DOMESTIC DETERMINANTS OF SRI LANKA'S SECURITY

The treaty of Westphalia and the consequent developments in the post World War has led theorist to equate national security to external and territorial protection and preservation of its sovereignty. Furthermore, the dominance of realism and the cold war stressed the importance of interaction of state within an anarchical system. Although, state was the primary unit of analysis, the way in which internal politics, including its historical and cultural attributes, shapes and direct foreign policy agenda was not considered to be important factor affecting security of a state. Consequently domestic structure as a factor affecting inter-state and intra-state relations took a back seat.

Such conceptualisation was justified as states, particularly western, did not face much challenges to the integrity of the state from within. And when such threat emerged it was easily suppressed or managed by the coercive state apparatus. However, such analytical scheme is inadequate because challenges to the legitimacy of the state and its integrity are a common phenomenon because of the growing democratisation of the civil society and the rising aspiration of various cultural and sub-cultural identities and groups. The state is being challenged from within and the instability and inability of the state to manage such conflicts have tendency in reinforcing and even discarding the core values that defined security.

The modernisation theorist writing in the 1960s assumed that economic growth and development would bring about a convergence in the various cultures, local identities based on ethnic or parochial divisions and traditional identities would be superseded by wider loyalties i.e., particularism would give way to universalism with the introduction of ‘modern values’. Although, most of the post colonial states gave high priority to economic development and industrialisation to end poverty, create employment and also increase international trade, economic development and modernization occurred unevenly and states both developed and developing continue to be torn by civil-strife, ethnicity, racism, secessionist movements and other form of violent conflicts. The states are unable to meet the popular expectations of popular demands as well as failed to distribute the benefits of development.
equally. Thus as Ayoob states, it is the early stage of state-making which is the primary issues dominating the security problematique of third world states.

Waltz, in his second image has placed much importance to the domestic-'nation-state' factor to explain external act, which takes many forms - as related to type of government that is generically bad, problem of governance etc. According to the 'Second Image' internal organization of a state is the key to the understanding war and peace, and hence to the problem of security of a state. Following Waltz, theorists like Rosenau, Wilkinson, Baghat Korany, and others had taken up the study of domestic structure and shown its affects on decision making and foreign policy. However, their explanations were limited because they only attempted to understand the decision making processes, without giving due emphasises on historical, economical and socio-political aspects of a state and the challenges they pose to the legitimacy of the state and stability of the civil society. Recent scholars like Mohammed Ayoob, Barry Buzan, Caroline Thomas have attempted to redefine security problems of third world by giving due emphases to the issues emanating from the domestic arena of a state as well.

Caroline Thomas, rightly notes that the state-centric geopolitical approach to international relations is inadequate to study and analyse third world security issues. Therefore, the interface of state building process, economic development and distribution of benefits as well as electoral politics are crucial issues that generates internal stability. Thus to understand the dynamics of internal or domestic politics of Sri Lanka issues relating to internal stability, such as problem of governance, legitimacy, economic development, ethnicity and alienation, that affects the security of the state will be analysed in this chapter.

Most of the South Asian states continue to remain mired with problems of state-building with regard to territorial consolidation and institutional building. Further, this state society tension is also a result from the growing centralisation, bureaucratisation and authoritarianism which has weakened state institution and even vitiated the representative nature of the system. Such centralising tendency has at time also thrown into disequilibrium the division of power between the legislature, executive and judiciary.
Besides the South Asian states have not been able to grapple the persisting problem of national identity and social cohesion. The rise of Hindu nationalism in India, Buddhist/Sinhalese nationalism in Sri Lanka, Bhutanese nationalism in Bhutan have tried to redefine the culture of the state by injecting their respective ideology into the state ideology. Such tendencies have not only led to the alienation of minorities but also generated a sense of insecurity leading to further break down in social cohesion and in their search for security they have taken refuge under sub national allegiance in the form of ethnic or separatist movement.8

In addition to problem of ethnicity states also witnesses political dissent that arise due to the failure of the institution and inability of the state to accommodate the aspirations of the masses. Such dissent exhibited through demonstration, strike, hartals, etc., are also perceived as threat to the state and at time the uses its coercive mechanism have further aggrieved individual and society.9

Thus the state faces challenges to its political legitimacy because of its inability to accommodate the rising aspiration of the civil society, protection of interest of minority, inability to equally allocate resources and economic opportunities, unwillingness to widen the democratic structure by including the politically mobilised social groups, and also lack of will to restructure the political order.10

In case of Sri Lanka, the domestic determinants of security emanates from three sources; a) maintenance of the political-economic stability; b) youth insurgency-JVP youth movement; and, c) ethnicity - demand of Tamil for a separate state. Although the last two fall within the ambit of the former they have been singled out and treated separately because of their contemporary salience. Thus the subsequent part of the chapter is an attempt to analyse the factors and forces that have led to the weakening of the polity affecting the security of Sri Lanka.

Before we undertake any analysis of Sri Lanka security problems, it necessary to discuss the society and polity of Sri Lanka at it emerged in the colonial and post colonial period.
Sri Lanka Society and Polity: A Historical Background

Sri Lanka* known as Ceylon earlier was called by various names. The Sinhalese as well as Indians called it ‘Sinhala-dwipa’ - the island of the Sinhalese or the lion people. It was also known as Lanka – the resplendent island. The Arabs called it ‘Serendip’ and the Portuguese ‘Ceilao’. A small island in the Indian Ocean the culture complex present a mosaic pattern composed of variety of ethnic groups each having it origin from diverse sources.11

The origin of both the Sinhalese and Tamils, its two most dominant communities has been traced from India. The Sinhalese traced their origin to prince Vijaya, who landed in Ceylon in 483 BC, which also coincided with the day of Buddha’s death. Since then Buddhism developed and has become a way of life. During its long history it witnessed a spate of invasion mainly from South India. It was around the 2 BC that Tamil invader of Chola dynasty conquered Anuradapura an ancient town. Dutu-gemunu put an end to the Tamils and restored Sinhalese sovereignty. It is not only the overthrow of the Tamils, but also his propagation of Buddhism is being regarded as a heroic deeds and this feeling continues to be nurtured by the Buddhist to feed religious communal nationalism and thus marking the beginning of Sinhalese nationalism and the idea that the island must be preserved as a seat of Sinhalese power. The dominance of the Sinhala was short lived as in 1017 AD, Rajendra-I, a Chola king conquered the northern part. Sri Lanka’s history from then on, was marked by frequent wars between Sinhalese and Tamils.12

The Sri Lankan society is a plural consisting of various groups distinguishable on ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. The majority of the population are Sinhalese, who largely follow Buddhism and speak Sinhala. They constitute nearly 74 per cent of the population and are mainly concentrated in the West Zone and Central Province of the island. The Tamils form the largest minority group representing 18 percent (12.5 % Sri Lankan Tamil and 5.5% Indian Tamil) of the population. They follow Hinduism and speak Tamil. They are mainly concentrated in the Northern and Eastern province of the island. The city of Jaffna is the principle of cultural and religious life. The Indian Tamils comprised around 12% of the population has not been reduced to

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* Ceylon was renamed Sri Lanka according to the New constitution of 1972.
5.5% after repatriation. They were brought to the island by the British to work in the estate as a source of cheap labour. They too follow Hinduism and speak Tamils but their status remain an issue of contention as the Sri Lankan consider them to belong to lower caste.13

The Muslim also known as Moors trace their origin to Arab descent, comprise around 7 per cent of the population. They are mainly found in the Western area and Coastal area of the Eastern Province. They follow Islam and speak Tamil. The Burghers, who comprise a very small per cent of the population about 1%, are descendants of the mixed European Ceylonese stock. They are children of Portuguese, Dutch and British marriages with Ceylonese. They are largely Christian, speak both English and Sinhalese and highly educated.14

The growing importance of the East and particularly Sri Lanka’s location as the hub of sea going traffic saw the advent of the Portuguese who came to the island as traders in 1505. Taking advantage of the divisions between the two dominant community they gradually took control of the island. Latter in 1658 the Dutch made its presence in the island followed by the British. In 1796, with the fall of the Kandyam kingdom, the British was able to bring the whole island under its control and administration.15

The process of colonisation not only signalled a change in life style but also changed the economic and socio-political structure of the island. The British transformed the predominantly subsistence agrarian economy to an export oriented plantation economy. It introduced coffee as a major crop, but with the collapse of the market for coffee it introduced tea and later rubber as an alternative crop. Thus in created a economy that was dependent on exports or foreign economy. Traditional cultivation in the south and west area remained stagnant.16

The introduction of the plantation economy gave rise to a class of landed aristocracy consisting of British and Sri Lankan elite, who received recognition for their loyalty to the British. Many also converted to Christianity and adopted British custom and way of life and identified themselves with the colonialist. Furthermore, the emphasis on English language, education and religion led to a neglect of the
native vernaculars and Hinduism and Buddhism as a culture. The lower middle class consisted of salaried employees, merchants, small land owners, traders etc., while the working class consisted of rural and urban plantation workers. Besides this there were a huge number of Indian Tamil labourers that were brought by the British to work in the coffee and tea estates.\textsuperscript{17}

The year 1915 was significant in the history of Sri Lanka in the sense that consequent to the riots that broke out between the Sinhalese and Muslims the British authorities resorted to brutal means to suppress it thus embittering most of the section of the elite, which stimulated an enthusiasm towards organised political activities.\textsuperscript{18} Furthermore, in order to safeguard the interest of the Sinhalese planters as well as demand a share in the administration, as the elite had already begun contemplating transfer of power, the Ceylon National Congress was formed in 1919 under the leadership of Poonnambalam Arunachalam. They soon began to demand amendment in the constitution. It should be noted that prior to this development, the intermediate period between the two world war was marked by the great depression consequent to the economic dislocation of Europe. This had a great impact on the export economy of Sri Lanka. The fall in export and the rise in the price of import led to scarcity and shortages, which saw the growth of working class activities in the form of unions.\textsuperscript{19}

The British withstood the pressure of the elite demand for a share in the administration as well as activities of the trade unions, and did not attempt to make any major concessions to their demands. However, with the increasing demand for constitutional reforms in 1924 the British brought an amendment increasing the representation in the legislative council. The British playing the policy of divide and rule had already witnessed differences between the Sinhalese and Tamils over the question of representation. The Sinhalese insisted on representation according to the strength of the population, while the Tamils opposed such move and demanded larger share as a mean to protect their interest. Soon, in 1927 the Earl of Donoughmore visited Sri Lanka to resolve the issue of representation based on communal lines. The commission rejected the principle of communal representation and recommended for universal adult franchise. This too did not favour the minority, as it feared a domination of the Sinhalese.\textsuperscript{20}
Latter in 1944, Lord Soulbury was appointed head of the commission which was charged with the task of formulating a new constitution for Sri Lanka. The Soulbury commission prescribed a Westminster model, unitary in nature based on liberal notion of a multiracial secular democracy. The Tamils continued to demand for a fifty fifty share in power with the Sinhalese and rest of the minority. The minority, especially Muslims did not support the Tamils demand and aligned with the Sinhalese.21 Later with the formation of the Federal Party and the growing discrimination the Tamils put forth the demand for a federal political structure with adequate representation at the centre and a degree of autonomy in areas inhabited by them.22

The introduction of universal adult franchise witnessed the growth of political activity in the island. The growth of various political parties, even though some were formed before 1931, was indicative of the changing nature of the political system. The Labour Party was formed by Goonesinha in 1928, the Ceylon Malay Association was founded in 1922, the Ceylon Muslim League in 1924; the Sinhala Maha Sabha (the Great Council of the Sinhalese) under the leadership of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was formed in 1937 and the Ceylon Indian Congress (founded by Plantation Tamils) emerged in 1938. A. Poonambalam and R. Poonambalam broke away from the Ceylon National Congress and formed an exclusive Tamil organisation, the Tamil Mahajana Saba and latter in 1944 under the leadership of G.C. Poonambalam the All Ceylon Tamil Congress was formed. When G. Poonambalam joined D.S. Senanayake’s UNP government two MPs broke away and formed the Federal Party. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP) was founded in 1935 and the split in the LSSP led to the formation of the Communist Party which had a leaning towards Leninism. The need to contest election led Ceylon National Congress under D.S. Senanayake and the Sinhala Maha Sabha led by S. Bandaranaike to come together to form the United National Party in 1946. Latter Bandaranaike’s aspiration to rise to power led him to break from the UNP to form the SLFP in 1956. From then on the Sri Lankan politics was dominated by a two party system led by the UNP and SLFP, which alternatively came to power.23 This brief discussion of the social political development is to lend clarity to the understanding the dynamics of the internal dimension of Sri Lankan polity.
The Maintenance of Political Economic Stability

The political system of Sri Lanka have faced challenges to its security because of economic factors. Economic factors refers to a sustainable improvement in the economy as well as the living standard and quality of life with the goal of increasing the economic, political and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic groups, religion race and region. Therefore, policy of the states have to augur well with all sections of the society at the same time be able to accommodate the aspiration and need of the people across all sections of the society, as the affected section may resort to dissent even leading to violence leading to tension and conflict in the society. Therefore, economic policy and strategy is a key factor that affects the stability and hence security of a state.

The UNP and Sri Lanka - 1948-1956

The UNP under the leadership of D.S. Senanayake took the reign from the British and formed the government in 1948. Realising the plural nature of the society, D.S. Senanayake emphasised on modernisation and secularism as a mean to maintain an equilibrium of forces, and also soften the Sinhalese dominance as sectarian nationalism would harm the prospect of peace and stability of Sri Lanka.

As regard the economy Sri Lanka inherited an undiversified economy which was mainly dependent on export of three crops- tea, rubber and coconut. The industries that emerged were also related to the processing of the crops and hence there was an absence of any industrial sector. Furthermore, traditional agriculture remained stagnant and Sri Lanka had to even import rice and other foodstuff to meet the needs of the people.

Prior to independence, the colonial government had assigned a limited economic role for the state as it mainly depended on the export sector. Export sectors were largely operated by private foreign companies and was limited to the export of tea, rubber and coconuts. The constitutional reforms of 1931 witnesses some efforts towards investment in agriculture sector but it constituted mainly paddy and some subsidiary crop. The need to change this structure was recognised but little efforts were made in this regard.
The UNP government of D.S. Senanayake place great importance on agriculture, but did not attempt any land reforms as he did not wish to interfere with the existing land ownership pattern as it could have political repercussions. However, he did introduce the policy of Dry Zone colonisation, wherein jungle land were cleared for settlement. Besides, it also aimed to create a class of peasant by providing land and a cow. Thus providing of land to the landless was seen as a mean to achieve productivity in agriculture. This policy was followed by his successor Dudley Senanayake as well as Sir John Kotelawala. In fact, Dudley Senanayake introduced a grandiose scheme, the Gal Oya Multi purpose project, which aimed to settle 12,000 families and promote rice cultivation.

The UNP government gave priority to rice as it was the staple food, but neglected other subsidiary crops like onion, chillies, pulses etc., which had to be imported. Even animal husbandry was not developed and Sri Lanka was importing preserved milk which was then costing the state Rs. 35 million. The fall in the price of rubber and rise in the price of rice forced Dudley Senanayake to enter into the rice-rubber pact with China in 1952. He therefore introduced the rubber replanting scheme where farmers were given a subsidy for replanting land with high yielding rubber variety. Depending on the holding the subsidy provided ranged from Rs.10 to Rs. 7 per acre and was to cover only 65,000 acre but by 1957 it covered 94,000 acre. However, it should be mentioned that although the UNP gave priority to agriculture and plantation the budget did not reflect it as the allocation for agriculture was meagre.

The UNP government did not promote industries nor adopt a policy of import substitution with regard to manufactured goods. This decision probably stemmed from the apprehension that such move could dislocate the trade of the urban commercial class and creates discomfort to the consumption of the propertied class. Furthermore, the leftist parties demand for industrialisation as a mean to solve the economic problems of the country was seen as left desire to consolidate power among the industrial class. Instead, it preferred to follow the World Bank Mission, 1952, guideline which recommended against capital intensive industrial ventures. The
domestic private capital was also not forthcoming as industrial venture did not seem to be lucrative as the plantation sector offered better returns.\textsuperscript{32}

Besides agriculture, the government gave much importance to the welfare services, such as free education, health and particularly consumer subsidy of rice. Such schemes continued and the economy at the time could sustain it as the plantation sector brought in substantial revenue as the export was experiencing a boom during period between 1951-53.\textsuperscript{33} However, the collapse of the Korean war boom the price of export fell while the price of import rose leading a drift in the economy which was clearly reflected in the balance of payment deficit. To curb the deficit the UNP government in 1953, decided to cut down expenditure on distribution of welfare by abolishing the rice subsidy and free mid day meal to school children and also increasing the price of sugar. This move had a direct bearing on the poor strata of the society, which resulted in the strike of August, 12, 1953 engulfing the country in violent disturbance. Dudley Senanayake resorted to the imposition of emergency and curfew and called in the police and army to control the situation. Many fell victims to the bullets of the police and the failure of Dudley Senanayake to handle the situation led to his resignation and Kotelawala took over as the Prime Minister. Kotelawala immediately reverted to the old policy and raised the rice ration and brought down the price of rice as well as of sugar. However, when he assumed power the language issue had already begun to take the centre stage, which saw the UNP loosing the 1956 election.\textsuperscript{34}

The UNP, unlike India where a planning process was put in place did not evolve any such institution nor did it undertake economic planning in a manner that would accelerate economic growth. The six-year plans during 1947-53 and 1954-60, was not implemented and had only partial plan for covering government investment. It is clear that the UNP did not wish to change the existing system of export economy as their own interest was also identified with it.

The SLFP and Sri Lanka – 1956-1965

Mr. Bandaranaike left the UNP, to from an electoral front called the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) (United People’s Front). The front was a coalition of the
SLFP led by Bandaranaike, Gunawardene's LSSP and a newly formed Sinhala Bhasa Peramuna (Sinhala Language Front). The election campaign was based on the criticism of the UNP's policy to cancel the rice subsidy and free mid-day meal to school children and pledge for nationalisation of foreign owned plantation, insurance, banking and transport sector. However, the election was contested mainly on issue of language, religion and culture. It promised to remove English and make Sinhala the official language.35

The change in government brought a reorientation in the economic policy of the island. In contrast to the UNP's laissez-faire policy, the MEP stood for nationalisation. It based its policy on socialist ideology and therefore assigned a greater role for the state in the development of the economy. It gave priority to centralised planning and development strategy was based on import substitution. However, it should be noted that although it advocated for planning, a ten year plan was prepared only in 1959. The main objective of the plan was diversification of the economy, employment generation, equitable distribution of income and maintenance of balance of equilibrium.36

The main strategy for development being import substitution in agriculture and industries, it imposed import restriction by increasing tariffs, exchange controls. Such move was also aimed at reducing the balance of payment deficits and also providing protection to infant industries. The MEP also put forth a plan for the establishment of new industries. It therefore, defined areas of public investment in heavy industries like iron and steel, chemical, fertilisers, cement, etc. In 1959 it nationalised road and public transport. However, realising the need of foreign capital and investment it planned to invite foreign capital in areas where domestic marked were not established or was not likely to establish. It offered tax holiday and tariff protection for export oriented industries.37

The agriculture policy also witnessed a significant shift. Like the UNP it also aimed at increasing productivity, but by use of modern techniques rather than increase of cultivable area. Bandaranaike therefore, in 1958 formulated a new Paddy Land Act fixing a maximum share of crop payable by the tenant farmer to the landowner. The act also provided for the creation of cultivation committee to fix the wage for
agriculture labour. However, the impact of this policy was minimal due to the resistance it faced from the landowner section of the society. Bandaranaike, continued with the policy of Dry Zone land development and colonisation scheme. He introduced a new scheme where prospective settlers were to participate in the clearing of area and development of land for cultivation. The government promised to provide irrigation facilities. But the failure to keep this promise saw people abandoning the colonies and returning back to their village. Huge sums of money were spent on these settlement and irrigation facility. He further continued with the rubber replanting scheme and extended the same to tea and coconut.

The policy of welfare schemes dominated the government policy. Soon after assuming power the price of rice was decreased, besides providing subsidies on other consumer goods also. The government increased the budgetary allocation for education, health, irrigation extension and transport facilities for rural areas. The government expenditure soared pushing Sri Lanka economy into a budget deficit situation.

The agriculture policy of the MEP failed to identify new crops for diversification nor did it implement any industrial policy. In fact nationalisation led to transfer of power from the private ownership into public ownership. This created a new social class of bureaucrats, who stood high on the hierarchical ladder. The policy led to patronage and inefficiency and proved to be uneconomical.

The SLFP and Sri Lanka - 1960-1965

Following the assassination of Mr. Bandaranaike, his wife Sirimavo Bandaranaike entered politics. She along with the LSSP and the CP formed the United Front coalition which won the July 1960 elections. The government policy was clearly reflected in the budget, which aimed at full development of the national economy and progress towards a socialist society.

However, when the UF came to power the Sri Lankan economy was already facing a major crisis with regard to the balance of payment deficit which amounted to Rs. 150 million. Furthermore, the foreign exchange reserve were also falling due to
the unfavourable term of trade and mounting government expenditure. To assuage these problem the government adopted a policy to restrict imports drastically, especially luxury items by increasing import duties and exchange controls. Soon even non luxury items were subject to licence and heavy duties. Despite such move the government could not tackle the foreign exchange crisis, and to offset the crisis had to secure loan from the IMF and in 1961 obtained a loan of Rs. 54 million.43

The government, keeping in line with its socialist orientation, went ahead with the nationalisation policy. Mrs. Bandaranaike nationalised petroleum distribution and established a petroleum corporation for distribution of petrol and petroleum products. It also took away assets from the foreign owned petroleum companies Shell, Caltex and ESSO. This policy was not received by the West, particularly the US. The US cancelled $ 3 million aid pledged to Sri Lanka under the Hickenlooper Amendment which forbade US assistance to countries which nationalised property of US companies or citizens without compensation. Not deterred with the US move she went further to nationalise the insurance sector too.44

The restriction on imports led to scarcities and rise in price of several consumerable goods. To ease the problem the government adopted a rationing policy, which to long queues and shortages. Further, the restriction resulted in the monopoly of local industries producing good like toilet items, soap, radio, etc. They demanded higher price leading to the exploitation of the consumer.45

In term of agriculture Mrs. Bandaranaike continued with the land development, irrigation, peasant colonisation policy. In order to increase food production she increased credit for agriculture as well the supply of fertilisers. The government also increased grants for rubber replantation scheme from Rs. 1,000 to 1,200 in 1962 to Rs. 1,500 in 1964. Furthermore, in 1964, the government launched a one year programme giving priority to land development and irrigation. Rs. 77 million was allocated for this purpose. However, the programme could not be implemented as the coalition lost the no confidence vote and the parliament was dissolved prematurely on December 5, 1964.46
Despite the persisting economic problem the government continued with the welfare schemes. It however, depended on borrowings to meet the expenditure of these schemes. The Finance Minister proposed to reduce the quota of rice by half was met with much opposition from members both within and outside the party leading to his resignation.47

The UNP and Sri Lanka - 1965-1970

The failure of the economic policy adopted by the SLFP, particularly the rise in price and scarcity of day to day essential led to the defeat of the SLFP. Dudley Senanayake of the UNP formed the government in 1965 with the support of the SLFSP, Tamil Congress, Federal Party and other smaller groups. Since the national verdict was economic issue, the UNP's priority was revitalisation of the ailing economy and a change in the economic policy.48

One of the major commitments of the UNP was ending of scarcity of consumer goods. He therefore, sought to remove the imports restrictions, which only increased the external debt of Sri Lanka putting greater burden on the economy. For this purpose, he had to resort to foreign borrowing as the balance of payment was already facing a huge deficit. By 1970 the foreign funds financed 40 per cent of the total imports, which earlier was only 8 percent.49

Dudley Senanayake sought assistance from the World Bank, but could not get assistance as he was not willing to accept the World Bank's recommendation to cut subsidy and welfare expenditure and devalue the rupee. He was very much aware that such move could be detrimental to his position as in 1953 the cut in rice subsidy had led to is resignation and also to the defeat of the UNP. He therefore, turned inward and sought to mobilise the country towards higher agricultural production.50

The repayment of debt necessitated borrowing and he was caught in a vicious circle of loans and debt servicing payment. In Riggs words he was in a 'debt trap'. However, the government had no option but continue with borrowing in order to stabilise the economy. In 1965, as an emergency measure a World Bank sponsored
Aid Ceylon Group* was organised. The aid group pledged to supply food and raw materials to the deteriorating economy. The operation was to last for 18 months but continued to operate as a permanent source of credit to finance regular imports of consumption items like flour, foodstuff, textile, etc. By 1969 the aid group had provided Sri Lanka with Rs. 780 million aid besides pledging another Rs. 900 million.51

Sri Lanka further availed ‘suppliers credit’ a short term high interest loans to cover cost of equipment delivered by foreign suppliers and also short term credit to finance imports of rice from Burma and wheat from Australia and France. Moreover, to stabilise the export earnings and balance of payment deficits the Central Bank of Sri Lanka borrowed from commercial banks in the US and the UK, besides availing loans from the IMF.52

Despite all these measures Sri Lanka was not able to defend its foreign indebtedness because of instability in exports earning, increasing imports and stagnation in agriculture and no growth in industrial sector. Multilateral and bilateral aid (as discussed in the previous Chapter) were the main source of revenue that was pumped into the ailing economy. Furthermore, its pro-West leaning helped him secure huge loans and aid and even outright grants from the Western countries. The Sri Lankan economy was moving towards a dependent economy.53

In terms of agriculture it aimed at increasing productivity by launching a ‘green revolution’. In this regard he formulated an Agriculture Development Proposal 1966-70, which aimed at increasing rice production by 40 per cent over five years. The policy envisaged increasing production through various inputs like, high yielding seeds, fertiliser, equipment and also provision of agriculture credit. The seeds were supplied at subsidised rate and to promote use of fertilisers a 50 per cent subsidy was granted. On the other hand, to mechanise agriculture it recommended imports of four and two wheelers tractors and credit to the tune of Rs.132 million was allocated for paddy cultivation. But since most of the land holding were small, about 85 per cent farmers owned less than 2 acres of land, agriculture was insufficient to generate enough income even to meet the bare necessities of daily life. Further, successive

* Initially the Aid Ceylon Group members included Australia, Canada, Japan, UK, USA and latter India, Germany, France, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden also became full members.
government policy of granting agriculture credit through cooperative had only increased the rural indebtedness. By 1969, 54 per cent of the rural household were in debt compared to only 30 per cent in 1950.54 In fact cooperative credit did not liberate the farmers from the vicious circle of indebtedness. Instead it had become synonymous with inefficiency and corruption and cooperative worked in collusion with big farmers, middle man and rice millers. Dudley Senanayake's agriculture policy did not attempt to bring any reforms in the land tenure system nor did it help in the diversification of agriculture corps which also was very essential for the development of agriculture economy.55

Furthermore, he continued with the Guaranteed Price Scheme and despite the fall in price of rice it continued to pay the farmers the amount it paid earlier adding to the burden of the already ailing economy. Just before the end of the term he launched the Mahaveli Ganga Development Project. This was a move to woo the farmers and garner support for the upcoming election to be held in May 1970.56

Dudley Senanayake did not envisage in the evolvement of any formal planning structure nor any concrete economic plan drawn. It continued to rely on imports to meet the consumers need and promotion of agriculture which turned out to be capital intensive. In fact the economic policy of the UNP aggravated the cost of living, was a rise in unemployment and income inequality. The benefits of the economic policy failed to percolate to the underprivileged masses who felt the effect of the cut in rice subsidy and living cost consequent to the devaluation of the rupee by 20 percent in 1967.57

**The United Front (UF) and Sri Lanka - 1970-1977**

The May 1970 election saw the emergence of the United Front (UF) coalition to power. The UF drew upon a common programme and a joint election manifesto which envisaged development of the economy while furthering the move toward a socialist society.58

When the UF under Mrs. Bandaranaike assumed power Sri Lanka was already bequeathed by foreign debt. Although, Mrs. Bandaranaike was critical of the UNP's
policy of dependence, she too relied on foreign aid as a source of domestic finance. The government sought aid from the IMF and secured a grant of Rs. 252 million from China, West Germany, Australia and Canada for food besides project loans from IDA, Asian Development Bank and World Bank.59

When Mrs. Bandaranaike came to power she viewed the UNP’s attempt of liberalisation as unwarranted and favoured control of foreign trade sector and advocated for active state participation in industrial development. At the same time, she realised that any attempt to completely revert the economy could dislocate the existing economic and social relation. Therefore the main aim of the government was to resolve the domestic financial crisis and balance of payment deficits by increasing government revenues, besides reducing inflation.60

The UF carried further the policy of nationalisation. Besides banking and insurance, the wholesale trade in essential commodity were also nationalised. In 1972 and latter 1975 the land reforms also brought the plantation sector under state ownership. In addition to this the government set up a programme for the establishment of public sector industries.61

The pace of change proved to be inadequate to tackle the problems of unemployment, rising price and scarcity of essential commodities. Moreover, it was not able to satisfy the aspiration of the educated unemployed youths, who in 1971 under the banner of the JVP threatened to overthrow the government for its failure to translate its pledge of socialism and economic development. The insurgency further complicated the economic condition as the expenditure on defence and security increased. Furthermore, the oil crisis and drought in 1973-74 affected the potential of trade sector to induce growth and generate foreign exchange.62

Therefore, to reduce the balance of payment crisis the government adopted a two prong policy – diversification of exports by providing tax holiday to export industry and cutting down of imports by increasing import duties. This move however did not prove to be successful.63 During the second budget in 1971 it trimmed food subsidy and welfare expenditure, and increased a ceiling on income and limit on the ownership of houses.64
When the UF was in the opposition, it was critical of Dudley Senanayake’s policy of emphasis on agriculture, but when it power it realised that to tackle the foreign exchange crisis agriculture development and self sufficiency in food production is the best mean to achieve economic recovery. So the government continued the policy of providing support to agriculture.65

However, with the concentration of land in the hand of the few the youth depended on education as mean to secure employment. The unemployment rate had soared to touch 20 per cent, the highest rate for any South Asian state. Furthermore, it was the educated nearly 67 per cent which was hit by unemployment. The introduction of ‘swabasha’ national language proved to be a failure as persons educated in English were preferred for white collar jobs and profession.66 To tackle the problem the government presented in proposal which envisaged the establishment of rural base industries which would utilise local raw materials; a short-term employment programme to provide jobs for 105,500 person; compulsory retirement of persons over 55 years employed in public sector; and to develop heavy base industries and industries to produce consumer goods.67 It also introduced a chit system whereby MPs recommended people for employment. The system proved to be a failure and was marked by corruption, discrimination and abuse.68

Mrs. Bandaranaike succeeded in changing the constitution in 1972. The new constitution established a unicameral republican structure, a centralised democracy wherein the executive was dominant. The conception of national sate assembly as the sovereign authority led to curtailment in powers of courts and the absence of any check on the power of the executive. With absolute majority she even extended the term of the parliament for two years i.e., 1977. Thus, the constitution was more authoritarian than liberal. The expansion of the executive power saw the imposition of emergency not only to suppress insurgency but was extended to deal with political dissent and harass political opponents too. Emergency was enforces from 1971 to 1977 and citizens liberties were circumscribed and judicial independence abridge.69

Despite all these efforts the economy failed to grow as the industries were heavily dependent on imports inputs and had no linkage with the rest of the economy.
Unemployment continued to increase and its plan for socio-economic transformation was not effectively implemented. Moreover, in the latter years the rupture within the coalition and dismissal of the LSSP and CP, the government revolved around the inner coterie of family members and the system were fully exploited for personal benefits.\textsuperscript{70}

**The UNP and Sri Lanka - 1977-1994**

The 1977 election witnessed the emergence of the UNP, who secured an absolute majority winning 140 out of 168 seats. The UNP's victory was a clear rejection by the citizens of the SLFP's political excess and arbitrary exercise of power, besides unemployment, price rise and economic hardship. Jayawardene, who led the UNP, based his campaign on the promise of 'dharmista' just and righteous government and ushering in not socialism but democratic socialism. It further promised to retain land reform with ownership and control to the peasant and elimination of ownership from the patronage based collective institution.\textsuperscript{71}

The major shift in focus of the UNP was to change the state-led social welfare policy to a market led economic growth. It's main objectives was to revive the economy, increase output from agriculture, industry and trade, stimulate saving and investment and improve the balance of payment. Therefore soon after assuming power the first act was to liberalise imports and the government released Rs.700 million for the purpose. In keeping with the electoral pledge it announced that all consumers would be entitled to a weekly ration of 4 pounds of rice and flour and also increased the sugar ration at subsidised rate. However, when the first budget was presented, following the IMF and World Bank prescription all subsidies on ration of rice, flour and sugar was cancelled except for those below the income of Rs. 3600 per year.\textsuperscript{72}

To revamp the economy Jayawardene moved towards capitalism and free market economy. He introduced an open economic policy, which was guided as well as endorsed by the IMF and the World Bank, by initiating administrative flexibility and eliminating red tapism, and laying much emphasis on market and private enterprise and minimum state intervention. According to the UNP, such economic
development could be achieved only through export oriented industrial development and increase in flow of foreign capital, but smooth implementation of the policy necessitated social and political stability and a strong government.\textsuperscript{73} Thus taking cue from the success of the newly industrial countries like Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea, that had a strong authoritarian government and was successful in generating economic growth, Jayawardene proposed a change in the constitution. The strength of his party in parliament was no obstacle in pushing the change and hence in 1978 the Sri Lanka adopted a presidential form of government with a strong executive.\textsuperscript{74}

In order to create an open and free economy all controls in the form of licenses and quotas were abolished and the door was open to unrestricted private sector. The Sri Lanka market was soon flooded with imported consumer and luxury items. The government cut all subsidies on food, but did provide subsidy to petrol and fertiliser to the tune of Rs.400 and 600 million respectively. This clearly benefited the affluent land owners and state managed estates.\textsuperscript{75} However, it is surprising that imports liberalisation in Sri Lanka was adopted at a time when even the industrial countries of the West and Japan were protecting their markets from imports, especially from the developing countries, by quota and tariffs. Sri Lanka herself was affected by the EEC textile quota for ready-made garments. Despite this Jayawardene went ahead with his open market policy.\textsuperscript{76}

Since the 1960's the export of tea, rubber and coconut has already been diminishing limiting foreign exchange capacity too. However, remittance from workers in the Middle East and sale of services (tourism, shipping and air) contributed about 35-40 percent of total foreign exchange. But the payment for imported goods, services, debt service and capital repayment required currency resulting in external resources gap in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{77} In this regard the Finance Minister Ronnie de'Mel visited a number of Western countries to seek aid as well as seek avenues for capital and investment. Sri Lanka was successful in getting aid from both the Western and donors agency.\textsuperscript{78}

Sri Lanka also drew the extended fund facilities provided by the IMF, and because the UNP adopted policy in line with the IMF and World Bank recommendation it extended a stand-by-credit of Rs. 5000 million (US $ 300 million).
During this tenure Sri Lanka also sought aid from Aid Group, Paris Group, Japan and the West particularly US and UK. Besides huge loans was sought from Canada for the Mahaveli Project.\textsuperscript{79}

The liberalisation programme had worsened the balance of payment situation. Corrective measures necessitated loans. The World Bank and IMF offered loans under SAP but it required adherence to its guidelines, which required depreciation of currency, relaxation of foreign exchange control, privatisation of public sector and above all reduction in subsidy and cut in government expenditure. Jayawardene, promised the lending institution that such measures would be undertaken. However, he had to stall the liberalisation process as the ethnic violence escalated.\textsuperscript{80}

The outcome of the devaluation and liberalisation package was evident when by 1978 the economy had been completely diverted from a meaningful development efforts and was being sustained by massive amount of loans. Import rose by 27 percent highest since the 1960s, while devaluation reduced export earnings leading to a staggering balance of trade deficit of Rs.2173 million.\textsuperscript{81}

The ethnic violence of July 1983 resulted in unprecedented destruction of industrial and trade establishment. Earlier, the violence was concentrated in the North and East and hence did not have much impact on the economic productive assets. The violence led to the fall in the GDP; fall in price of commodities and decline in foreign aid.\textsuperscript{82}

The post 1983 budget reflected the effect of the ethnic violence on the economy. While defence spending shot the spending on other sectors were cut to provide resource for defence. In 1985, the defence expenditure amounted to Rs. 6.2 billion (10 \% of the total budget and it kept increasing in successive year accounting to nearly 15 \% by the 1990s).\textsuperscript{83} The expenditure on defence was also due to the expansion of number of personnel in all the three military services. The increase in personnel have been beneficial in the sense that it has provided employment opportunities to the youth, but at the same time also absorbed a large share of resources leading to less investment in other more productive sectors.\textsuperscript{84}
The violence also added another burden to the economy in the form of refugees. The cost of caring (about Rs. 240 per person per month) was being met from the contingency funds. In addition resettlement required the government to provide grants for reconstruction/renovation of home as well as provision of ration.85

The ethnic violence also impacted the tourism industry. With the explosion of Air Lanka Tristar carrying mostly foreign tourists, countries issued notices advising tourist not to visit Sri Lanka. With level of tourist declining in 1986 the tourist board had to close office in New York, Milan, Australia and Japan. The fall in tourism has not only affected foreign exchange, but loss in hotel business and loss of jobs.86

Furthermore, the threat by EROS to multinational exacerbated the already dismal picture of foreign investment. The threat was taken seriously following the 1986 bombing of the Tokyo cement plant in Trincomalee. Although, multinational did not pull out such security problems discouraged new investors. Sri Lanka’s tea trade also suffered because of threat of the LTTE to contaminate tea. The demand for SL tea fell and in 1986 it fetched the lowest price at the Colombo auction.87

Agriculture continued to be the mainstay of the government policy which gave high priority to the Mahaveli project. The three schemes, the Mahavalis Project, Free Trade Zone and the Greater Colombo Development Scheme was held by the UNP as a panacea to all economic ill. The Mahaveli project would make Sri Lanka self sufficient in food and power, an the trade zone would generate employment and the Colombo scheme would provide housing facilities to population in the capital and make Colombo the garden city of Asia and also solve the problems of unemployment. The government allocated 43 % of total public investment to agriculture and irrigation out of which 50 % was for the development of the Mahaveli project.88 The government, for the first time, also announced the introduction of an unemployment relief payment at Rs. 50 per month per person. This policy was to cost Rs. 645 million but the pledge for job for the unemployed was done in return for vote. However, it continued to secure aid and loans particularly Canada for the completion of the project.89
The poor performance of the economy was attributed to the continuing separatist war, but a close observation indicate a causal link of the economic policy and political violence. The liberalisation policy adopted by Jayawardene was selective in the sense that certain state favoured enterprise like tyre, chemical, paper and pharmaceutical which kept out of the liberalisation process as it provided patronage to ministers and merchants. Further, while paddy and potatoes grown by mainly Sinhalese remained protected, grapes, chillies and onions grown around the Jaffna area especially by the Tamils were liberalised.

Furthermore, the Mahaveli Project was would primarily benefit only the Sinhalese as it tended to settle only Sri Lankan in the new settlement area. With growing authoritarianism such projects further provided a favourable ground for corruption and offered unlimited scope for patronage and financial gains to party supporters. Moreover, the rise in food prices was received favourably by the farming community, who were mainly large land owners. When the urban workers resorted to strike as a mean to protest the rise in food price and cut in subsidy, Jayawardene refused to negotiate brutally suppressed it. The liberalisation policy also did not benefit the educated youths as it was not able to generate adequate employment. The youths felt excluded from the benefits expected from the change in policy. With the ban on unions and protests the youth, both Tamil and Sinhala took to extra parliamentary form of struggle. The Sinhalese under the banner of the JVP revitalised and gained support in the rural areas and the Tamil youth also begun to gain momentum under the banner of the LTTE.

The UNP under Premadasa

The election of 1989 was held in an atmosphere of violence and the election was marked by alleged electoral fraud. However, Ranasinghe Premadasa of the UNP won the election and became the president of Sri Lanka. He was faced with challenges from the insurgency, ongoing ethnic war with the Tamils, the presence of the IPKF as well as major economic crisis. With a weak opposition Premadasa had established a virtual dictatorship and responded firmly to the political crisis. He ruthlessly crushed the JVP, and begun dialogue with the LTTE in order to establish peace and stability in the island.
On the economic front he continued with the liberalisation policy set by Jayawardene. Privatisation was a major item of the government policy agenda. He successfully negotiated with the IMF and secured loan to enable Sri Lanka move with formed the process of liberalisation. Thus the second wave of liberalisation process was set in. He provided incentive to export oriented industries and textile and garment sector grew rapidly. With stability, of some sort, foreign invest was also forthcoming. The economy recorded a growth rate of 6 % between 1989-1994. The balance of payment situation also improved mainly due to the remittance from expatriates, capital inflows though loans and aid as well as foreign investment.

The People’s Alliance (PA) and Sri Lanka

The year 1994 saw the end of the 17 year long rule of the UNP. The People’s Alliance (PA) led by Chandrika Kumaratunga emerged victorious with 62 percent of total vote. The coalition was an alliance of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress, and independent Tamil members of the central province. The change indicated that the people were discontent with the government’s policy as it was unable to resolve the economic hardship faced by them nor was it able to being an end to the on going ethnic conflict. The PA came to power on the mandate that sought to bring an end to the civil war and hope of economic development. The PA reiterated it commitment to economic growth and liberalisation and privatisation would continue but with a ‘human face’ i.e., the economic policy would be pro poor. It also proposed to end the war through negotiation even devolving power to the Tamils. It further proposed to abolish the system of president executive.

The change in power did not however bring any fundamental change in the economic policy initiated earlier by the UNP since 1977. She accelerated the process of privatisation and liberalisation. The national airlines, telecommunication, plantation management and ports were all liberalised. The economy grew in the initial years by 5 percent between 1995-2000. Foreign reserves also witnessed a growth as the export of tea fetched a favourable price besides remittance from expatriate, particularly Middle East and boom in garment export. Further the balance of payment
deficit also came down with receipt from privatisation and foreign direct investment, which was around US $ 130 million and US $ 190 million respectively.98

As the economy seemed to be recovering the Sri Lankan economy was hit by two phenomenon. On the domestic front the ongoing war with the LTTE escalated in April-May 2000 requiring the government to step up its offensive leading to an escalation of defence expenditure. It further established special police units and announced crackdown on extra legal protest. But with the continuing stalemate in the process and the continuing terrorist attacks by the LTTE the economy was not able to take off.99 On the external front the escalation in the price of oil since 2000 had a direct bearing on its foreign exchange reserves. Furthermore, the projects approved by the board of investment was declining. This was due to the apprehension of investors regarding safety and security following the growth of labour militancy, series of strikes, including hostage incident involving foreign and local investors.100

In order to put back the economy of course, Kumaratunga signed and Memorandum of Economic and Financial Approved Policies 2001-2001 and agreed with the IMF a 14 month Standby package which provided Sri Lanka with US $ 253 million aid. However, the package included measures like reduction in defence expenditure, no pay hike for public servants and freezing of new appointments, no new incentive to be provided to the board of investment, reduction of subsidy to public corporations, and prevented the state from injecting capital in the state owned People Bank. This new stringent policies were bound to burden the public coupled with the rise of defense expenditure, budget deficit and decline in industrial growth. Furthermore, political crisis paralysed policy implementation and business activities. However, just before the election the government announced a series of populist measures in the form of pay hike, pension increase, introduction of subsidies etc. in order to gain the support of the voters.101

However, keeping the election promise Kumaratunga cut the price of bread, fuel and fertilisers and brought down inflation but the continuing military expenditure the budget deficit kept on increasing. The continuing war not only heightened defence expenditure but also led to negligence of other economic sectors as public spending of development and infrastructure was not given a priority. The ceasefire that followed
by round of talks brought new inflow of foreign aid that provided relief to the cash strapped government and war ravaged economy. The international community provided financial aid for relief and rehabilitation along with subsidy and support for the poor. Thus even after liberalisation the Sri Lankan economy continued to be dependent on aid and loans as it has not been able to generate enough revenues internally.  

The Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) Insurrection

In 1971, thousand of poorly armed peasants organised rebellion against the government in an attempt to overthrow the government and capture power. This upsurge marked a new phase in the relative peaceful and stable history of the island. The insurrection posed a formidable challenge to successive government by mobilising strength on the base of nationalism, patriotism and economic discontent of the larger masses. However, before discussing the JVP insurrection a brief background to its growth and operation is provided to lend clarity to the phenomena.

In 1965 Dudley Senanayake rise to power was based on the support he garnered from the rural voters. One of the major commitments of the UNP was to end scarcity of consumer goods and revitalise the economy. However, the lifting of restriction on imports had increased the external debt of Sri Lanka and in order to get assistance from the World Bank and IMF as well as Western countries he had to resort to cut in subsidy, welfare expenditure and devalue the rupee. The masses, both rural and urban, protests demanding an increase in wage was suppressed by the UNP. It further reduced the rice ration and cut in expenditure on education. This had led to much discontent among the voters.

It was in the wake of economic despair that the masses turned to the left and the SLFP which had pledged to reverse the rise in unemployment, promised improvement of the socio economic condition and restoration of the rice ration to the 1965 level. Besides it also promised a change in the constitutional structure for facilitating better administration and provide justice to the Sinhalese community through legislation.
However, when Mr. Bandaranaike assumed power Sri Lankan was already bequeathed with high unemployment rate, problems of foreign debt consequence of falling income from exports, and a deteriorating economy. Therefore, the SLFP and its coalition were not able to make drastic changes because of both internal and external forces. Internally, a major change in the economy would disturb the class relations and embitter the class interest of the government. Externally it was dependent on aid and loans particularly from the IMF and World Bank as well as Western donors and had to succumb to the pressure as it needed capital for development and repayment of debt services. It therefore fell back on issue of nationalisation of bank and tea estates, and backtracked from their promise of reversing the rise in unemployment. The rice ration was increased but at a price three time higher than what they had promise. Needless to mention the implementation of social policies as well as the process of the new constitution was slow. Such development gave rise to discontent and the youths felt alienated. The British Daily Telegraph reported, “Ceylon’s popular mood has slumped drastically from euphoria and hope to dismay and discontent”.

The simmering discontent in the island due to non-fulfilment of socio economic aspiration came to fore in 1971 with the outbreak of the youth insurgency under the banner of the JVP. The educated unemployed youths under the leadership of Rohan Wijeweera had staged a wide spread armed insurrection to capture state power. They viewed that social improvement was not possible without total restructuring of the Sinhalese social economy on the basis of revolutionary Marxism, which should be free from external influence both Western and Eastern. It viewed the US, Soviet Union and India as imperialist power.

The phenomenon of the JVP was a result of a complexity of factors and forces, which was set into motion from the colonial times. The period of colonisation had brought a change in the character of the Sri Lankan social economy. It created a class of traders, landlords and merchants who depended on the exports of tea and rubber which fetched huge monetary benefits. Further, the huge surplus generated by the export was able to sustain the provision of health facilities, free education and subsidised food commodity besides resettlement of landless people in the less densely populated area. However, they failed to extend the economy through development of
other crops and reduce the dependence on tea and rubber and also imports of food items, which proved to be a major economic problem in the long run.\textsuperscript{110}

The post independence leadership continued with the policy and pushed further the welfare schemes for political gains. In the course of time, with the fall in the price of tea and rubber and the rise in price of imports the economic crisis begun to simmer in the form of huge balance of payment deficits and dependence on loans and aids. Furthermore, the attainment of high literacy rate created a huge army of unemployed youth force. It should be noted that, despite high literacy rate it was the urban youth who were in an advantageous position because of English, as majority of the rural population were educated in vernacular medium. Thus the failing economy was not able to adequately fulfil their aspirations, despite various policies and programme of successive government.\textsuperscript{111}

Following the cultural revolution in China, the anti-Vietnam movement in America and student unrest in the campuses of advanced capitalist countries protesting against economic crisis and social alienation, which was based upon the writings of Marx, Mao and Che Guevera, the Sri Lankan youth political scene also underwent a change. A large section of the educated youth imbibing the revolutionary ideas and ideals of Marxist revolutionary begun questioning not the liberal parties but also the SLFP and the communist parties. They viewed these parties as socially regressive and were an instrument for preserving the existing social order.\textsuperscript{112} Based on such ideas a section of the youth broke away from the Communist Parties (pro-China) to form the Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), which mean National Liberation Front. The JVP was formed under the leadership of Rohan Wijeweera, who was educated in Moscow under the auspices of Ceylon-Soviet Friendship fellowship programme and was expelled from the university for promoting revolutionary activities.\textsuperscript{113} Wijeweera argued that liberal democracy did not offer solution to Sri Lanka’s social problem as it did not have an independent capitalist class, which was committed to promote overall national development. The dominant bourgeoisie consisting of plantation owners, the bureaucracy and the political elites were committed to the existing order of dependent development because of their advantageous position within it. He therefore, called for a total demolition of the dependent development system and termed the political elite and the foreign allies as imperialist and responsible for the social crisis of the island.
The second premise of his argument was that the non plantation peasantry were the main force of the Ceylonese revolution. However, he added the element of Sinhalese nationalism in his political discourse.114

The JVP found support among the Sinhalese youth, especially from the rural areas and those hailing from middle and lower social background. The discontent urban working class and the poor rural peasantry also lent support to the JVP movement. Its strategy of revolutionary capture of state power was considered credible because of the failure of the electoral order to meet their social demands.115

The JVP spent its five years concentrating in organising its cadre building in rural areas. Its cadre building exercise were well planned and rigorous, learning from the experience of successful revolutionary movement, especially those in Russia, Cuba and China. Its theoretical exercise revolved around several themes, but the main ones can be summarised as follows:116

a. The greatness of Sinhalese past and the rich egalitarian quality of Buddhist theology emphasising on philosophical, historical truth, moral virtues and social justice in the context of which they equated the island with Buddhism and Sinhalese culture;
b. The socio economic crisis of the island was due to colonialism and imperialism;
c. Indian expansionism as its strategic domination over the island including India’s vested interest in preventing a revolution in Sri Lanka;
d. Critical of the role of the Sri Lankan communist parties, and stressed on the futility of parliamentary path for attainment of socialism;

Along with the theoretical lessons the cadre were given rigorous military training for arms combat and guerrilla activities. Such training was imparted to cross section of the have not society such as students, peasant, workers and urban lumpen proletariats.
On April 1, 1970, it gave a call to liberate Sri Lanka from vested interest and convened a meeting in Colombo on April 10. Such gathering, which was well attended, were demonstrated in other down of the Sinhalese society. It gradually perpetuated sporadic arm attack on a low profile. In March 1971, it claimed that it had made an all out plan to capture state power including eliminating prominent political figures and elites.

The SLFP Response to JVP

During the insurrection, the SLFP which was in power, detected the plot of the JVP and to prevent any outward incident arrested prominent JVP functionaries on precautionary grounds and also declared a state of emergency. A civil war broke out in April in the rural area where 100,000 insurgent were engaged in insurgent activities. The government took drastic military steps, which also included air raids on JVP guerrilla bases. It banned the organisation and by May the government had diffused the threat at the cost of much bloodshed. It leaders and cadres were imprisoned and tried.117

The government received timely help from neighbouring countries, such as India, and Pakistan as well as the US, the USSR and China, and was able to thwart the attempt of the youth insurrectionist. The government also received huge military assistance for immediate social development programme in order to arrest the process of alienation. Although, the problem subsided in response to coercive action of the government as well as socio-economic appeasement policies, the phenomena and the ideology of the youth militant for social redressal was not completely eliminated from the society.118

The UNP Response to JVP

When Jayawardene came to power in 1977, he abrogated the ban on the JVP and its leader Rohan Wijeweera was released. In response to the amnesty action of Jayawardene and also learning from its past experience the JVP reformulated its political action by declaring itself as a political party committed to social justice through peaceful means.119 However, it should be mentioned that it continues to have
a predominately Sinhalese base and although it announced its action to be peaceful it still cherished revolutionary ideals.

Following the rise of Tamil militant sub-nationalist movement and its perpetuation of violence in Sinhalese area especially Colombo and neighbouring area the JVP militancy once again re-emerged. The JVP was discontent with Jayawardene with regard to the handling of the Tamil issue and considered the UNP to be soft towards the minority and pro-India as Sri Lanka was seeking New Delhi’s help for resolving the issue. The UNP blamed the JVP for the race riots of 1983 and once again the organisation was banned. However, it continued to work clandestinely and had reemerged as a strong force in 1988.\textsuperscript{120}

The re-emergence of the JVP was not much different from that of the 1970s. The emergence was once again attributed to the UNP policy. The new economic policy of import liberalisation and export oriented industrialisation did not bring much change in the socio-economic conditions of the masses. To attract foreign capital and investment the government had emphasised on political stability and labour discipline but banning trade union activities. This move impeded the cause that JVP championed. Furthermore, unemployment was as high as 20 per cent of the labour force and 70 per cent of the unemployed were educated youths between the age group of 15-50 years. Due to the emphasis on industrialisation agriculture did not get the thrust and this resulted in further impoverishment of the rural peasantry. Thus the growth process excluded a large section of Sinhala-Buddhist rural population.\textsuperscript{121}

Besides, the JVP was critical of the Indo-Lanka accord of 1987 and regained its offensive against the government. They interpreted it as an insult to nationalism and patriotism. They took advantage of the anti-Indian feeling and used it as an humiliation of the Sinhalese and were able to mobilise ethnic fear and prejudice among the Sinhalese. The Indo-Lanka accord provided the appropriate catalyst to thrust the organisation back into the main stream political life.\textsuperscript{122}

The election of 1988 provided a fertile ground for the resurgence of the JVP. The weakness of the SLFP created a vacuum which was exploited by Rohan Wijeweera to create an anti-government sentiment. The JVP protest took the form of
hartals and strikes. The protest which were large in nature disrupted public life and posed potent challenge to the government. The government fear led them to close down all economic, educational and administrative infrastructure in the country. On the other hand the Democratic People’s Alliance (a temporary and short lived alliance of seven parties headed by Mrs. Bandaranaike) that was formed to contest the presidential poll tried to bring the JVP into its fold to the extent of offering cabinet positions.123

Such move gave creditability to the JVP and helped them organise and continue with their anti-government activities. In fact, although Jayawardene blatantly criticised the JVP for its activities, the UNP Prime Minister Premadasa did not blame the JVP for increasing incident of terrorism themselves as it too seem keen to win support and collaborate with the JVP because of its strong rural Sinhalese base.124

In 1987 the JVP was close to taking over the reins of power, but it has to blame itself for its failure. Between 1983-89, the JVP strategy and activities back fired because it failed to differentiate between a revolutionary war and outright terrorism. It too had begun using tactics used by the LTTE. The indiscriminate killing by its cadre of both arm forces as well as civilian had eroded its strength as the civilian was also being now terrorised by its own organisation whom it had once supported.125

When Premadasa assumed office of President reacted strongly to the JVP’s activities and campaign vigorously against the JVP leaders and cadre while also launching military assault against them. In November 1989, the JVP leader Rohan Wijeweera was killed by the Sri Lankan security forces and it seemed that the JVP as a movement was defeated. Premadasa had also made effort to deal with the JVP on conciliatory base in the sense that he appealed to cease fire with full guarantee of amnesty and even offered seats in parliament. Furthermore, on the other had to deal with the socio-economic problems, the government initiated economic rehabilitation programmes like the Jansaviya and Gam Udawa with the hope that it would bring down socio economic disparity.126
People Alliance and JVP

Following, the death of its leader the party organisation was in much of a disarray and its activities had been subsided for quite some time. However, they once again re-emerged in the political mainstream in 1994 emerged as a third force in the provincial council election.\(^{127}\) In September 2001, the PA agreed to a one-year alliance with the JVP. The alliance was a move by Kumaratunga to garner support to the thin majority of her party for preventing the opposition from any move to impeach the president.\(^{128}\) The JVP promised conditional support and demanded the pruning of the cabinet, cut in wasteful government expenditure and set a commission to oversee the fair functioning of the judiciary, police, election and public servants. It however, did not accept any cabinet position preferring a course of self sacrifice to promote their public image.\(^{129}\) The alliance with the JVP witnessed the exit of several PA members from the coalition. The 15 MPs who left included G.L. Pieris, one of the architect of the constitutional reforms, the General Secretary of the SLFP S.B. Dissanayake and four Tamil parties who has supported the PA in its search for a solution to the ethnic problem. The JVP is opposed to talks with the LTTE, as well as the devolution of power. The coalition with the JVP also seen as weakening the process of the peace talks which the PA government had initiated.\(^{130}\)

Furthermore, prior to the parliamentary election of April 2004, the JVP for the first time have joined an alliance led by the SLFP. The new alliance is known as the United People’s Freedom Alliance (UPFA). Furthermore, prior to the December Presidential poll held in December 2005, the JVP signed an agreement with the SLFP and has put forward a twelve point proposal to support the government. The fallout of this alliance could once again throw the country into a political turmoil. The JVP strongly favours a unitary state and is opposed to any concession to the Tamils. Furthermore, it has also demanded a reconsideration of the role of the Norwegian facilitator and shelve all economic policies of privatisation. This stand could jeopardise the ongoing peace talks and drive the country further into ethnic problems, while also impeding the economic growth of Sri Lanka.\(^{131}\)
The Tamil Ethnic Movement

With the annexation of the kingdom of Kandyan in 1815, the British gained control over the whole island. The British established a centralised administration under a British Governor, thus creating a unitary structure in the island. Thus Sri Lanka or Ceylon as it was known then, became a crown colony. The Colebrook-Cameron commission visited the island in 1929, to assess the administration of the island and initiate reforms. The most significant reform was the ending of the existing administrative divisions of the island. The island was divided into low country Sinhalese, Kandyan Sinhalese and Tamil area, which was also based on ethnic and cultural lines. The commission favoured a uniform system and established Legislative Council whose members were nominated and act as an advisory body. It also proposed the opening of civil service to Sri Lankan. Latter in 1912 elections to the Legislative Council were initiated but it was limited as only the Europeans, urban community and educated Ceylonese voted to elect a 21 member council in which besides 11 officials 6 members were nominated to represent specific ethnic communities.

Following the riots of 1915 a nationalist movement grew demanding for political changes. Responding to the demand, in 1921 the British colonial administration decided to expand the Legislative Council. However, this reduced the number of Tamils seats to 3 from the earlier 13. The Tamils were hit by this change and put forward demand for a 50:50 representation. During the Donoughmore commission visit to the island the conflict of representation came into the open. The Donoughmore commission rejected communal representation despite the Tamil demand for equal share. Instead it provided for 50 territorially elected members beside 12 nominated members to represent various interest. The recommendation, which came into effect in 1931 thus, instituted universal adult suffrage in Sri Lanka. The elected members formed the State Council and were bestowed with executive, legislative and advisory functions. The proposal was criticised by the nationalist as it did not give Sri Lanka a full responsible government and also by the Tamils as it did not give them adequate representation. The Sinhalese, particularly the Goyimas dominated the council.
However, the State Council continued with its demand for further reformation in the line of Westminster Parliament and cabinet system. In fact, by this time the British was also contemplating transfer of power. In this regard in 1944 the Soulbury Commission visited Sri Lanka to draft a new constitution for the island.\textsuperscript{134}

Post Independence Developments

D.S. Senanayake, who was the leader at the time of the transfer of power insisted on a Dominion status. This was to assuage the apprehension of India’s dominance and secure Sri Lanka from any external threat. On the domestic front he remained “committed to maintenance of liberal ideas of a secular state in which the line between state and power were scrupulously demarcated”.\textsuperscript{135} He was sensitive to the anxiety and also the need of maintaining stability in a plural society. He therefor, saw that the Soulbury constitution of 1944 incorporated legislation guaranteeing against any discrimination of minorities. He took the initiative to form the UNP- a party which included members of all shades and created a consensus on moderate lines. The UNP included Sinhalese members, members of the Ceylon National Congress, Ceylon Tamil, Muslim League, and also Bandaranaike Sinhala Maha Sabha. G. Ponnambalam’s Tamil Congress, a party representing the estate Tamils, also joined the UNP. He therefore followed the concept of secular state and principles of religious neutrality.\textsuperscript{136}

However his move had place him in the opposition has it had embittered the Buddhist who was of the opinion that Sri Lanka polity should be essentially Sinhalese and Buddhist in culture. According to them Sinhala and Buddhism should be accorded the right place as their religion and culture had already suffered injustice under the Western rule. This claim revolved around the Buddhist ideology of the unity of Sihaladipa (island of Sinhalese) and Dhammadipa (island of Buddhism). Hence, beneath the surface emotions of language and culture were already gaining momentum.\textsuperscript{137}

It should be noted that, in 1931 when universal adult franchise was granted to Sri Lanka, the status of the Indian Tamil (estate labourer) remained unsettled. The
Soulbury constitution also left the issue unresolved. However, when the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 and Indian and Pakistan Resident Act of 1949 was enacted the Indian Tamil were not granted citizenship rights and this gave rise the phenomenon of what was termed as ‘stateless people’. The move to exclude the Indian Tamils and disenfranchise them arose from the fear that their representation would lead to Indian influence in Sri Lankan politics. The left was critical of such discrimination. However, the Ceylon Tamil Congress, which was dominated by the upper caste Jaffna elite, was split on the issue. In fact they also considered the Indian Tamil to belong to lower caste. G. Ponnamblam leader of the party voted against the bill but preferred to support the UNP.\(^{138}\)

The Tamils who already carried the fear that end of British domination would pave the way for Sinhalese majoritism were keen to secure adequate safeguard to protect the minority interest. In 1949, with G. Poonambalam continuing to support the UNP, some Tamils MPs broke away from the UNP and under the leadership of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam formed the Federal Party. The party put forth the idea of single Tamil nation comprising both Sri Lanka and plantation Tamil and formulated the notion of a ‘traditional Tamil homeland’. From then on he became the spokesperson of the Tamil nationalism. However, in the mean time Sri Lanka begun negotiations with India for repatriation of the estate workers.\(^{139}\)

After independence, during the UNP rule English continued to be the state language. During the tenure of Sir John Kotelawala, the Buddhist clergy and Sinhala intelligentsia insisted for declaring Sinhala only as the national language. Sensing the election, Kotelawala took the position that both Sinhala and Tamil would be given parity and English would be phased out. The position was supported by the left i.e., Communist party and the LSSP. Bandaranaike also initially supported the idea but soon changed stand and by 1955 begun advocating for ‘Sinhala only’.\(^{140}\)

The SLFP and the Tamil Issue: 1956-1965

In 1951 Bandaranaike had already broken away from the UNP to form the SLFP to contest the election to be held in 1956. During the UNP rule the rural masses had already shown signs of dissatisfaction, especially the cut in rice subsidy and there
were also resentment among the vernacular educated youth who alleged that Tamils held a greater share of government jobs. Bandaranaike was an astute politician who exploited the growing discontent and ably intertwined religious, cultural, nationalism and economic problem. Nationalism reinforced feelings not only against modernised Western elites but also anti-Tamil feelings.\textsuperscript{141}

Soon after assuming office Bandaranaike presented in parliament the official language act. The act was passed immediately, but the Tamils protested this move as they perceived their language, culture as well as the economic position, especially in term of employment, to be under attack. The Federal Party opposed the bill and demanded autonomy for the northern and eastern region, and launched a satyagraha (non violent) protest. In reaction to this the Sinhalese mob attacked Tamils in Colombo which precipitated in large scale riots. Bandaranaike responded to the situation with a dual strategy. On the one hand he went with the Sinhalese sentiments, while on the other hand he showed keen interest to accommodate the Tamil demand. The continuing antagonism between the two community led Bandaranaike to start negotiation with the Tamil leader Chelvanayakam. The Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam pact of 1957, as it widely know, agreed to provide autonomy to the Tamil area and accorded parity to both Sinhala and Tamil language in administrative matter. It also included issue of colonisation scheme where regional council would have the power to allocate land and provide work under the scheme.\textsuperscript{142}

However, the pact was opposed by the Buddhist as well as the UNP. In 1958 he cancelled the formal agreement with the FP. The Tamil protest continued and the island witnessed incidents communal riots. A state of emergency was declared and the government came strongly on the rioters, while moving a bill to protect the Tamil rights. In 1959 a disgruntled monk assassinated Bandaranaike and his tenure ended abruptly. In fact if the act would have been passed Bandaranaike Lanka would have ushered a federal system in Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{143}

After the death of Mr. Bandaranaike his wife Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the prime minister of Sri Lanka following the victory of the SLFP in the 1960 election, after a short interlude of the UNP rule. In the election of March 1960 the UNP had formed the government, as it was the largest single party. During this time
the FP has secured 16 seats. It mounted pressure on the government for the introduction of federalism in exchange for its support. The demand as earlier, included replacement of unitary constitution with a federal one which recognise the autonomy of the Tamil speaking areas, parity of Tamil as official language, grant of citizenship rights to the Tamils of Indian origin, cessation of planned colonisation and merger of the north and eastern province.\textsuperscript{144} It should be noted that the colonisation process i.e., settlement of displaced Sinhalese peasant was done in traditional Tamil areas particularly eastern zone.\textsuperscript{145}

The UNP lost the no confidence vote and in the election held in July the SLFP won comfortably. The Tamil strategy misfired and contributed to further consolidation of Sinhalese strength. The SLFP emphasised on the implementation of Sinhala only bill with more vigour. She went a step further and announced that all school receiving government assistance should impart free education and all Sri Lankan education be delivered in the mother tongue. Despite shortage of books and material as well as shortage of teachers she stood by her announcement. When the Catholic minority organised protest she did not relent to their demand. Finally, it was only the private schools, who could run on personal funds, continued to charge fees and provide instruction in English.\textsuperscript{146}

\textbf{The UNP and the Tamil Issue: 1965-1970}

In 1965 election the SLFP and its coalition was defeated. The UNP, led by Dudley Senanayake, which emerge as the single largest party formed the government. The Federal Party which was also able to secure 14 seats decided to support the UNP. This culminated in the Dudley-Chelvanayakam pact of 1965. The agreement emphasised on unit of devolution of the Northern and Eastern province as the Tamil homeland. In 1966 the government passed the Tamil regulation act which allowed the use of Tamil in the Northern and Eastern province for government transaction and communication. The issue had tended to mellow down as Tamil had begun to accept Sinhala and public servants in Tamil areas took training in Sinhala and teachers were invited to the Northern and Eastern province to teach Sinhalese to the Tamil people.\textsuperscript{147}
The government also introduced the District Council Draft Bill in 1968. Such move of the UNP was opposed by the SLFP and the left parties and criticised the government for having secret dealing with the Federal Party. Disillusioned with such movement the Federal Party broke away from the coalition and in its 1969 convention resolved that the Tamil people would never achieve independence, self respect and equality unless there is a federal form of government. From then on the Federal Party emphasised on its demand for a federal structure and devolution of power to the Tamil homeland.\textsuperscript{148}

**The SLFP and the Tamil Issue: 1970-1977**

The UNP lost the election in 1970 and the SLFP coalition came to power on the pledge that it would bring structural change including land reform, increase in rice subsidy and nationalisation. In its election campaign it attacked the UNP for aligning with the Federal Party while also using communal and language issue as a potent campaign weapon.

A year after assuming power it faced the problem of youth insurgency in 1971. The government thwarted their efforts and declared a state of emergency. It then moved to change the constitution. The Tamil parties took part in the deliberation but left in June 1971, when the government refused to negotiate on the six point demand. The six demand included, parity of Tamil and Sinhala, devolution to the Northern and Eastern province, secular state, guarantee of fundamental rights, abolition of caste and untouchability and decentralisation. The UNP also participated but voted against the constitution as it extended the life of the parliament by two years. Following the failure of the negotiation with the SLFP the Tamil parties united to form the Tamil United Front (TUF), which latter in 1976 became the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF).\textsuperscript{149}

The constitution was seen as anti minority not only because it reaffirmed the policy of Sinhala only and special status to Buddhism but also because it did not contain any provision for the protection of minority rights. The Tamil youth who were critical of the development resorted to extremism which included the murder of police and administrative officers and even bank robbery.\textsuperscript{150}
The Bandaranaike government did not make any positive contribution in easing the emerging ethnic tension. Instead it aggravated and widened the cleavages by the policy of standardisation in education. The policy of standardisation in education reduced the admission criteria for Sinhalese. It meant that Tamils had to secure more marks for admission to higher seat of learning. This discrimination was to favour the Sinhalese and was a policy to control admission on ethnic lines while reducing the over representation of the Tamils in education and state employment. The policy was detrimental to the interest of the Tamils as education was the only mean by which they were able to secure coveted public service jobs. Upto the 1970s Tamils held prestigious professions in medical, engineering, scientist and technical field.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1974, on the concluding day of the World Tamil Research Conference in Jaffna, the police tried to disperse the mob and the action led to several deaths and injured. This action was perceived as the government attempt to prevent the propagation of the Tamil culture.\textsuperscript{152}

Such policy of discrimination pushed the Tamil towards the demand for autonomy as they saw that it was the only way to achieve their political and economic rights. In the 1975 by-election Chelvanayakam campaign centered around the six point plan. The SLFP opposed the demand on the ground that it meant a vote for separatism After winning the election the Tami leader changed his stand from equity to right of self determination. This major shift was clearly evident from the announcement where he stated, that the eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free.\textsuperscript{153} Further in May 1976, the TULF passed the Vaddukoddai resolution which called for the creation of a separate state of Tamil Eelam. It was around the same period that Velupillai Prabhakaran, an 18 year Tamil youth, founded the Tami New Tigers.\textsuperscript{154}

The tigers vowed to fight for the cause of a Tamil nation. It was latter renamed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. However despite such developments the TULP continued to participate in election and sought cooperation of the moderate Sinhalese parties, particularly UNP with the hope of securing political solution to the
problem. The rise of the Tamil militant also is attributed to the same factors that led to the JVP insurrection. They too faced the problem of increasing unemployment and the policy of discrimination had further alienated them from the political system.

Just before the election of 1977, the Tamils lost two important leaders Chelvanayakam and G. Ponnambalam of the CWC. The Tamils were left without any strong leader who could negotiate their cause. In the mean time another significant development that was underway was that the Tamil separatist group had split into six other groups and the division was marked by caste, ideology as well as personal antagonism. The LTTE grew to be the strongest of the group and was responsible for some of the most gruesome acts of terrorism. The LTTE first made its presence felt by the assassination of the mayor of Jaffna in 1975, a supporter of the SLFP. Furthermore, during the election of 1977, the Tigers had begun engaging themselves in extra parliamentary measures eliminating moderate Tamil leaders in their bid for a separate state. Such move precipitated backlash which was further provoked by the anti-Sinhalese statements made by Tamil politicians. Just two weeks before election Sri Lanka was engulfed in a major communal violence. Further, two months latter anti-Tamil riots broke out in several parts of the country. The riots as K.M. de Silva, state, ‘was a set back to the promising beginning of a policy of reconciliation’.

The UNP and the Tamil Issue: 1977-1994

The 1977 election saw the reemergence of the UNP, under Jayawardene who promised to revive the economy and restore order. It was a massive victory of the UNP who won 141 out of the 169 National Assembly seats. The TULF also contested the election with a manifesto of creating a Tamil Eelam. It won 18 seats and became the largest opposition as the SLFP could secure only 8 seats.

The Jayawardene government was willing to accommodate the Tamil’s demand within some sort of autonomy formula but did not accept the TULF and the LTTE stand on separatism. In this regard he curtailed the use of Buddhist symbolism in official affairs. Furthermore, he abrogated the ‘standardisation policy’ and granted a national language status for the Tamils and language of administration in the North and Eastern province. However, Sinhala continued to be the official state language.
In the meantime Jayawardene was contemplating a change in the constitution. In 1978 the Westminster form of government was replaced by a Presidential system with a strong executive, while maintaining the unitary character of the polity as it feared that decentralisation would lead to separatism. The TULF participated in the constitutional deliberation with the hope that it would be able to negotiate a settlement to the Tamil crisis. However, it did not vote for the constitution, as it was unfavourable to the Tamil demands. The TULF in conjunction with the UNP was also making efforts to initiate an all party round table conference to bring an end to all forms of confrontation. But the UNP failed to realise that the Tamils would not settle for any meagre concessions.

While the TULF were still negotiating with the government the Tamil Tigers escalated their terrorist activities. Consequently the Jayawardene government, in 1978, enacted the LTTE Law which outlawed the organisation. Further in 1979 it passed the Prevention of Terrorism Act giving wider range of power to police and security and also imposed emergency. Despite passing of the act guerrilla activities continued and the Tigers were targeting government establishment like post office, police outpost, etc. The other militant groups like the EROS, PLOTE, TELO also became active and violent.

In 1981, the killing of a Tamil UNP leader and two policemen by the LTTE in Jaffna witnessed strong reaction from the Sinhalese security personnel posted in the area. They set on fire the famous Jaffna public library, which housed 95,000 books and some rare collections. They also burned the office of Tamil daily and residence of a TILF Member of Parliament. Anti-Tamil riots spread to other part of the island affecting Tamil speaking Muslim and Tamil Christian as well as plantation Tamils.

The UNP had committed in its election manifesto for the establishment of District Development Council (DDC). The aim was to decentralise administration to the village level and make people partner in planning, organisation and implementation of policies. The outbreak of the ethnic violence led to delay in the implementation of the plan. However, with continuing violence and hostilities the government turned to the plan as it was one of the basic demand of the Tamils.
The election for the DDC was held in 1981. The voters turnout were less because many were not aware of the implication of the experiment, the SLFP withdrew from the contest and in Jaffna it was preceded by violence. Furthermore, the TULF had expressed misgiving about the plan. In fact the DDC gave autonomy to district but it perpetuated the unitary structure of the government. The members were elected but their officers were central government appointees. This design fell short of the Tamil demand and the DDC experiment was abandoned within less than two years of its introduction.\footnote{166}

The liberalisation and free market economy introduced by Jayawardene had two dimensions. In the Tamil areas the economic conditions deteriorated. The government removed all restriction on imports of food items like chilli, onions and potatoes which adversely affected the Tamils as they were the major grower of this crops, while paddy had a guaranteed price besides subsidy provided for its production. Furthermore, there was discrimination in matter of subsidy too. The government provided subsidy to horticulture development in area dominated by Sinhalese population. These development coupled with the failure of the Tamil parties to bargain a fair deal for solving the Tamil problems was an important factor that led the growth of militancy among the youths.\footnote{167}

On the other hand the opening of the economy opened several opportunities for investment. The Tamils and Muslims, who dominated retail and wholesale trade, took advantage of such policy change and accumulated large wealth in short time. Furthermore, with private sector flourishing the Tamils made use of their education to capture the bulk of the employment opportunities. Such prosperity of the Tamils led to prejudice and worked as a factor for causing anti-Tamil feeling among the Sinhalese.\footnote{168}

With continuing violence the government took harsh steps and continued with the prevention of terrorism act. The TULF boycotted the presidential election of 1982 opposing the act. But with increasing violence the government further passed an act that banned all talks on separatism. The TULF refusal to take an oath in parliament led to the expellation of the TULF and removed a critical channel for mediation.\footnote{169}
All efforts to find a political solution to the crisis were stalled because of the riots in 1983. The month of July witnessed the most gruesome of communal violence that remains a dark patch in the history of the island and continues to haunt the memories of many. It begun with the Tamil militant tactic of ambush killing and assassination. In March, the Tigers ambushed a military convoy and in May it assassinated a UNP Tamil candidate to boycott the local election. Latter on 23 July it ambushed and killed 13 soldiers. This event was met with strong reactions and the next day a week long pogrom of anti-Tamils riots engulfed Colombo and spread all over the island. The JVP, which was functioning as a political party, joined the anti-Tamil campaign. Tamil business, shops and establishments were the main targets of the rioters. It is reported that Sinhalese rioters in Colombo used voters list to identify Tamil homes and attack Tamil community. The whole island was engulfed in a communal frenzy. It was also reported that the operation against the Tamils were not spontaneous but well organised. The police and the army remained passive spectators. On the other hand in retaliation the Tamils attacked the Sinhalese living in the North. The government took to offensive and resorted to strong military action.

As discussed in the previous it was during this time Jayawardene sought help from friendly countries. India also offered its good office to mediate and help Sri Lanka resolve the crisis. The efforts culminated in the all-party conference and the several round of Thimpu talks.

While the government showed its intention to talk it also intensified its military operation against the LTTE. The LTTE also did not cease its activities. In 1986 while talks process was ongoing, the LTTE blew a Air-Lanka jet liner in Colombo which followed by another explosion at the Central Telegraph Office. Thus violence was brought to the heart of Colombo.

In addition to the talks the government attempted to resolve the problem through devolution. It agreed on creating an elected council for the entire nine provinces with a board of minister presided by a chief minister. Such schemes were not acceptable to the LTTE who had already established a firm grip over the Tamil region. The government could not achieve much success in defusing the crisis and
win the Tamil because of various factors: the promise of devolution did not have creditability as the government had a track record of not honouring its past pledge to honour the Tamil culture; there were division among the Tamils and it was difficult to build a consensus; the LTTE had pushed itself too far on the liberation issues and was not ready to negotiate for any lesser share; the moderates were not forthcoming in support of the government for fear of retaliation from the LTTE.172

The UNP under Premadasa

When Premadasa came to power he had to face two powerful militant youth movement – the LTTE and the JVP. Besides the Sinhalese, particularly the Buddhist monks opposed the accord and also the presence of the IPKF as they saw it as a violation of their sovereignty.173 The JVP took advantage of this discontent and while opposing the IPKF directed attacks on the government. Premadasa was successful in thwarting the JVP, but the problem in the North continued.174

Premadasa promised to send the IPKF, as he too was opposed to the accord and India’s presence, but had apprehension that Rajiv Gandhi would not pull out the troops. But with Gandhi’s defeat and the coming to power of V.P. Singh he was successful in negotiating the withdrawal of the IPKF. He was in a haste to send the IPKF as he distrusted India’s motive and the LTTE insisted that it would come to an agreement only after the IPKF left the island.175 He begun direct talks with the LTTE in March 1989. The negotiation begun to succeed. By June the LTTE agreed to transform the cease fire, that was in effect since the starting of the negotiation, into a cessation of hostilities. In response, the government also offered to discuss the possibility of increasing power to the provincial council.176

However, the talks failed and in June full scale war broke out in the northeast and with LTTE launching unprecipitated attack on the Sri Lankan force. The withdrawal of the IPKF in March 1990, the Sri Lanka ethnic conflict entered a more violent phase. The LTTE too had strengthen its force and almost become a full scale army. It continued its activity of assassination eliminating leaders, even Tamil leaders who came in the way of its goal of Eelam.177 The ethnic violence took a new turn when LTTE began to kill Muslims and Sinhalese to drive them away from the Eastern
area. The government responded by renewing the war and after the crushing of the JVP in the south it stepped all efforts to eliminate the LTTE.\textsuperscript{178}

Premadasa also showed an interest to go ahead with the peace efforts. In 1991 the Parliament passed a resolution to set a 45 member Parliament Select Committee (PSC) representing all parties in parliament. The PSC was to arrive at a political solution involving the devolution of power, prevent disintegration of Sri Lanka and achieve peace and stability. However, the issue of merger of North and East province dominated the discussion. While the CWC insisted on the merger the UNP and the SLFP opposed it. In the process the SMLC opposed the merger without safeguard of the Muslims. In 1992 the PSC further decided to have two separate council for the North and East province. The Tamil parties (EPRLF, TULF, TELO, EROS, PLOTE) presented their four point formula demanding a unified administration for the North and East, devolution, etc. The process continued but the PSC failed as neither the Tamil nor the Sinhala were ready to compromise on the merger issue.\textsuperscript{179}

The President also stated that the government had no intention to pursue a military solution but laid down three conditions for resuming peace talk with the LTTE. The condition were, stop use of arms, join the democratic process and recognition of the right of other Tamil political parties to contest election. The LTTE out-rightly rejected this proposal and the war continued.\textsuperscript{180}

Thus all attempts on the part of the government to restore peace as well as devolve power failed. The deadlock over the merger issue was a major hurdle to the settlement. The LTTE unwillingness to share power with Colombo and even with other Tamil parties has been a major stumbling block towards any negotiated settlement.

\textbf{The People's Alliance (PA) and the Tamils Issue: 1994-2004}

Chandrika Kumaratunga narrowly won the parliamentary election of 1994 ending 17 year long rule of the UNP. Latter in November 1994 she won the Presidential election too. Kumaratunga PA came to power on the mandate pledging to ending the prevailing political culture of bhishana (terror), dushana (corruption) and
ghatana (assassination). It proposed to end the war through negotiations and bringing a political solution which include devolution of power. She also proposed for change of the constitution and abolishing the executive.\(^{181}\)

Soon after assuming power, keeping with the promise she begun negotiation with the LTTE. As a confidence building measure she relaxed the embargo on good to the Jaffna region. She also lowered the price of food and fuel and a large arms deal concluded by the UNP was suspended. In October 1994, a government mission visited Jaffna for initiating rounds of direct talks with the LTTE breaking a four year impasse.\(^{182}\)

Further in August 1995, Kumaratunga announced her devolution scheme. She took into account all major Tamil issue, language, land settlement, law and order and regional autonomy. In fact she almost conceded to fulfil the Tamils demand. By the end of her first term three such documents were released detailing the schemes of devolution.\(^{183}\) The main aim of the document was to provide Sri Lanka a federal and parliamentary status of government. The first two document presented the basic idea of devolution and also provided a clear demarcation of authority between the center and region by including provision of two list – regional list and reserved list. The last two document released in 1977 and 2000 were aimed at change in the constitution. The UNP as well as the Sinhala particularly the Monks, were critical of Kumaratunga’s move and due to strong opposition the bill was not tabled.\(^{184}\)

Kumaratunga was keen in pushing the framework for a political solution through negotiation with the LTTE. The LTTE continued its terrorist activities and leading to the failure of the peace talks. Despite this the government went ahead with negotiation with the aim of establishing a cease-fire and advancing the peace process. By this time the LTTE too had developed effective naval capability and consolidated its rule over the Tamil population. It had established administrative service, taxation system and other apparatus of state power.\(^{185}\) Hence there were always apprehension whether the LTTE would negotiate and accept the government proposal and settle for anything less than a separate state.
The LTTE continued with its terrorist activities. It destroyed a supply ship
carrying food to Jaffna and also a navy surveillance ship. It also assassinated the UNP
Parliamentary leader Dissanayake just before the start of the second round of talks.
But following the LTTE's continuous offensive the government also declared 'war for
peace' and intensified its offensive against the LTTE beginning another round of
confrontation or Eelam-III as it is called. The government launched a full scale
military operation called Riviresa (sunshine) to eliminate the LTTE. The Sri Lankan
army took control of large areas in the North and the East and the LTTE were pushed
to the jungles of Vanni area.186

Thus while the government was attempting to put an end to the LTTE, the
LTTE also retaliated back with added resolve and force. It destroyed several military
camps and was able to regain the lost territory. It even captured the Elephant Pass
making it difficult for the Sri Lankan army to penetrate the Jaffna area. However, the
war escalated the budget expenditure of the government and the burden fell on the
common people. This also forced the government, probably, to change its attitude. In
the meantime the LTTE also signalled a desire for peace talks, as it too suffered large
causalities and economic burden. In 1999, the LTTE therefore unilaterally declared a
cease fire.187

To facilitate the peace process the government, in 2000, invited Norway to
mediate a peaceful solution to the conflict. The government with the support of the
Norwegian team was successful in effecting a cease-fire agreement with the LTTE.188
The efforts of Norway culminated in various rounds of peace talks. Ranil
Wickremesinghe, who became the Prime Minister, headed the peace process. The
government had six rounds of talks. But the LTTE laid down the condition that Sri
Lankan force should be withdrawn from the Jaffna area, and refused to accept the
offer for surrender of arms and a time bound solution.189 In 2002, Oslo round of
discussion a breakthrough was almost achieved when the parties agreed to explore a
solution on the principal of internal self-determination. It also discussed issues such as
power sharing, geographical region, political and administration mechanism and even
agreed to explore possibility of federalism. The peace process also witnessed an
increase in the flow of aid for rehabilitation of war torn areas. The Paris Aid group,
Japan, EU and even US came forward to help Sri Lanka restore peace and stability but the aid was conditioned to the progress of the peace process.\textsuperscript{190}

In 2003, the Tamil for the first time announced a blueprint for peace under which they sought an interim self-governing authority for northeast. This was welcomed as an important step forward. However, the Sinhalese nationalist party reject the power sharing proposal and the JVP said it was a first step towards separatism.\textsuperscript{191} Kumaratunga, learning for the 1995 experience, insisted that talks with the LTTE would resume only when the LTTE renounce the goal of separate state, lay down arms and commit to talk on core issues relating to the political framework within a time frame.\textsuperscript{192}

The October 2000 election, which although was marked by fraud, violence and irregularities help the PA retain its position. But with just 107 seats it took support of the minority parties to form the government. However, with the eruption of Sinhala Muslim riots, the SMLC broke away from the PA coalition. This gave the UNP scope to pass a no-confidence motion for impeaching the president. Thus in order to retain the majority and prevent the opposition from passing an impeachment motion, she aligned with the JVP. This not only forced the government to shelve its plan for devolution; as the JVP was totally against devolution and talks with the LTTE. This move was not appreciated by her party members and 8 MPs crossed over to the UNP charging the government with corruption and incompetence. In reaction to this development she prorogued parliament for two months and latter dissolved it and set December 5, 2001 as fresh date for election.\textsuperscript{193} In the 2001 parliamentary election the UNP secured a majority and formed the government under the leadership of Ranil Wickremesinghe. It established a cohabitation system with two different parties heading the government. The rivalry between the two parties came to the fore.\textsuperscript{194}

Kumaratunga was critical of the cease-fire accepted by the UNP as a departure from the policy of framed by the PA government. Furthermore, although she had invited Norway as a mediator she failed to continue with the process. When the Norwegians succeeded in brokering a cease of hostilities agreement between the Wickremesinghe of the UNP and the LTTE, Kumaratunga was critical of Norway for excessive interference. She also was critical of the UNP alleging that it was providing
much concession to the LTTE. The tug of war between the UNP and the PA led Norway to suspend its good office in November 2003.\textsuperscript{195} This stand of Kumaratunga probably arose from the fact that the JVP as well as the Buddhist monks were opposed to the Norwegian role in the peace process.

The Sri Lankan business community also called on the UNP to come to working condition with the president and to evolve consensus on national issues and move the peace process as well as developments. In reaction to this appeal the Wickremesinghe bluntly responded that it was not possible to work with Kumaratunga. Furthermore, the PA alliance with the JVP has proved to be a major stumbling bloc in the progress of peace and it has declared its policy which is against devolution and talks with the LTTE.\textsuperscript{196}

The LTTE is continuing with it terrorist activities of killing, assassinating and bomb explosions. It has however send a message to the government that it is ready to resume talks without any condition and based on the proposal of the interim self government authority. It added that if the government rejects the appeal or attempt delay tactics it would continue to advance the cause of freedom of their nation.\textsuperscript{197}

However, it is clear that the LTTE have used the government efforts to demand further concession and continues to stick to their demand of separate state of Eelam and it has repeatedly announced that this goal is non-negotiable. Further, despite the ongoing talks the LTTE has not ceased hostilities. The Sinhalese, Muslims as well as several Tamils also doubt whether the LTTE will compromise on its goal. The LTTE is known to have backtracked and dragged its feet on many issues. Furthermore, with the new government led by Rajapaksa and with the JVP being a major partner the hope for a peace settlement seems bleak.

Conclusion

The discussion clearly indicates that the Sri Lankan state has been confronted with socio-economic discontent due to rising unemployment, high cost of living and deteriorating economy. Besides the state faced threat to its internal stability and security from the JVP insurrection and the Tamil separatist movement.
At the time of independence Sri Lanka’s economy was highly dependent on the export of tea, rubber and coconut, which brought substantial revenue to the state. This also enabled the government to carry forward the welfare schemes effectively. However, with the fall in export earnings and rise in price of import of rice the economy began to experience the burden of the welfare scheme. However, Dudley Senanayake was able to sort out the problem of rice by entering into the rice-rubber pact with China. Following, his resignation, the UNP under Kotelawala reverted to the policy of rice subsidy and continued the policy adopted by his predecessor.

Mr. Bandaranaike pledged to usher a socialist government for Sri Lanka. He therefore, based the economic policy on socialist ideas of centralised planning, nationalisation and greater role for the state. He also adopted import substitution in agriculture and industry by increasing tariffs and imposing exchange controls. With regard to agriculture he made a significant contribution by introducing the Paddy Land Act, which aimed at fixing the share of crop payable by the tenant-farmers and also fixing wages for labourers. He however, failed to implement the ten year plan.

Mrs. Bandaranaike continued the policy of nationalisation and state driven economy as adopted by her late husband. She nationalised the petroleum distribution and also set up public sector units for tyre, cement and steel manufacturing. She also imposed strict import restrictions. However, the restriction on imports led to scarcity of consumer goods and price rise; and the policy of rationing of goods led to queues and shortages. Furthermore, the increase in the credit facility, supply of fertilisers as well as the amount of grants for the replantation scheme for rubber increased the states expenditure leading to a further crisis in the balance of payment. She continued with the welfare scheme although, Sri Lanka depended on foreign borrowing to meet this expenses.

By the mid 1960’s economy became a major political issue. Dudley Senanayake’s priority was to revitalise the economy. He therefore attempted to partially liberalise the economy by removing imports restrictions to end the scarcity of consumer goods. But to meet the cost he had to resort to loans and the external debt of Sri Lanka increased tremendously as multilateral and bilateral aid became the main
source of revenue for Sri Lanka. He also launched the green revolution by attempting to modernise agriculture through provision of inputs like high yielding seeds, fertilisers, tractors and Guaranteed Price Scheme.

Mrs. Bandaranaike faced the burden of foreign debt. Therefore the main aim of the government was to resolve the domestic financial crisis and balance of payment deficits besides reducing inflation and increasing government revenue. She therefore, advocated for control of foreign trade and active state participation in industrial development and continued with the nationalisation policy. Despite such measures the government was not able to meet the aspirations of the educated unemployment youth and the government faced challenge from the youth insurrection led by the JVP.

Jayawardenese sought to revive the economy by liberalisation and policy of free market economy. Since economy was his main policy plank, he liberalised imports and removed all controls opening the door for private sector by initiating the Free Trade Zone. Furthermore, to secure loans and aid he followed the WB and IMF guidelines to cut down subsidy, government expenditure and further liberalise the market. However, the escalation of ethnic crisis forced him to stall the liberalisation process. The economy deteriorated with increase in expenditure in defence and the decline in foreign investment and tourism industry. The liberalisation of the economy did not prove to be of much benefit as the devaluation of the currency led to rise in price and increased the burden of the masses. Even the Mahaveli project proved to be much capital intensive and much of the funds were diverted toward the project.

Kumaratunga not only continued with the policy of liberalisation and privatisation, but accelerated it in order to bring about economic growth. The economy witnessed growth in revenue and foreign reserves with the liberalisation of telecommunication sector, airlines and plantation management besides growth in foreign investment. However, this growth could not be sustained for long due to the rise in price of oil as well as the expense on defence due to the escalation of ethnic war. In order to stabilise the economy she signed an IMF standby package and accepted the conditions that demanded reduction in government expenditure. However, with election around the corner the government resorted to populist measure and announced salary hike, subsidy, etc.
The various regimes have experimented with various economic policies. However, all of them failed to evolve a comprehensive economic planning system. Although, they gave priority to agriculture, no land reforms were initiated as none would risk their electoral gains by embittering the landowners. Furthermore, despite deficits, they have resorted to welfare schemes to enhance their legitimacy. It could be said that 'rice politics' dominated electoral dynamics. Even liberalisation failed to help Sri Lanka diversify its economy and with the continuing defence expenditure it has become dependent on foreign aid and loans. The inability to stabilise the economy is also responsible for causing social tension in the civil society.

Sri Lanka also faced challenges from the JVP insurrection and the ethnic crisis, particularly separatist movements led by the Tamil militants groups.

The JVP insurrection in 1971 was a consequence of the failure of the economy and the government's inability to provide employment, reduce inflation, price rise and economic burden of the masses. Although, both the government of Mrs. Bandaranaike and Premadasa were able to thwart its efforts through coercive action, the ideology of the youth for social redressal has not been completely eliminated. After being banned it has reemerged as a political party and have contested elections. Presently, it's a partner in the UPFA coalition and based on its ideology which is against liberalisation, devolution and talks with the LTTE, the JVP continues to be a force that could pose a challenge to the state if the state is not able to meet its demands.

At the time of independence, D.S. Senanayake adopted secularism as a principle and thwarted all attempts to identify Sri Lanka with Buddhism or Sinhala in order to maintain the plurality of the society. He also accepted a unitary system as he realised that unity and integrity of the island was essential for socio-economic and political development of the island.

However, in 1956, Bandaranaike, in order to capture power, exploited the feeling of the Sinhalese by advocating Sinhala-Buddhist culture, which brought the Tamil minority in conflict with Sinhalese and divided the society on linguistic and religious grounds. In reaction to this the Federal Party demanded autonomy for the
northern and eastern region as well as parity of status for the Tamils and the Sinhalese language. The demand by the Federal Party and the ongoing negotiations led to the Bandranaike-Chelvanayakam pact embodying the means for settlement of the issue, but the pact was abrogated due to stiff opposition by the Sinhalese, particularly the Buddhist monks.

The FP, supported the UNP government in the hope that it would be able to negotiate some concession for the Tamils. The demand as earlier, included replacement of unitary constitution with a federal one which recognise the autonomy of the Tamil speaking areas, parity of Tamil as official language, grant of citizenship rights to the Tamils of Indian origin, cessation of planned colonisation and merger of the north and eastern province. The Tamil strategy misfired as the UNP lost the no confidence vote. Following the defeat of the UNP, Mrs. Bandaranaike emphasised on the implementation of Sinhala only bill with more vigour and announced that all Sri Lankan education be delivered in the mother tongue.

Following the Dudley-Chelvanayakam negotiations, Dudley Senanayake passed the Tamil regulation act allowing for the use of Tamil in all government transaction and communication. He also introduced the District Council Draft Bill in 1968. Such move was opposed by the SLFP and the Left parties. Disillusioned with such developments the FP broke away from the coalition and in 1969 convention resolved to demand a federal form of government as the only mean to achieve self respect and equality. It is also pertinent to point out that until 1972, the Tamil demand was only a reaction to the Sinhala nationalist ideology and it was limited to autonomy. The FP also contested election in an attempt to solve the issue through parliamentary process. It participated in the 1970 deliberation for constitutional change but the SLFP’s refusal to negotiate only aggravated the problem. Furthermore, the adoption of the policy of standardisation in education was seen by the Tamils as discriminatory. Such move not only widened the cleavages but also led the Tamils to reinforce their demand more vigorously. In the mean time the youth who felt alienated took to militancy in the belief that an arm struggle would bring a solution to their problem.

Jayawardene tired to accommodate the TULF and LTTE demand but rejected their stand on separatism. As a move to resolve the discontent among the Tamils, he
abrogated the standardisation policy and made efforts to initiate the All Party Conference in order to find an amicable solution to the problems. He also initiated the District Development Council and proposed devolution but the LTTE was not ready to accept anything short of a separate state. While the talks were in progress, the LTTE continued with their terrorist activities. Such move by the LTTE led the government to take harsh steps to curb terrorism. Furthermore, India's effort to mediate in the crisis also failed.

When Premadasa assumed power he was under pressure to send back the IPKF. He negotiated the return of the IPKF, and begun direct negotiations with the LTTE. Following the cease-fire agreement the government was contemplating to increase power to the provincial council, but the LTTE backtracked and continued with attacks on life and property. The failure of the talks led the government to take military offensive and the ethnic war resumed once again.

Kumaratunga's People's Alliance government came to power on a mandate of bringing peace and stability in Sri Lanka. Keeping with the electoral commitment she begun negotiation with the LTTE and as a confidence building measure she relaxed embargo on goods to the Jaffna area. She also released documents presenting the basic idea of devolution and demarcating authority between the centre and the regions. Despite, the cease-fire agreement the LTTE continued with its activity which led the government to take military action and abrogation of the peace talks.

She also, invited Norway to mediate a peace solution. The Norwegian efforts culminated in various rounds of talks but the LTTE laid down conditions, which were not acceptable to the Sri Lankan. Furthermore, Ranil Wikremesinghe of the UNP, who headed the peace process was successful in negotiating a cease-fire agreement and at Oslo the parties even agreed to explore a solution on the principal of internal self-determination and discussed issues such as power sharing, political and administration mechanism and even possibility of federalism. Wikremesinghe, was also ready to accept the LTTE proposal for Interim Government but the LTTE condition that Sri Lankan force should be withdrawn from the Jaffna area, and its refusal to surrender of arms proved to be major hurdles in the smooth movement of the peace process. Furthermore, it also kept changing its demand while continuing
with its terrorist activities. The LTTE’s move clearly indicate that it is not committed for finding a solution to the crisis. Furthermore, the difference between the UNP and the PA led to the deterioration of the peace talks and suspension of the Norwegian’s good office for playing the role of a mediator.

However, the LTTE must also change radically and make efforts to design a concrete proposal for peace. It should realise that posts 9/11 developments have led international community take strong stand against terrorism. Therefore, if its continues to drag its feet in resolving the crisis and continues with the war, the international community will emphasise with the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE could even loose the prospect of even achieving autonomy.

On the other hand, the alliance of the PA and the JVP poses doubts over the future of the peace process. The JVP is opposed to market driven economy/liberalisation, devolution and talks with the LTTE, and such stand of the coalition partner could be potential areas of new tension that could emerge in the future and also be a stumbling block in the prospect of achieving a political solution to the decade old crisis.
Notes and References

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