CHAPTER 6
VARIOUS SOCIO- ECONOMIC POLICIES OF SRI LANKAN STATE

6.1 Policy of Portuguese

The Portuguese, the first European power to come to Sri Lanka, established trading centers and forts in Colombo. They ruled the country for a century and a half. Shortly after their conquest they started interfering in the internal politics of the Sinhalese and Tamil Kingdoms, at first in Kotte and later in Jaffna. Both regions lost their independence to the Portuguese, Jaffna in 1619 and Kotte in 1633. They ruled directly the Kotte kingdom for sixteen years (1633-1658) and thirty nine (1619-1658) years they ruled the Jaffna kingdom also. The Portuguese were interested in the cinnamon trade, and to protect that trade they needed maritime security. They had no interest in territorial conquests. Their intention was to have control of commerce by subduing and dominating others with the use of naval power. The Portuguese ruled the island according to the local customs. They introduced inter marriages between the Portuguese and the local people. As a result, a new social group came into being, namely Burghers. Another notable feature was the introduction of Christianity in Sri Lanka. It was significant in terms of its impact on social and cultural life. K.M. De Silva wrote:

Bigotry, even fanaticism, had not been unknown in Sri Lanka’s past- Nor for that matter had persecution on grounds of religious beliefs.
But instances of this had in general been rare, and in the case of Buddhism, not since the distant past. By the sixteenth century tolerance of other faiths was a well-established Buddhist tradition. In Sri Lanka the Portuguese record of religious persecution, coercion and mindless destruction of places of worship scared to other faiths was unsurpassed in its scale and virulence. The establishment of Roman Catholicism was achieved at the cost of tremendous suffering and humiliation imposed on the adherents of the traditional religions and of Islam. Yet the impact of Roman Catholicism was not entirely destructive. It is to the credit of the Portuguese that conversions to Roman Catholicism stood the test of harassment and persecution under the Dutch and the indifference of the British. In sharp contrast, Calvinism, which the Dutch propagated with much the same zeal if not quite the same means as the Portuguese did Roman Catholicism, developed no strong roots among the people, and its influence evaporated with the collapse of Dutch power. Moreover, the conversion to Roman Catholicism of a large proportion of the people in the areas under Portuguese control opened the way for the absorption of new social concepts such as monogamy and the sanctity of
marriage, and certainly the disappearance of polygamy and polyandry from the lowlands owes much to the influence of the new religion.  

6.2 Policy of Dutch

In 1658 the Dutch took over the administration from the Portuguese. They ruled until the arrival of the British in 1796. They did not leave much impact on Sri Lankan life. One among the few was the introduction of the protestant form of Christianity. In administrative field they depended heavily on the village headmen. (They ensured that Sinhalese Christians live in Sinhala area and Tamils Christians in Tamil area.) Supervisory role over these headmen were played by a Dutch official called disava (collector). There were three such officials, namely in colombo, Jaffna and Matara. They introduced Roman Dutch Law. As in the case of Portuguese, they also encouraged inter-marriages with the local people and thereby contributed to the development of the social group of the Burghers.

6.3 British Policies in Sri Lanka

The British colonial establishment brought about many administrative, economic and political changes in Sri Lanka. Careful analysis of various policies introduced by the British reveals that, the root of the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka lies in those policies. The Dutch handed over the country to the British in 1796. By 1802 the system of three disavas were ended. In its place the colony was divided into thirteen provinces, each of them located in a coastal town after which they were named. But in 1833 the
Colebrooke-Cameron reforms introduced a highly centralized system of administration in the entire island.

6.3.1 Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms

According to the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms in Sri Lanka, the legislative and executive councils were renamed. The legislative council included governors sent from England, representatives from Sinhalese, Ceylon Tamils, Burghers and members from local European community appointed by the governor. All these members were appointed not elected.

The country was divided into five provinces. Each province was headed by a government Agent. Each province was subdivided into districts and each district consisted of several headman's divisions. In the creation of these provinces, the aim of the British was to use the most well fortified coastal urban centers. Colombo, Galle, Jaffna, Batticaloa and the capital of the Kandyan kingdom which served as the base for effective control over the territories falling under them. Most of these areas were still unexplored. It may be clear from the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms that in creating these five divisions there was no historical, geographical, or demographic consideration. But, they aimed to prevent any possible resurgence of Kandyan nationalism by cutting it off from the various branches of the erstwhile Kandyan kingdom with each of them attached to the remaining four provinces. Kandyan national consciousness was the central problem facing the colonial administration in the first half of the 19th century. In 1850 Governor Torrington wrote:
The theory of attempting to break up the so-called nationality of the Kandyans by annexing different portions of the Kandian country to the adjacent district of the Maritime Provinces has in reality proved a failure ... better to meet and provide for the remnant of the Kandian nationality ... than to be voluntarily blind to the fact of its existence.7

These five provinces were later re-demarcated and new provinces were created. In 1845 the North-West Province was created; in 1873 the North-Central Provinces, in 1886 the Uva Province and in 1889 the Sabaragamuva Province were created. It is relevant to notice here that in re-demarcating the provinces and in creating new ones, there was no consideration for a specific political aim but routine administration, devolved to them. Compared to the Indian experience, one striking difference noticeable in Sri Lanka was that none of the Provinces carried any ethno cultural name, not even the Northern Province, which could have been designated as the Tamil Province. They were just geographical expressions relevant for the purpose of colonial administration.8

6.3.2 Educational Policies of the British

The education policy was left to be developed by the missionaries with the active encouragement and support of the colonial government. There were attempts to transfer the responsibility for education to the local authorities in keeping with the British tradition. The Colebrooke- Cameron Commission abolished feudal
system and gave equality of opportunity to all subjects. This led to the formulation of regular educational policies. Accordingly, education was to be spread to all the people if they were to comprehend Western ideas and take advantage of the new facilities. The creation of Ceylonese public opinion and participation of the people in the legislative process required the people to understand the new institutions and how they worked. For this purpose the spread and intensification of education in English language was considered to be essential. Therefore, Colebrooke recommended that indigenous population be educated in English so as to hold government jobs. From this point of view money spent on fostering education in local language was considered a waste of resources. And they were abolished in order to replace it by English education in schools. The missionaries also fell in line with the government policy by concentrating on English education. They adopted the system that was similar to the system that existed in England.9

6.3.3 The Economic Factors of Education

Education had a great source of influence to effect change in the society and thereby in economy. Educational system introduced by the British was not just in the medium of English, but its subject matter was also heavily westernized. The curriculum and conduct of school were consequently oriented towards western customs, tradition and culture. English education caught on amongst the upper classes. However, it was soon found impracticable to neglect Sinhala and Tamil altogether. Then education was made bilingual more of the child’s mother tongue
being used at the primary level and more of English at the later stages. In this context, unlike the Portuguese and the Dutch, the British took a more keen interest in developing the educational system of Sri Lanka to suit their needs and leave a long lasting impact. But it was done more or less as a transplantation of the British model including British customs and traditions. For this purpose, firstly the colonial government encouraged the Christian missionaries to establish and manage schools in all parts of the country both in English and in national languages. Secondly, the government also was involved in establishing schools. Until the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the limited revenue of the colony allowed for education. In addition to government schools established in the towns, the missionaries were paid government grants for the purpose of establishing schools of their own. They established English education at the cost of the indigenous system of instruction, known as the Denominational System. It gave freedom to all religious denominations to establish school for their own children without any restrictions on religious teaching. Seemingly, this was a non-discriminatory and democratic policy that provided equal treatment to all religions. But the reality was something else. On account of scarcity of funds and lack of political support, the Buddhist or Hindu organizations were not in a position, like their Christian counterparts, to take much advantage of this. The actual beneficiaries were, therefore, the Christians. In 1868, 65 percent of the children attending school in Sri Lanka were Christian and only 27 percent were Buddhists. The British policy after 1884 left the development of secondary education largely to private schools, enabling the Christians to maintain this lead.\textsuperscript{10}
The industrial people of the Jaffna peninsula profited by every opportunity afforded them for educating their children at modest cost. As a result they became proficient in the English language and mathematics. They were also able to compete successfully for vacancies in the clerical staff of the public and mercantile services in the large and more commercially developed areas of western and southern Ceylon, and later to gain in these areas an influential position in the learned professions. This was the cause of the Sinhalese Buddhist enthusiasts making legislations for the abolition of the denominational system of education which favored especially Tamils.11

In 1885, the government was faced with the difficulty of educating the local children in the English Medium without the help of their mother tongue. Thus the government changed its emphasis from English to local language and devoted a greater part of its expenditure on education to improve and expand the education in Sinhala and Tamil medium schools. They left English education to the aided or assisted schools run by the missionaries.12

In order to avoid unnecessary duplication the provision of rural schools especially in the interior was undertaken by the government. The large majority of the aided schools were established along the Western coastal belt and the Jaffna peninsula thus confining English education to those areas. This resulted in the creation of particular elite groups amongst those living along the Western coastal belt and the minority Tamils in Jaffna.
The rapid increase of the revenue of the island due to the success in the plantation industry in tea and rubber increased the expenditure on education. At the same time, the success of the plantation industry necessitated the import of cheap labour from South India. This was because of the unwillingness of the local people to work in the plantations. The small landowners and cultivators among the locals believed that education would enable their sons to enter the clerical service or one of the learned professions. The main purpose for the introduction of English education at secondary level was to cater to the creation of a pool of clerks and other lower level functionaries required by the colonial administration. Since 1815, when English was made the official language, no local person could join the public service or hold office under the colonial government unless he or she acquired some knowledge of English. As mentioned earlier, the Christian missionaries mainly opened schools in Tamil dominated areas. Perhaps, the British rulers found that the Tamils were more willing to learn English and join government jobs than the Sinhalese. An important reason for this attitude was that the Ceylon Tamils were living in dry zone areas which were not fertile as Sinhalese Areas. In other words unemployed Tamils were in search of state employment unlike the Sinhalese who were engaged in trade and plantations. Some of the old generation Kandyan chiefs had an awareness of importance of English education. From the ancient times, the royal or the state service was considered as bestowing power, authority and prestige on those holding such positions. In this context, parents also did their best to give an English education to their children so that they
could aspire to enter the colonial government service. Those who could afford it, sent their sons to be educated in English universities. Others who were not so affluent but reasonably was off, sent their children to the Ceylon University College established in 1921, so that they could also enter higher levels of public service. Thus education system in the British era elevated superior, social and economic strata. It became the most important factor in social differentiation in the country.

A strong Sinhala nationalism emerged against westernism and Christians in late 19th century. But the issue of language was to enter in 1930s. The English language was the official language of Sri Lanka and it was the language of administration, professions, commerce, higher education and politics. It was against Sinhalese nationalism. So the majority of Sinhalese wanted the adoption of *Swabhasa* (own language).

**6.4 Constitutional Reforms in Sri Lanka**

Until 1912, there was no constitutional development in Sri Lanka. As nineteenth century drew is a close with the expansion of educational system and general development of the country, it resulted in creation of new middle class group among both Sinhalese and Tamils. The leaders of both groups began to demand an effective role in the conduct of public affairs. They wanted constitutional reforms in the country. For this purpose the Ceylon National Congress(CNC) was formed under the leadership of Ramanatham in 1919. Their demand was that members of the council be chosen through national election on
the basis of territorial constituency and universal adult franchise. In the light of their demand British compromised and introduced a new legislative council with elected members being only sixteen out of thirty seven and twenty three unofficial against fourteen officials. The Ceylon National Congress not in terms with the whole scheme and proposed the new council. Of twenty three unofficial members eleven were drawn from low country Sinhalese, three from Tamils, three from Europeans, two from Burghers, two from Kandyans, one Muslim and one Indian. Some of the Tamils, particularly those belonging to educated classes wanted equal representation. But the constitution of 1924 provided a partly representative government, not a responsible government. One of the qualifications was that voters should have known English or Sinhala. A large number of Indian Tamils were deprived of their franchise. Thus the Tamils agitated against it and so the British appointed Earl of Donoughmore to study the situation in Sri Lanka. The Donoughmore Commission framed a new constitution for Sri Lanka.

6.4.1 Donoughmore Constitution of 1931

Donoughmore constitution of 1931 did not provide full self-government. It retained the governor's power of supervision, protection of interests and veto. Some subjects like finance and law remained in his hand. Thus this was a big step on the road to self government. It introduced adult suffrage and local bodies were required to be run by elected representatives. But the franchise was restricted by educational qualifications and a special seat in Colombo was reserved for Tamils. It led to smaller share in the
state council than before. So some Tamils reacted against the Donoughmore constitution. During the Donoughmore constitution communal tensions had surfaced. The Sinhala leaders desired further change and utilized existing powers. They wanted to improve the situation of the Sinhalese electorate. The minority groups demanded safeguards.\textsuperscript{15}

6.4.2 Soulbury Commission

The working of Donoughmore constitution was not satisfactory for both Sinhalese and Tamils. They wanted further constitutional concessions. The period of Second World War was crucial time for all colonies. That was also true in the case of Sri Lanka. The Secretary of state for colonies gave an assurance that after the war constitutional reform would be taken. Thus on 26\textsuperscript{th} May, 1943 the government declared re-examination of Sri Lanka constitutional reforms. Under the chairmanship of Lord Soulbury (later became first governor general of Sri Lanka), a commission was appointed. After studying the behaviour of the people of Sri Lanka by interacting with various political, social, religious and other minorities association the commission submitted its report on 11\textsuperscript{th} July 1945\textsuperscript{16}. Independent Ceylon came into being on 3\textsuperscript{rd} February 1948. It had a unitary character and the central government was powerful. It could abolish old territorial division-provinces and create new ones in their places. The interests of religion and racial minorities were sought to be safeguarded by a special system of representation. But the Tamil congress wanted balanced representation.
6.5 Post-independence Scenario

The post-independence reality in Sri Lanka was that Sinhalese majority governing body suppressed minority Tamils in the country by various measures. The Sri Lankan government's main aim was regarding the status of Tamils alongside that of Sinhalese majority. The Sinhalese dominated government adopted the Lion flag and installation of 'Sri' number plates. This indicated the political powerlessness and status deprivation of Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹⁷

6.5.1 Citizenship Act

Immediately after gaining independence, the Sinhalese nationalism began to grow. The first victim of that development was the Indian Tamils who were disenfranchised under the Ceylon citizenship Act No 18 of 15 November 1948. The Act laid down the law governing citizenship of Sri Lanka and prescribed qualifications necessary for a person before or after 15 November 1948 to become a citizen of Sri Lanka.¹⁸ The Indian Tamils were virtually declared stateless because they were required to establish citizenship of the country by providing that they were citizens of Ceylon either by descent or by registration. They could claim citizenship of the country by providing that they had family connection with the country for at least two generations. Since in those days there was hardly any practice of registering births, the Indian Tamils failed to produce the birth certificates of their fathers stating that their place of birth was in Ceylon. Consequently, a majority of Indian Tamils became stateless in a country where they had been living for generations. This legal
formulation was designed to deny citizenship to the plantation Tamils of Indian origin and it had affected not only those living but also those still to be born. (See appendix-1).

In many constituencies “Indian”, Tamils formed the majority and elected members of the leftist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) to the parliament. Their sympathy for the leftist party was not favorably viewed by the Sinhalese as well as the Ceylon Tamils and, therefore, they lost their right to vote. In other words, the “Indian” Tamils became stateless in a country where till that time they enjoyed the status of citizenship and the right to vote at the time of election. It was a clear case of discrimination against a minority ethnic group in a multi-ethnic country. The British government’s the special provisions order-in-council introduced in 1946, did not say any thing about the question of Indian Tamil voters. They did not change the existing qualifications of voters. The qualifications means the Indian Tamils in Ceylon of either sex and above twenty one age of years, all could become voters if they could satisfy the registering officer that they were British subjects domiciled to Ceylon or if they were literate and possessed some property or income qualification or if they possessed a certificate of permanent settlement duly obtained. Most of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka did not ensure any one these schemes. Hence, the names of the Indian Tamils especially estate Tamils were not registered in election register.¹⁹
6.5.2 Language Policy

The fundamental objective LSSP which formed in 1935 was to introduce use of Sinhala and Tamil in the lower courts, police stations and government departments. Thus, prior to independence, they began to launch the movement for the adoption of Swabhasa. English would gradually be replaced by both Sinhala and Tamil. However, in 1944, J.K. Jayawardane proposed that Sinhala be made the official language in a responsible time. But this proposal was amended and it was recommended that both Sinhala and Tamil be made the official language as medium of instruction in schools, public service examination and legislative proceedings. At the same time, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, who later introduced Sinhala as the only official language of Sri Lanka, reportedly remarked;

I have no personal objection to both these languages, nor do I see any particular harm or danger or real difficulty from this.  

As noted, the official national language issue was the major bone of contention between the Sinhalese and Tamils. At the time of independence of the country in 1948, the Ceylon Tamils constituted ten per cent of the population but held 31 per cent of the posts in universities and acquired a higher percentage in professional fields like medicine and engineering. Therefore, many Sinhalese resented the fact that the Tamils enjoyed disproportionate educational and employment advantages because of their proficiency in the English language in the
majority Sinhala country. When S.W.R.D Bandaranaike came to power in April 1956, he had promised to introduce Sinhala as the only official language of the country. The Sinhala only legislation came into being under the official Language Act No.33 of 1956. There were some provisions for using English language in government departments until December 31, 1960 and no provisions were made in the Act for the use of Tamil language in Tamil districts.

By the Sinhala only policy the doors of government employment were closed to Tamils. This forced Tamil government employees to study and work in Sinhala or leave employment. Only three years were granted to them by the government to study Sinhala or face dismissal. This rule was extended to the security services, public service, public corporations and even to the private sector. What actually happened was that the Tamil parents resisted the compulsory learning of Sinhala for their children. In the past, they had done it voluntarily.

Thus by 1958 language had became a dominant area of conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. The Jaffna Youth Congress (JYC) which came into being in the 1920s was a progressive nationalistic organization. Before independence the JYC had championed the cause of national languages in education and governance and succeeded in getting virtually all the leading schools in Jaffna to teach Sinhala as a compulsory subject at the secondary level. At that time, the elite Sinhalese were not concerned about their mother tongue. The JYC fought for both
Sinhala and Tamil language. But after the Sinhala Only Act the JYC took sharp retaliatory action. They terminated the teaching of Sinhala in schools in Jaffna. So in 1958 the Tamil Language (special provision-as subordinate legislation) Act was passed. By this the government decided that children should be taught in their mother tongue. That means Sinhalese children in Sinhala and Tamils children in Tamil. This led to an abnormal situation. The Tamils children were supposedly educated without knowing the official language of the country. They became alienated, and outside their own regions, they had no role to play. Again the younger generation of Sinhalese and Tamils became strangers to each other. Thus by the language policy the state failed to safeguard the interests of the Tamils and actively discriminated them from Sinhalese because of their birth. Gradually they nourished the feeling that they had no state and this led to the urge to create a state of their own, called 'Eelam'.

Reading the mind of the majority Sinhalese community on the issue of language, in 1951, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike parted company with the United National Party (UNP) and formed a new political party called the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). He alleged that the UNP had failed to take action on the language question. His party's first manifesto called for immediate adoption of Sinhala and Tamil as official language of the country so that people would cease to feel alien in their own land.

Language was not the main issue in the 1952 elections. In fact, emotions were raised amongst the Sinhalese that their emancipation
could be achieved by the adoption of "Sinhala only" as the official language and the revival of the Buddhist religion. Preparations had already begun for celebrating the 2500th death anniversary of Buddha in 1956. The trends of Buddhist resurgence began in the early 1950s. They were articulated in a provocative book entitled _The Revolt of the Temple_ Written by D.C.Vijayawardhene in 1953. He highlighted legend and superstition as historical facts as well as romanticized the unhistorical view of the past based on mythology, fantasy and social destiny. Surprisingly, the Sinhala intelligentsia did not question the authenticity of Vijayawardhane's version of the Sinhala history and destiny. However, such passiveness of the intellectuals in the face of strong chauvinistic ethno-religious-nationalism is not surprising. In fact, at times they have also been influenced by such emotions and articulate their own views, thus, legitimizing nationalism and feel secure in avoiding the wrath of the fanatics. Such anomaly in the behavior of the intellectuals was recently noticed in the Balkans where ethno-religious-nationalism has emerged.

**Table 6.1**

*Main Languages spoken in Sri Lanka by Various Ethnic Group based on 1981 census*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Sinhala</th>
<th>Tamils</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sinhalese</td>
<td>89.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka Tamils</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Tamils</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moors</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malays</td>
<td>61.3</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burghers</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 1950s, the social and political atmosphere was surcharged with the emotional issues of language and religion in Sri Lanka. The Buddhist religious upsurge gained momentum because of the preparations for the celebration of the 2500th death anniversary of Buddha in 1956. The Buddhist monks, who are supposed to renounce all worldly affairs and devote themselves to spiritualism, became the most articulate spokesman for the adoption of "Sinhala only" as the official language. By the "Sinhala only" policy the Sinhala language became the language of administration. The government progressively phased out Tamil recruitment which was eventually not more than a trickle in public services, teaching, defence and other areas. At the time of independence, employees in the service of the government numbered 82,000, of whom 30 per cent were Tamils. Although government recruitments were expanded rapidly to 2,25,000 by 1970, the proportion of Tamils declined to 6% in the same year of the total personnel by then.

In 1973, out of 100 persons selected for higher administrative service through examination, 92 were Sinhalese, four were Tamils and four were Muslims. The decline in Tamil recruitment to government services from 1956 to 1970 was as follows:
Table 6.2

Employment of Tamils in government services
(in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceylon administrative service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical service (incl. Postal, railway, hospital, and customs services)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions (engineers, doctors, lecturers)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed forces</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour forces</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Profile issued by Tamil Information center

6.5.3 Standardization and District Quota System

During Bandaranaike's time suppression of the interests of Tamils intensified. He abolished denominational system in 1960 and introduced the weightage system in favor of Sinhalese. They introduced an educational discriminatory policy called Standardization Programme. It was a notoriously selective device which was mainly aimed at subjugating the Tamil students. According to this program the Tamil students were required to obtain a higher aggregate of marks for university admissions than their Sinhalese counterparts. This severely undermined the Tamil prospects for higher studies. The new scheme turned out to be far more discriminating than the earlier one by denying thousands of deserving students, their right of higher studies. And the government ignored the timely needs of the Tamil and
Muslim schools. They were not able provide enough teachers to fill the post of the corresponding number of them who retired. For the benefit of the Sinhalese the government also introduced lower qualifying marks in the competitive examination for getting admission in the university. This eliminated the competition among candidates. The merit system was abolished. Standardization and district quotas were used to favour Sinhalese students. It also sought to give the rural under privileged a fairer chance of gaining access to a tertiary education by imposing quotas on a regional basis for university admissions. The policy appeared to favour the children of the affluent Sinhalese rural families and worked against the Tamil students who were mainly from Jaffna and Colombo regions. By this policy, a large number of qualified Tamil students were removed from university admissions. These young generations who were so flagrantly and unjustly excluded from university and prevented by the state from achieving their aspirations became the leaders of the armed liberation struggle for the state of Eelam.

6.5.4 State Sponsored Colonization

After independence dry zone colonization strategies stand in the forefront of the development strategies of Sri Lanka. The main objective of this strategy was to increase the country's food production, by utilizing its physical resources and movement of surplus population from over-crowded areas of the wet zone to the sparsely populated dry zone. The primary criteria for the selection in the colonization scheme was landlessness. In the early schemes, even houses and other infrastructures were taken care of by local administrative officials. They also tolerated the illegal
occupation and cultivation of state-owned lands because of weakness in the implementation machinery and the threat of loss of productivity, or politically sensitive problems. Successive regimes at the centre consciously tried to make the prospect of land resettlement both possible and attractive for the indigent beneficiaries. At first they maintained uniformity in the size of the individual allotment. The settlers were not required to contribute to the cost. No effective charges for land and irrigation were made. The establishment of irrigation facilities and the development of land for agriculture were done entirely by the government. The colonists were also provided government subsidies for house construction, purchase of agricultural implements and living expenses for several months after initial settlement in the colony.

By the state sponsored colonization and resettlement schemes about 200,000 Sinhalese families were resettled in over 3,000 square miles of the Tamil homelands. As a result, one third of the Batticaloa district in the Eastern province was absorbed into the new Sinhalese Amparai district.

6.5.4.1 Features of Organized Dry Zone Colonization Schemes

The entire colonization scheme in the Dry zone was divided into four regions, namely;

1. Central region,
2. Northern region
3. Eastern and South Eastern region and
4. North Western region.
The Central region covers the districts of Anuradhapura, Plonnaruwa and Matale, the western parts of Tricomalee districts and northern parts of the Kandy districts. The northern region included the districts of Jaffna, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya and Mannar. The Eastern and south eastern region encompasses the districts of Batticaloa, Ampara, Monaragal, Badulla and Hambantota. Fourth region, North-western region, included the districts of Puttalam and Kurunegala.32

The application of the Dry Zone colonization strategy outlined in the earlier stages have remained more or less same in subsequent years. There was only one important modification of the original
design in the form of progressive reduction of land alienated to each settler family (from 5 acres irrigable land and 3 acres of non-irrigable homestead land in the schemes established up to the mid-1950s and 3 acres of irrigable and 2 acres of non-irrigable land in the 1960s and 2.5 acres and 0.5 acres, respectively, in the two categories of land in those of the recent past).33

This was aimed at reducing the cost per settler family by maximizing their number accommodated in the colonies as well as for inducing more intensive utilization of the alienated land. A system of "advanced alienation", another cost reduction deviation from the original model, attempted in the colonies opened up in the 1960s, was abandoned at the end of that decade largely because of its failure to reduce costs.34

Most of the colonization schemes of Dry Zone are based on restoration of ancient storage reservoirs and channel system. The only significant exception in this regard up to the launching of the Mahaveli Department Programme were the river basin development project of Gal-Oya in the eastern lowlands and Walave in the southeast. The colonies varied in size and migration impact from those with a few hundred settlers drawn from their immediate vicinity to those that have attracted thousands of migrants from the densely populated areas of the country. By the early 1980s, there were about 100 colonization schemes scattered throughout the Dry Zone.
Table 6.4
Settlement and land development in Major Colonization Schemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of schemes</th>
<th>Number of Allotters</th>
<th>Extent of land Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Paddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,982</td>
<td>5,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matale</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3,785</td>
<td>7,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuwara Eliya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,127</td>
<td>4,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uda-Walawe Scheme</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,835</td>
<td>n.a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurunegaia</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6,610</td>
<td>15,172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Puttalam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2,358</td>
<td>5,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anuradhapura</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20,381</td>
<td>52,038</td>
</tr>
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<td>Polonnaruwa</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14,687</td>
<td>52,287</td>
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<tr>
<td>Badulla</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4,128</td>
<td>9,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaragala</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2,114</td>
<td>5,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnapura</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>552</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>1,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vavuniya</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>4,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullaitivu</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5,286</td>
<td>8,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaffna</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,054</td>
<td>8,548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricomalee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6,325</td>
<td>18,105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,394</td>
<td>11,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amparai</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,815</td>
<td>32,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL DISTRICT</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100,611</td>
<td>247,111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Land Commisioner’s Department of Sri Lanka

From several viewpoints, the Mahaweli Development Programme marks a new stage in the processes of settlement development in the Dry Zone. Its novelty lies mainly in its unprecedented scale.
It was not only based on the physical resources of the Mahaweli River but also on several adjacent river catchments, its hydraulic matrix extends over a large part of the northern Dry Zone plains, supplying water to the several complexes of new peasant settlements and improving the existing irrigation in many of the older colonies. Moreover, the Mahaweli Program is also more genuinely multi-purpose in its objectives than any of the previous colonization schemes. But it was developed predominately in Sinhalese areas. The water resource development in the Dry Zone continues to be largely controlled where the Tamil population is concentrated. The transfer of surplus water from the Mahaweli Ganga into the rivers of the northern province and of converting the Jaffna lagoon into fresh water lake have received the lowest priority.

The colonization schemes of the Dry Zone are the main surplus areas of rice production in Sri Lanka, having an aggregate of about thirty per cent of the country's total extant of land devoted to paddy and contributing an estimated 40% to the total output of rice in the country. These Dry zone colonization schemes affected demographic balance, which was disadvantageous to the Tamils. This means the Sinhalese percentage of population increased in these areas. Thus, in Sri Lanka, the state-sponsored program affected the Tamil's land which they regarded as their traditional homelands. They regarded relocation of large numbers of Sinhalese into the area where Tamils have historically formed a high proportion of the population as a deliberate plan to bring about a change in the ethnic composition of those areas. The
resettlement program had inevitably reduced the effectiveness of the Tamil voting power in these parts of the country. At the same time some Sinhalese saw the Tamil protest as further evidence of what they view as the inflated demands which this group continually makes.\textsuperscript{35}

The government approach was that Sri Lanka was home to all Sri Lankans. All citizens are free to live anywhere in the island. According to a government spokesman by colonization program the people were resettled in numbers proportionate to the ethnic composition of the entire island.\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{6.6 The Constitution of 1972}

According to the Constitution of 1972 the head of the state is prime minister. Provisions of the constitutions were against the interest of the minority people in the country. The status of Tamil language and Tamil community as a whole became worse. This led to further demand for regional autonomy under the federal constitution. The Tamils demanded the establishment of a separate state.

\textbf{6.7 The 1978 Constitution}

A controversial bill on Sri Lanka's constitution was passed by parliament on 9\textsuperscript{th} August 1978 that came into force on 7 September 1978 which was Sri Lanka's third constitution since its independence. The new constitution envisaged unitary presidential form of government with a combination of parliamentary and presidential features. It provides strong president and weak prime
minister. For conflicting language issue, Sinhala and Tamil were recognized as national languages, but Sinhala became the official language. And Budhism was accorded a foremost position. Fundamental rights and Directive principles were also included in the constitution. Importance of judiciary and law increased and the voting age had been reduced to eighteen years. According to the Tamils point of view, the constitution also had discriminated against them because the Tamil language was given a second place.

6.8 Economic Programmes and Policies of Sri Lankan Government

The Sri Lankan government gave stress on economic development. The first post independence plan was to make Ceylon less dependent on imports for its supplies of essential food and manufactures.

6.8.1 Plannings

A six year plan of development was assigned covering the period of 1947-48 to 1952-53. The planners expected that by increasing the output of food materials, imports would be minimized and thereby increase the per-capita income of the country and domestic production. In the initial stages, the plan was a success. But the Korean war in 1950 and 1951 affected Sri Lanka economy also. The country faced food shortage and the government introduced rice ration system.37

By 1954 Ceylon made remarkable economic and financial recovery as the terms of trade improved. So the government decided to follow
three principles, first, provision had to be made for commitments on relatively long term projects in the country started after 1954-55. The second was to speed up the projects started earlier. The third was concerned with the residue of funds available after providing for current commitment.

The Sri Lankans were little taxed than people of any other countries. The major reason behind it was that until the ethnic crisis in 1980s the Sri Lankan government had been spending only a small amount on military and intelligence establishments. Investment priorities in the development program were determined broadly on the lines recommended by the IBRD mission in 1952. With the renewed emphasis on long-term planning, in July 1955, government issued a statement on foreign investment policy.38

The government stated that budgetary policy should be geared to achieve rapid economic development while maintaining financial stability at the same time. In September 1956, the National Planning Council was established under the national Planning Council Act No.40, of which the chairman was the minister of finance, and the council consisted of fifteen others appointed by the Prime Minister. The function of the council was to define the planning of agriculture, industry, commerce, education, social services, and other matters pertaining to the national economy. Also defined in the Act was the role of the Planning Secretariat. It was to function as a government department and its task was to
provide advisory services and render any other assistance that may help the council to perform its duties.

A policy declaration was made that the government would give high priority to industrial development and the control of basic industries while giving private enterprise every encouragement to participate in economic development. Industries were classified into three categories. The first consisted of industries to be exclusively owned and operated by the government, including cement, limonite and salt. Reversing a decision made previously, the government decided not to transfer to the private sector, under the provision of the government-sponsored corporation act No 19 of 1955, the seven state enterprises manufacturing ceramics, vegetable oil, paper, cement, chemical, leather and plywood. The second category envisaged joint participation by the state and private enterprise in industries such as textiles, light consumer industries, was left open to private enterprise.

In framing the budget for 1957-58, the government was aware that an improvement in the foreign trade position would not be forthcoming. A deficit of $26.1 million was estimated, but in actual fact it was higher because of revised wage scales of government employees and unforeseen expenditure on account of the damage caused by floods in December, 1957.

By 1958, there was some indication of the government's achievements in agriculture and industry, although they were restricted to a few spheres. The government was able to
implement successfully the policy of increasing the domestic production of textiles.

The first comprehensive national plan was presented by the United National Party Government in 1955. But the new political party, the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) that took office in 1956 did not officially accept the plan, and instructions were give to reorient it to include a program for the private sector.39

6.8.2 The Ten-Year Plan

The period chosen, namely 1959 to 1968, was in excess of the conventional five or six years usually covered by development plans. There were two important reasons for this: first, the economic problems of the country, particularly the very high rate of population growth, required a scale of development far in excess of what had been attained before. A relatively short planning period would not have provided a level of development commensurate with the requirements of an increasing population and a fast, expanding work force. The problem of employment was one of the key questions of relevance to planning in Ceylon and the emphasis had to be placed on fields of productive activity where the future work force, which was estimate to more than double over the twenty-five year period ending 1981, could be found employment.

The year 1977 made a turning point in the economic history of Sri Lanka by the launching of an extensive package of liberal economic policies by the UNP government. The liberal economic policies brought relaxation of rules, controls and regulations and
facilitated the free movement of goods, services and finance within the country and outside. Many state-owned enterprises became privatized and the state bureaucracy declined. Thus there seemed substantial expansion of urban informal sector (include retail trade, goods and passenger transport and personal service) particularly in the capital city of Colombo. The country received a wide range of foreign capital investment particularly in labour intensive industries. These industries used more labor compared to capital. Most of the industrialists were engaged in garment industry, which could employ a small section of the unemployed youths mostly young women. They did not absorb unemployed men in large numbers. Moreover, the jobs created in the industries were low-paid, unskilled ones not the type of job the country’s educated youths have been looking for. The dissatisfied groups were mainly from Tamils. The educated Tamils youths educated in their own language were placed in a disadvantageous position in the competition for state employment. This became a far more burning issue in Sri Lanka in 1970s and 1980s.40

6.9 Role of Defense Forces

The role played by the defense forces in Sri Lanka was not significant during the 1950s and 1960s. The government of Sri Lanka just after becoming independent from Britain, had to organize its own entry force. The defense force of Sri Lanka mainly consists of its army, navy and air force. In the past these forces were important only in ceremonial proceedings. They did not give much importance in developing a large number of forces,
supplementing it with good training and sophisticated weapons. The table below shows the strength of the forces during 1986-94.

**Defence forces of Sri Lanka-1986 and 1994**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1986</th>
<th>1994</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Army:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>63,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>105,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>2,960</td>
<td>9,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,960</td>
<td>10,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserve</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Task Force</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Guard</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>15,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Guard</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Force</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>77,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Asia Year Book- 1987, pp.20-21

So the government did not include much amount in the budget for defence expenditure. The armed forces were mainly involved in day-to-day law and order maintaining activities and communal clashes and they never fought a real war. At the time of immense attacks by LTTE cadres, the government forces were not competent enough to tackle the situation. The gradual increase in terrorist activities has compelled the Sri Lankan government to
increase the defence expenditure. The cost will continue to rise as the armed forces obtain more weapons and other war related materials.

6.10 Conclusion

Tamils who were proficient in English language, enjoyed a very good economic and social position during the colonial rule. But the successive governments, controlled by majority Sinhalese, came to power after independence introduced many draconian measures to discriminate Tamils from the main stream. They were disfranchised, linguistic freedom was curtailed, the sectoral identity was questioned and right to education was hindered with chauvinistic oppression. Ultimately, these policies put the young Tamils in an anarchical situation and to violence.

NOTES


2 Ibid., p.128.


5 The thirteen provinces were Jaffna, Mannar, puttalam, chilaw, Necoombo, Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Batticaloa, Tricomalee and Mullaitivu.

Thus Nuwarakalaviya was added to the Northern Province (Jaffna), Tamankaduwa and a large portion of Uva were added to the Eastern Province (Batticaloa) western flanks of the central highlands were added to the western Province (Colombo), and parts of Sabaragamuwa and Uva were added to the Southern Province (Galle).


8 G.H, Peiris, n.6., p.20.


10 Partha S. Ghosh, n.3, p.53.

*The British educational policy not only disadvantaged the Sinhalese Buddhists vis-à-vis the Christians, but also affected them vis-à-vis the Tamils. For example, in 1869, the Department of Public Instruction was opened to financially assist schools in general through various schemes of grants- in-aid. Following this, several Sinhalese Buddhist schools were established – within a decade there were four such schools registered as Buddhist. This system, however, hand little impact in Jaffna where it was left entirely to the Christian missionaries to promote education.*

11 Partha, n.3, pp.53-54.

12 D. Thenuwara, n.9, p.477.

13 Ibid., pp 477-480.


17 Ibid., p.72.

19 Ibid., Ravi Kant Dubey, n.15, pp.37-38.

The provisions in the citizenship act create two classes of citizens by decent and by registration. A person might acquire citizenship by decent of his father or his paternal grandfather who were born in Ceylon. Besides he must have been born before the appointed date to be fixed later. Only Sinhalese can acquire citizenship by decent, though Indians had spent their lifetime in Ceylon. They have been barred. In regard to the citizenship by registration, the Bill provided the unmarried Indian residents who have lived in Ceylon for ten years, and married persons who have lived for seven years immediately prior to January 1946 will have given the status of citizenship those who acquire citizenship by registration constitute a inferior class as it did not confer full citizenship rights to them. Again the person who ask for citizenship will have prove that he has the means to livelihood that he can maintain himself and his family. Hence the persons who enter Sri Lanka after 1936 or 1939 would not have been able to acquire citizenship. Absence in Ceylon exceeds one year considered break in continuous residence. The act further stipulated that a person who apply for citizenship should able to show that he has lived in Ceylon with his wife and minor children and even if one of minor children lived outside Ceylon could not apply for the same. The candidate must conform the laws of the state. According to the laws of Ceylon one cannot marry his sister's daughter. But in south India it was permitted. And according to Celon's law one cannot have more than one wife. But many of Indians had more than one wives. This was a major disqualification for the Indian applicants.

20 O.N. Mehrotra, n.14, p.1523.

21 Ibid., p.1525.


Sinhala only legislation provided an opportunity for 74% of the population who did not have proficiency in English language to conduct official transactions in their native language. At the same time, Tamils many of whom were proficient in the English language and not Sinhala, were prohibited from using the English language. Its use was prohibited partly because it was foreign language and partly because it gave more importance to Tamils in education and employment. Tamils objected this attitude.

22 Devanesan Neisah, Tamil Nationalism (Colombo: Marga, 2001), pp.11-12.

23 Satchi Ponnabalam, n.16, p.4.

24 See appendix II


28 Sachi, n.16, p.5.


30 Satchi, n.16, pp.3-4.

31 G.H Peris, n.6, pp.172-173.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., p.28.

34 Ibid,
Advanced alienation means that under which the selected colonists were required to participate collectively in aspects of initial land development.


In that system there also three categories of persons who received rice. First the ration of the manual worker, second was designates ordinary and the smallest was given to infants.

38 Ibid.

The main points were

1. It was desirable for local capital to participate with foreign capital in the establishment of business enterprises. No rigid rules concerning such participation were laid down.

2. Importance was attached to the training of as many Ceylonese national as possible in business operated by foreign firms.

3. Remittances of dividends and interest as well as withdrawal of capital on liquidation were permitted freely.

4. For taxation purpose, foreign concerns were to be treated on equal terms with local enterprise. Whenever possible, the government would negotiate with other governments to relieve the burden of double taxation.

39 Ibid.

The six – year program broadly sought to satisfy several objectives:

1. To safeguard the existing productivity of the major areas of the economy, since a deterioration in these sectors could affect or negate advances in other directions. This included a program for the rehabilitation or improvement of the major export crops.
2. To increase the total output in the economy through the expansion of existing economic activities and the creation of new ones. It included programs and projects for expanding the acreage and improving the yield of rice production, for improving the output of subsidiary foodstuffs and the fishing industry, expanding the cultivation of tobacco, expanding from tourism, expansion of manufacturing industry, and other activities of a similar nature.

3. This included utility services and basic overheads of the economy as a whole. To a large extent, these were to be the exclusive responsibility of the state, and the emphasis was on essential services such as road, harbors, telecommunications, railways and power. Substantial investments were to be made in these fields.

4. Since social services played a significant role in development by improving the quality and living standards of the population, provision was made for investment in water supplies, housing, hospitals, schools, training institutions and subsidiary social services.

Chapter 7

Ideologies and Strategies of Various Militant Groups in Sri Lanka

7.1. Evolution of Tamil Militancy in Sri Lanka
7.2. The Birth of the Tamil Militancy
7.3. The Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF)
7.4. Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP)
7.5. Conclusion