CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

9.1 Evaluation

Almost all countries of south Asia have been following divergent strategies for dealing with ethnic movements and all of them have failed to satisfy minority groups in varying degrees. A comparative study of the ethnic policies of the governments reveals that in most of the cases the problems remain unresolved. The people who have ethnic consciousness are more committed to it than is assumed ordinarily by governments. Question of ethnic identity varies and even changes from one historical period to another.

For the last two decades, Sri Lanka has been facing an irresolvable ethnic problem that has even threatened the territorial integrity of the country. The British imperialists seeded a communal cancer in the island. That was the policy of the British in leaving their colonies in a state of turmoil as we had seen in the Indian subcontinent. The British imposed a unitary constitution which envisaged a free democracy by the majority of Sinhalese group. The overall objective of the study is that the spatially unequal and temporarily uneven capitalist development are at the roots of the ethnic cleavages in Sri Lanka. The process of economic development and the growth strategies coupled with the socio-political policies have widened this problem.
9.2 Objectives

The first objective of the study was theoretical in nature, which has been dealt with in the second chapter. The study has attempted to supplement the theoretical foundation with the use of secondary historical materials. It attempted to explain internal colonialism assisted by factors like economic dependence, uneven development and development of underdevelopment. The internal colonial model would therefore seem to provide a more adequate explanation of the ethnic identity among the peripheral groups in a complex society like Sri Lanka. The peripheral group is culturally and economically isolated from the core. For strengthening the study of internal colonial model, Marxist view on society and different models of modernization theory have been touched upon. The modernization theory examines the works of the nineteenth century social scientists, as well as contemporary commentators.

The Political economy of Sri Lankan state is discussed in the third chapter. Sri Lanka is basically an agrarian economy. An important problem facing the third world countries is the difficulty of trying to balance their drives for an increase in national material output and at the same time attempting conservation and renewal of their natural resources. The development pattern of Sri Lanka was mostly centered along ethnic lines. The theoretical study of economic development pattern in Sri Lanka and the colonial legacy on the
restructuring of Sri Lanka's political and economic institution is highlighted in this chapter.

Another objective, the status of Tamils in the colonial and post-colonial situations, is discussed in the fourth chapter. Before the advent of foreign colonists the Tamils of Sri Lanka had their own sovereignty, their own language and culture, and they enjoyed equality in all spheres. The Christian missionaries established excellent institutions for education in north and east of the island. The education imparted to the students by these institutions enabled many of them to become doctors, engineers, and lawyers among others. These circumstances led to the impression being formed in the minds of the Sinhalese masses that the Tamils were enjoying more facilities than what they deserved.

The historical background to the emergence of the ethnic diversity in Sri Lanka is the fourth objective formulated in the fifth chapter. Capitalist development from its beginning and its uneven growth in Sri Lanka is set out in the fifth chapter. The ethnic problem becomes its disreputable form in the uneven development pattern of Sri Lanka state. The ethnic distribution among various districts of Sri Lanka using maps is also included in this chapter for examine the fifth objective.

The sixth objective is to examine the various socio-political programmes of the successive governments which has been set out in sixth chapter. The constitutional developments in Sri Lanka, the educational policies
of British and all the policies adopted by Sinhalese dominated Sri Lanka government after its independence are included in the sixth chapter. By the citizenship act of 1948, language act of 1956, standardization and quota system in university admissions and employment sector and state sponsored colonization programmes the Sinhalese dominated governments marginalized Tamils (Indian and Sri Lankan) in the country. The governments economic planning and its impact on country’s development are also summed up in this chapter by using government documents. The various policies and programmes of the state, directed towards the underdevelopment of north and north eastern parts (Jaffna, Batticaloa, and Tricomalee) of the country has also been subjected to study. These districts are Tamil dominated areas. The crucial subject area of defence allocation was also subjected to closer study.

The eighth objective, that is the socio-economic conditions for the emergence of militancy in Sri Lanka, is discussed in the seventh chapter. The oppression against Tamils in Sri Lanka was a continuous process, and it is the main factor behind the underdevelopment of Tamil areas and the emergence of the various militant groups in the country. Among five important militant groups LTTE occupies a key place in the study. The objective of the study also focuses on the main ideologies of the five militant groups and their ends.
The final objective, the development of militant movement in Sri Lanka is summed up in the eighth chapter. The militant movement entered into the mainstream Sri Lanka's history was under the flag of nationalism. Sinhalese nationalism on the one side and the Tamil Nationalism on the other. Following the riots of 1983 a large scale refugee problem was created and this led to the India's active intervention in the island's affairs.

9.3 Findings

The Marxian theories of state have come a long way since their origin. Based on Marx's idea of class perspective the newer theories grouped industrially advanced societies and dependent state of developing societies. Contemporary theories reject a single version of capitalist state but establish a historical analysis within the universalistic conception relating to the state and capitalist societies. The uneven wave of modernization and development over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. The 'internal colonial model' by Michael Hechter is focused in this study.

The core periphery relations at international level was applied to the problem of ethnicity within a society. Instead of the relation between the countries, the internal relations between regions inhabited by different groups, has been formed in the case of Sri Lanka. The core group used its advantageous position, to regulate the allocation of resources and social roles. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced or periphery group are denied access to these roles. In Sri Lankan case the Sinhalese dominated government is the core group and
Tamils are the periphery group. The nationalist movement is an ethnic reaction against overt ethnic policies of a dominant ethnic core. This ethnic core became more and more exclusive in economic terms and this change was accompanied by increasingly explicit repression of opposition. Behind the birth of any militant or terrorist group, there may be some dissatisfaction with the policies of the government. Sometimes, they even demanded the displacement of existing political elites.

The militant attitudes are determined by different factors like psychological, structural and positional. By studying these psychological factor it become clear that the aggressiveness is an inherent part of every person. When continuous denial of their interest and there could be a strong leader behind them or in the aware of their state of affairs, they become more militant. For attaining a specified goal militant people sacrifice their life and they become martyrs. The power of the militant group is located solely in the central power. The strength of the military is measured by its ability to use as counter strategy. If sacrifices and the sufferings of militants are very high the militant movements will last to attain their goal.

From political economy of the state, it is found that agriculture was the economic base for many centuries. The western development strategies based on industrialization made far reaching consequences in the country. It could not solve the problems of poverty and frustration among unemployed youth in the country.
Present ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka can be traced back to the policies of the British. As part of the colonialist expansionist policy they started spreading Christianity through Christian missionaries and started schools. English education was provided by these Christian missionary schools. The government policy was one of limiting government schools and granting state aid to private schools. The colonial government recruited local personnel, proficient in English, for junior and middle level bureaucratic positions. Hence English education came to be valued and became the primary means of economic advancement, social mobility and elite culture. In this way English education, Christianity, western culture and values became the dominant force in the country. Tamils were more willing to learn English and join government jobs than the Sinhalese. That was because Tamils were inhabited in dry zone areas which were not fertile as other areas in which Sinhalese lived. But in early twentieth century Sinhalese also were attracted towards government jobs and found opportunities to acquire higher education.

Immediately after independence the newly elected government disenfranchised Indian Tamils under the citizenship Act of 1948. The Indian Tamils were virtually declared stateless because they were required to establish citizenship of the country by proving that they were citizens of Ceylon either by descent or by registration. Another major bone of contention between the Tamils and Sri Lankan government was the issue of Language. In 1956 “Sinhala only” as the official language were introduced. This language led to not only ethnic
divide but also social and religious discord. Again other policies by successive government in Sri Lanka such as dry zone colonization, standardization and district quota system in education and employment sector also marginalize the Tamils (including Sri Lankan) in the country. The education policy of Sri Lanka governments was therefore a calculated move to keep the Tamil students from entering professional colleges and universities.

The agricultural policy of Bandaranaike government which intended to help Sinhalese peasants also helped the farmers of north and east to a considerable extent. The government started a systematic scheme of colonization in the traditional Tamil homelands with a Westminster model of parliamentary representation. These colonization programmes were aimed at changing the predominantly Tamil areas into Sinhalese majority areas. Their aim was to destroy the Tamil traditional integrity.

From the findings set out in the preceding chapters it is clear that the minority Tamil people had an unequal position in Sri Lanka. When the colonialist handed over power the majority ethnic group took over the country. The study found the major socio economic and political reasons for the rising ethnic problem. They have been eliminated from the mainstream of social and political life of the country. The provisions of the constitution favored only majority populations. This created problems for the youth. They could neither enter the universities local organizations or go abroad,
meanwhile the militant movement for a separate state was ground
and hundreds of youths joined the fight for an independent Eelam.

The growth of the Tamil ethnic nationalist movement was analyzed in
the context of development of underdevelopment in a third world
economy. The disparity in relative economic positions of the two
ethnic groups within the society exists is because of the unequal and
uneven capitalist development along with asymmetrical and
disadvantageous distribution of power. According to Marx national
oppression would inevitably hold back and divide the working class
of the oppressor nation. It is through the oppression and through
the hegemony of a national chauvinistic ideology that the ruling
Sinhalese bourgeoisie exerts dominance and power over the ethnic
minority, namely Tamils. The emergence of a reactive ethno-
nationalist Tamil identity was from the political and economic
dominance that the Sinhalese sought to establish and extend over
the Tamil minorities within an economically developing society. In
this process the Sinhalese who enjoy political power at the center
tried to develop at the expense of the minority Tamils at the
periphery to create an internal colony. The Tamils of these
underdeveloped areas, confronted with steadily mounting national
oppression, frustrated with the failure of national political struggle
demanding basic human rights, protested against the exploitation of
the Sinhalese bourgeoisie through armed resistance movement to
secede from the center.
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