large in resolving their disputes and problems, though some of which appeared at times to be intractable, by means of political co-operation, discussion, negotiation, diplomatic effort etc.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature on Sri Lankan politics is not so plenty as that on Indian politics. However the phenomenon of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has been investigated by many Sri Lankans and Non-Sri Lankans alike. Scholars from the disciplines of sociology and comparative politics in particular have focussed their attention on Sri Lanka from the conceptual perspectives of race, ethnicity, religion, class, political development, modernization etc.

2 Ravi Kant Dubey, India-Sri Lanka relations, (New Delhi, Deep & Deep Publications, 1989, p.6)
and minority relations Horowitz\(^3\) who is concerned with theories and patterns of problems of ethnic conflict, has suggested that in Srilanka the ethnic conflict is intensified by political sentiments and group loyalties.

Arasarathnam has traced the conflict in Srilanka from its historical roots. He believes that it was colonialism which was responsible for the disunity between the communities in Srilanka\(^4\) D E Smith and Wriggins on the other hand consider that the ethnic strife of Srilanka is predominantly due to the religious institutions, religious revial and cultural nationalism of the competing groups\(^5\) K M De Silva is of the view that the Srilankan problem is mainly racial in character\(^6\) Providing a historical and sociological reading of the Srilankan issue, Thambalahan attempts a balanced analysis of the crisis by suggesting that the problem lies in economic factors\(^7\) Neelam Thiruchelvam and Radhika Coomara Swamy maintain that the constitutional safeguards extended to the minorities have not been upheld by the judiciary of Srilanka and to that extent they are also

\(^3\) Horowitz D L, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, (California University of California Press, 1985)
party to the conflict that rages in Sri Lanka. Moore, however
holds that it was sneaking in of class sentiments that has been
responsible for the Sri Lankan tragedy. He goes on to say that
the Sri Lankan issue continues unmitigated because the elite of
the Sri Lankan society obviously do not have an interest in peace.

James Monar provides an institutional perspective of the
whole crisis in Sri Lanka. However S.U Kodikara reaffirms
that the Sri Lankan problem is only political. Dissanayaka ana-
lyses the Sri Lankan problem from a Sinhalese perspective, while
Satchi Ponnambalam presents it from the Tamil viewpoint.

However these scholarly accounts of the Sri Lankan problem
are deficient on two counts. Firstly they do not trace the dimen-
sion of the emergence of ideologies behind the ethnic conflict
in that country. Secondly a good many of them have become
dated since the situation, in its very nature, is fluid. Therefore
the current situation in Sri Lanka requires a fresh reapprai-
sal of the conflict. The entry of India into the problem solving
attempt also makes it necessary to re-evaluate it.

8 Tiruchelvam, N and Radhika Coomaraswamy, (eds ), The
Role of Judiciary in Plural Societies, (New York, St Martin
Press, 1987)
9. Moore, M The State and Peasant Politics in Sri Lanka,
( Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985)
10. Manor, J Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis, ( London: Croom
Helm, 1984), p 9
11 Kodikara, S U Indo-Ceylon Relations Since Independence,
( Colombo. The Ceylon Institute of World Affairs, 1965)
12 Dissanayaka, T D.S A, The Agony of Sri Lanka, (Colombo,
13 Ponnambalam, S Sri Lanka, The National Question and The
Prof J A Wilson has analysed the problem of Sri Lanka systematically and listed out various causes for the emergence of discontent between the Sinhalese and Tamils. 14 Satchi Ponnambalam, a staunch supporter of the Tamil Movement in Sri Lanka, has brought out a lucid account of the history of Sri Lanka from his chosen point of view. Prof Urmila Phadnis has analysed the problem of Sri Lanka from a religious perspective. She holds that the role of the Buddhist Bhikkus in the politics of Sri Lanka is unfortunate as it is unavoidable. 15 Dr P Sharan has analysed the political system of Sri Lanka. He gives a clear picture of the history of political development and the emergence of the party system in Sri Lanka. 16 Donald L Horowitz examines racial politics in the new states, and especially his illustration from the Sri Lankan perspective is thought-provoking.

Apart from these books, there are also others which are listed in the bibliography at the end of this study.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this inquiry are.

1 To investigate the sphere of ethnic violence and what it means.

To analyse the History of Srilanka-India relations

To analyse the role of ethnic politics in Srilanka to bring to light the various causes for the ethnic holocaust and there its consequences,

To evaluate the role of the IPKF in maintaining peace in Srilanka,

To examine the Indo-Srilanka agreement and its implementation,

To analyse the relations between India and Srilanka from the past to the current times,

To examine the question of the stateless citizens of Tamil origin in Srilanka,

To describe the Socio-Economic Political conditions of the Srilankan society under which the ethnicity of a particular group progressively becomes demanding, competitive, and conflictive,

To study the political and legal suppression of Tamils and the consequent counter uprising of the Tamils by peaceful and violent methods

To explain the direct and indirect mediatory role played by India
METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study is scientific, analytical, critical and minaly library oriented. The data for it have been collected from libraries and knowledgeable people including Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka. The major part of the primary data is collected from the published documents, reports of statistics and manuscripts. Community resources have been exploited. Clinical conducted to obtain the data. People have been interviewed also to elucidate their sentiments regarding the current outrage of political violence against the minority groups. News papers and academic journals form the fourth source for the data, for they provide an adequate picture and critical analysis of the ethnic conflict. Lastly, books and numerous articles related to the field of inquiry have been carefully gone through and assessed.

PLAN OF STUDY

The thesis has been organised into nine chapters, including the conclusion. The purpose of the first chapter is to give a brief background of the Sri Lankan Society. It opens with an introduction to the ethnic groups in Sri Lanka to be studied. Then it follows with a broad definition of ethnic environment and an analysis of the economic profile of the ethnic groups, the social system, political relations and religious dimensions.
The second chapter focuses on the historical, socio-economic and political factors at Sri Lanka.

The third chapter deals with the Indo-Sri Lanka relations from the past to the present.

The fourth chapter deals with the stateless citizens of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, and the question of their citizenship rights.

The fifth chapter deals with the ethnic violence which broke out in Sri Lanka and discusses the causes for it.

The sixth chapter focuses on the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement of 1987 and its implications.

The seventh chapter deals with the role of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in maintaining peace in Sri Lanka.

The eighth chapter is concerned with the various aspects of the direct and indirect role of India as a mediator whenever the issue of Tamils sparked off violence in Sri Lanka. It examines the direct role played by India in her attempt to solve the statelessness of the people of Tamil origin in Sri Lanka. This chapter mainly focuses on India's role in differing the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

The final chapter sums up the arguments made in the thesis by way of conclusion. At the end a comprehensive bibliography and a few appendices are provided.