CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE DIFFERENCES

[1956 - 1965]

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike Period 1956-'59:

In General Elections held in May 1956, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike won, by a large majority and became Prime Minister of Ceylon. This was a historic event as it inaugurated a period of struggle and suffering for the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

D.S. Senanayake, the first Prime Minister of Ceylon did not take kindly to S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. He kept Bandaranaike at arms length. In fact D.S. Senanayake had requested Lord Soulbury, the Governor-General to support his son, Dudley Senanayake, as his successor. On 22nd March 1952 D.S. Senanayake died. Subsequently a bitter struggle for power followed between Dudley Senanayake and Sir John Kotalawala. In a notorious pamphlet titled "Up the garden path" Kotalawala gave the full story of this sordid struggle for power.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was aware of D.S. Senanayake's tactics and he began to prepare quietly for an electoral victory.

Bandaranaike was Minister of Health and Local Government in D.S. Senanayake's Cabinet. He used this high office to prepare for his gains at the hustings.

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike knew that the United National Party of Senanayake was supported by rich Western oriented Sinhalese in association with the Tamils, the Muslims and the Christians. Bandaranaike decided to appeal for the support of the Sinhala Buddhist masses. Hence he befriended the Buddhist priests, the Sinhala vernacular teachers, the ayurvedic physicians and the local small-trading community spread over the Sinhala speaking areas.  

Bandaranaike, an Oxford graduate himself and an astute politician donned the national costume and mixed with the people. He started a new political party - Sri Lanka Freedom Party. He was sure of victory when the elections came around in May 1956. The United National Party was monopolised by the Senanayakes. Sri Lanka Freedom Party was monopolised by the Bandaranaikes. This political rivalry has remained a


4 Bandaranaike took to national dress after his return from Oxford in 1925. In 1931, he attended the dinner in Queen's House as well as the State Council opening in national dress made of home grown cotton and home spun as well as home woven cloth; S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Speeches and Writings, (Colombo, 1963), p.305.
permanent feature in Sri Lanka politics and the Sri Lankan Tamils
had been drifting between the U.N.P. and the S.L.F.P.

Tamil political parties from time to time supported the
Sinhala majority ruling parties. Whenever the U.N.P. or S.L.F.P.
comes to power with the intention of solving the political
problems of the Tamils, the Tamil leaders did not fail to put
it across the ruling State Governments but every time the Tamils'
grievances were never heard by the Sinhala ruling political
parties.

Bandaranaike invariably campaigned in the time of election
in 1955 and declared. "In most of the towns and villages the
business houses and boutiques are in the hands of Tamils. This
will inevitably result in a fear and I do not think it as an
unjustified fear of the shrinking of the Sinhala language." This
statement made it clear the intention behind the 'Sinhala
Only Act'. In the election campaign he continued to appease
and win the support of the hard core Sinhala Buddhist masses.
He promised them "Sinhala Only" within 24 hours.

In September 1954, Prime Minister Sri John Kotalawala
stirred up the hornets' nest in Jaffna that the Constitution
would be amended to give arity of statue to Sinhalese and Tamil

5 URMILA PHADNIS, _op.cit._
as the official languages of the country. It was mainly to replace English language with the two Swabashas Sinhala and Tamil in administration as well as in the educational institutions.

To draw the support of the Sinhala masses, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike promised to make 'Sinhala Only' as the official language policy of his party. He appointed a committee to examine the Bill without a Tail member in it. As he had promised Bandaranaike made 'Sinhala Only' the official language of Ceylon on 5.6.1956.

In fairness to S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike it must be recorded that he did have plan to make provision for the 'Reasonable Use of Tamil' but the forces he let loose were too strong for his control.

Earlier commenting on the final draft of the 'Sinhala Only' Bill, E.M.V. Naganathan, General Secretary of the Federal

6 SIR JOHN KOTALAWALA, House of Representatives (Ceylon), Vol. 21, Col. 485-486; His detailed explanation is to be given text; DONALD EUGENE SMITH (Ed.), South Asian Politics and Religion, (Princeton, 1966), pp.467-468.


Party said:

"Since the provision for use of Tamil or English for communication with officials by a person, who is not an official has been deleted from the Bill and it is impossible to believe that even a single Tamil or Burgher will be recruited to public service after the deadline year of 1960 ...."^10

Dr. N. M. Perera, the L. S. S. P. leader declared:

"The L. S. S. P. demand for Sinhalese and Tamil as the State languages, it should be made clear at the outset flows from a very real concern for the interest of the people who speak these languages .... We have been for Swabasha, that is for Sinhalese and Tamil ever since we started in 1935. That was one of our items in our first programme issued by the L. S. S. P. that the administration of the country should be in Sinhalese and Tamil .... Our party has taken a consistent attitude ever since .... We have never faltered, wavered from that position because we felt that was the correct line to take. The position we still adhere to however unpopular that action
might be."\(^{11}\)

On 5.6.1956, the 'Sinhala Only' Bill was debated in Parliament, S.J.V. Chelvanayagam, the leader of the Federal Party organised a Satyagraha on Galle Face Green opposite the Parliament House.\(^{12}\)

The Federalist leaders demonstrated the non-violent Satyagraha in front of the House of the Representative at Galle Face Green, Colombo in protest of the submission of the Sinhala Only Bill on 5th June 1956. Chelvanayagam led the Federal Party of 300 Tamil volunteers for the peaceful Satyagraha as demonstrated by Mahatma Gandhi at the time of India's Freedom Struggle.

There was another group called as Eksath Bhikku Peramuna, had organised a Sinhala Only protest march in front of the Parliament to remove the term, 'Reasonable use of Tamil' from the Sinhala Only Bill.\(^{13}\)

The moment the Federal Party whose volunteers and leaders assembled, a waiting mob of more than 1,000 Sinhala thugs fell on them like a pack of wolves in a most inhuman

\(^{11}\) SATCHI PONNAMPALAM, \textit{op.cit.}, p.101.

\(^{12}\) \textsc{The Hindu} - 6 June 1956 - p.7.

\(^{13}\) \textsc{Ceylon Daily News} - 6 June 1956 - p.1.
and cowardly manner. Satyagrahis fell prostrate on the ground and their placards were seized. Some were trampled upon, beaten, kicked and spat upon. Chelvanayagam, Naganathan, Vanniasingham and Amirthalingam were some of the prominent Federal Party stalwarts. The mob appeared to recognise the well known leaders and single them out for special handling including Amirthalingam who had a wound caused by the mob stone throwing. The Satyagrahis marched towards the Parliament amidst stone throwing, and filthy abuse by the Sinhala mob. Tamil passersby were beaten up and thrown into the Beira Lake.  

As the day passed to afternoon the Colombo harbour workers joined with the mobs, an estimated 100 thousand, and blocked the Galle Face Centre Road around Parliament. Tamils were spotted out on the road beaten up. Chelvanayagam's two sons who were caught and roughly tossed in the air. Many prominent Tamil professionals and others were caught stripped and thrashed. The violence spread throughout the city of Colombo. Wherever Tamils were seen they were attacked.  

This 1956 riot spread like wildfire all over Colombo and to distant Gal Oya near Batticaloa. In Gal Oya 150 Tamils, men, women and children were brutally massacred. Many were injured and thousands fled for refuge! Indian Tamils' shops were looted and attacked. Tamils' property worth millions was looted, and set ablaze. For the first time in recent history of this island, Tamil blood began to flow due to racial hatred. Tamils were subject to physical violence. Thereafter, the Tamils have been forced to live in fear.

The 1956 riots were the first of a series of riots in which the Sri Lankan Tamils and those of Indian origin were subjected to, because of the 'Sinhala Only' policy and the 1956 Language Act which divided the people on national ethnic lines.

The Sri Lankan Tamils led by the Federal Party, resolved to fight for their rights. On 19.8.1956, the Federal Party held its Annual Convention at Trincomalee, and passed the following resolutions:

17 SATCHI PONNAMPALAM, op.cit., p.106.
(1) The replacement of the present Constitution by a rational and democratic Constitution based on the Federal principle and the establishment of one or more Tamil linguistic State or States incorporating all the geographically contiguous areas in which the Tamil speaking people are numerically in a majority as federating unit or units enjoying the widest autonomous and residuary powers consistent with the unity and external security of Ceylon.

(2) The restoration of the Tamil language to its rightful place enjoying the absolute parity of status with Sinhalese as an official language of the country.

(3) The repeal of the present citizenship laws and the enactment in their place of laws recognising the right to full citizenship on the basis of a simple test of residence for all persons who have made this country their home.

(4) The immediate cessation of colonisation of the traditional Tamil speaking areas with Sinhalese people.

These four demands have been the main demands of the Federal Party ever since. 19
Colonisation of traditional Tamil lands was a major subject of contention between the Tamils and Sinhalese. D.S. Senanayake started the colonisation in 1930 when he was Minister of Agriculture in the Ceylon State Council. It roused the opposition of the Ceylon Tamils. The havoc played by this policy is shown by the table follows.

The Delimitation Commission created the two Constituencies of Amparai and Seruvila. Both the Constituencies returned Sinhalese Members of Parliaments. Sinhalese representation in Parliament increased to 80 percent although Sinhalese were only 71.9 percent according to 1971 census. These two Constituencies, covered 1,500 sq.miles of territory, that is two-fifths of the land area of Eastern Province. These colonisations will in time make Tamils minorities in their own land.

Now with the passing of the 'Sinhala Only' Act, Tamils were in danger of being made second grade citizens.

When Sirimavo Bandaranaike realised the magnitude of the resistance of the Tamils, he wanted to come to terms with them. A series of meetings were held between the Government

21 C.R.de.SILVA, 'The Sinhalese Tamils Rift in Sri Lanka' in A. JAYARATNAM WILSON, DENNIS DALTON (Eds.), The States of South Asia; Problems of National Integration, (Delhi, 1982), p.165.
Tamil, Sinhalese Population Change due to State Sponsored Colonisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tamils</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Increase of Sinhalese</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affna</td>
<td>477,304</td>
<td>673,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>atticaloa</td>
<td>130,382</td>
<td>246,582</td>
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<tr>
<td>rincombe</td>
<td>37,517</td>
<td>73,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uttalam</td>
<td>9,010</td>
<td>30,994</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Memorandum of Ceylon Institute for National and Tamil Affairs.

Ethnic Distribution of Population in two select Tamil Districts of the Eastern Province (in percentages)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Tamils</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Tamils</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Batticaloa and Amparai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Batticaloa and Amparai</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trincomalee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Michael Roberts 'Collective Identities', p.75.
and the Federal Party. The discussions concluded in the
signing of the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact' on July 1957.22

The main provisions of the 'Bandaranaike-Selvanayagam
Pact' allowed for the creation of the Northern Regional Council
and the Eastern Regional Council with provision to amalgamate.
Reasonable autonomy was granted to the Regional Councils.23

The Tamil language was to be made an official language
of the minority. Northern and Eastern Regional Councils were
to use Tamil as an administrative language.24

Due to the powerful opposition of the 'extremist'
Sinhalese, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike could not initiate action on
the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact', for five months.

On the other hand, in December 1957, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike
tabled the Bill to incorporate the Sinhala SRI on number
plates of the motor vehicles. The Federal Party wanted it
in Tamil script 'SRI' for Tamil areas. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike
refused.25 After the signing of the Pact Bandaranaike did

22 See Appendix-I.
23 AMITA SASTRI, 'The Material basis for Separatism: The
Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka' in The Journal of
24 CEYLON DAILY NEWS - 24 July 1957.
25 C.R.de.SILVA, op.cit., p.166.
not take any steps to translate the Pact into law to implement it. In December 1956, in order to appease the Sinhala masses, he made arrangements and tabled a Bill in Parliament to the Sinhala letter 'SRI' (the prefix SRI in Sri Lanka) to replace the English letters in the number plates of newly registered motor vehicles.  

To give more stress for the equal status for the Tamil language the Federal Party put forward that the Tamil equivalent word for the Sinhala 'SRI' be accredited for vehicles registered in Tamil areas. This was rejected by the Prime Minister in contrary to one of the terms agreed in the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact' that Tamil should be the language of administration in Tamil areas. Therefore, the Federal Party was against this rule and protested by putting 'Tar' to the vehicles coming into the Tamil areas with the Sinhala letter 'SRI'. The Government prosecuted Chelvanayagam and the Federal Party Members of Parliament. Chelvanayagam served jail sentence but was subsequently released on bail.

On 4.10.1957, J.R. Jayawardene of the United National Party undertook his protest march to Kandy against the

28 CEYLON DAILY NEWS - 26 July 1957.
'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact'.

On 9.4.1958, a group of Buddhist priests led by Wimala Wijewardene, Minister of Health went in a procession to Prime Minister's Office and demanded the abrogation of the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact'. Bandaranaike consented in writing to withdraw the Pact.29

As Walter Schwarz pointed out the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact' embodied one of the few statesmen-like compromises .... ever to be attempted in Sri Lanka.30

In May 1958, the Federal Party held its Annual Convention in Vavunia Town. Tamils coming to attend this Conference from Trincomalee and Batticaloa, were dragged out from buses and trains and beaten up and wounded.

Acts of violence against Sri Lankan Tamils became frequent. In a private quarrel in Batticaloa on 25.5.1958 a Sinhalese was shot dead by a Tamil. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike speaking over the radio gave the incident a political twist. As a result unbridled violence against the Tamils spread all over the Sinhalese areas. Tamils were killed by the hundreds, Tamil women raped, Tamil's property worth millions was looted

and set on fire. \(^{31}\)

The Tamils lived as small minorities in Colombo and other Sinhala areas. Hence they could not resort to violence and they took refuge in police stations and temples and they were all taken to Jaffna, Batticaloa and Trincomalee by special chartered ships because they could not be taken by road through Sinhalese areas. Even in Jaffna, the Tamils did not attack the Sinhalese since by nature they were non-violent people. \(^{32}\)

The Indian High Commissioner in Ceylon met S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, but he was not willing to declare emergency. Finally Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, the Governor-General proclaimed an emergency after four days of unchecked terror perpetuated on the Tamils. \(^{33}\)

Tarzie Vittachi in his book "Emergency '58" captured the brutal race riots. In the foreword he wrote:

"The story of the race riots of 1958 is a story of violence, anger, jealousy fear, cynicism, vengeance and many other states of heart and


\(^{32}\) GENOCIDE OF TAMILS IN SRI LANKA, People Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam, (n.p., n.y.), p.7.

mind which the people of Ceylon experienced."

Sinhalese mobs went on the rampage, stopping trains and buses dragging out Tamil passengers and butchering them. Houses were burnt with people inside. Tamil women were raped and pregnant women slaughtered. A Hindu priest performing pooja ceremonies at Kandaswamy Temple, Panandura near Colombo, was dragged away and burnt alive.\(^\text{34}\)

The atrocities committed by the Sinhalese on the Tamils is truly inhuman and is a measure of the deep racial divide between Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils.

The belly of a pregnant Tamil woman was cut open, and the yet unborn child pulled out and dashed to the ground.\(^\text{35}\)

In Kanthalai there was evidence of gruesome murder of three members of a Tamil family including a four year old child who was snatched from the arms of his father, stabbed in the back with a sword and heartlessly thrown into a blazing house.\(^\text{36}\)

In the colonisation scheme of D.S. Senanayake, the Sinhalese set fire to sugarcane plantations and drove the Tamils

\(^{34}\) Ibid., p.9.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) SANSONI COMMISSION REPORT-1980.
into the conflagration to torture and death. 37

Six daughters of a witness called Ramasamy Pillai were raped by a gang of thirty persons in Matale. 38

At Kekirava in particular the business known as 'Subramaniam's' which was a business carried on in that area for generations by a Tamil family was completely destroyed, looted and burnt. This was a very large business and the loss is in the region of at least five million rupees. 39

Sithivinayagar Temple in Katugastota has been in existence for 50 years .... They broke open the gate and broke the idols that were in the Sanctum Sanctorium. The attackers took another idol of Pillaiar deity of Saivas threw it on the road and spat on it and kicked it. The attackers were mostly young men of 20-30 years of age. The entire temple were broke down. The temple bell was taken away and the priest was assaulted. 40

Several Tamil youths have been kept incommunicado in dark jails, subjected to electric shocks, water jets, light

37 TARZI VITTACHI, op.cit.
38 SANSONI COMMISSION REPORT-1980.
39 Ibid.
40 TARZIE VITTACHI, op.cit.
streams, burning with cigarette butts, pins in finger nails, whipping, baton charges, hung head down from roof tops. Every imaginable torture has been inflicted on the Tamil youths.  

Tarzi Vittachi in his book exclaimed thus "have the Sinhalese and Tamils reached the parting of the ways?"  

Prof. Howard Wriggins wrote:  

"In the event majority community succeeded in obtaining the language reform legislation its ardent spokesman sought. The alarming riots of 1958 unparalleled in the island's history, were the direct results of these reforms and of Governments to insist that public order be maintained and individuals protected. The memory of these events will retard the creation of a unified modern nation state commanding the allegiance of all communities."  

With the emergency in force and Federal Party members of Parliament in detention, Bandaranaike enacted the 'Tamil language (Special Provision) Act No.28 of 1958, thus allowing

42 TARZIE VITTAChI, op.cit., p.117.
43 HOWARD WRIGGINS, op.cit., p.248.
for a reasonable use of Tamil. 44

In 1959, a split occurred in the party, Mahajana Eksath Peramuna. Right Wingers called for the removal of Philip Gunawardene. The Marxist Parties proposed no confidence motion on Bandaranaike Government and let loose strikes which paralysed industry and commerce.

On 25.9.1959, a Buddhist priest (Bhikkhu) named Somarama assassinated Bandaranaike on the verandah of his own house. Thus the Right Wing Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism removed, Bandaranaike an essentially middle of the road politician, from the political scene of Sri Lanka. 45 The country slipped into political confusion.

W. Dahanayeke was elected as the care-taker Prime Minister. Parliament was dissolved in December 1959 and fresh elections were ordered in March 1960.

The SLFP was in disarray. Dudley Senanayake won, but the U.N.P. Government was defeated. Fresh elections were fixed for July 1960. The U.N.P. lost the elections inspite of its anti-Tamil propaganda and its accusation that its rival


the S.L.F.P. had a secret Pact with the Tamil Federalists. 46

Sirimavo Bandaranaike Period 1960-’65

Sirimavo Bandaranaike the 'weeping widow' captured the hearts of the Sinhalese voters. The Lanka Sama Samaja Party and Community Party joined the S.L.F.P. on a no contest Pact. 47 The S.L.F.P. won the July 1960 elections and Sirimavo Bandaranaike a Kandyan aristocrat became the world's first woman Prime Minister. A significant event was the victory of sixteen Federal Party candidates in North and East Ceylon.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike showed no interest on the language issue. Therefore, the Federal Party launched the Satyagraha and the Civil Disobedience Campaign on 2nd January 1961. 48 The Federal Party called on the Tamil speaking Government servants not to study Sinhalese. The Federal Party organised hundreds of volunteers to block access to the Kachcheris in Jaffna, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Vavunia. This continued for days and paralysed Government work.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike declared a state of emergency and sent Government troops to the Northern and the Eastern.

46 A. JAYARATNAM WILSON, op.cit., p.120.


Provinces. The military brutally attacked men and women Satyagragies. Government made the 'Sinhala Only' Act more rigorous and expressed determination immediately to make Sinhalese in reality the official language of this country. In retaliation, Chelvanayagam inaugurated the 'Tamil Arasu Postal Services' by issuing the Federal Party's stamps as an Act of Civil Disobedience against the violation of the postal laws. All the Federal Party members were arrested and held in detention for 6 months.

Sirimavo Bandaranaike as a Kandyan aristocrat was close to the Malwatte and the Asgiriya Chapters of Buddhism. She was keen to win the support of the Buddhists. The Buddhists were demanding a Government take over of the private Christian schools.

The Christians generally supported the United National Party. The U.N.P. was led by the Western oriented English educated leaders. And many educated Sinhalese were Christians. Christian churches normally supported the U.N.P. to come to power. Hence when the Arch Bishop from Bombay came

49 CEYLON TODAY, IX, (8 August 1960), p.3.
51 Ibid., p.130.
to an amicable settlement with the Sri Lanka Government, the Christians accepted agreement. 52

Srimavo Bandaranaike enacted the Act No.5 of 1960 for a take over of all the schools except 38 prestigious Mission Schools which were prepared to manage without Government grants. The take over of schools placed a heavy burden on the Government finances.

The Catholics mounted a massive campaign against school take over issue. They physically occupied the schools. Tension mounted, but Cardinal Gracias of Bombay diffused the situation and restrained the Catholics from a serious breach of peace. To pacify the Sinhalese, the Vatican allowed Catholic Services in Sinhala. 53

Once firmly settled in the saddle, Srimavo Bandaranaike began to fill the top Government posts with the Kandyans. Sir Oliver Goonatilake, the Governor-General was replaced by Srimavo's uncle William Gopallawa, himself a Kandyan Buddhist. Richard Udugama another relative of Srimavo Bandaranaike was appointed as the Army Commander. Stanly Ratwatta another close relative of Srimavo Bandaranaike was appointed as the commander of the army volunteer force. Many

more similar appointments were made in security and civil services. The practice was so widespread that Lakshman Rajapakse, a low country member of Parliament protested: He pointed thus:

"We cannot be blind to the active discrimination now practiced by the Government against the low country Sinhalese." 54

There was widespread economic recession and the essential items of food were in short supply. Sirimavo Bandaranaike teared a rising of the working-class and took the Lanka Sama Samaja Party into the Government. 55 The L.S.S.P. adopted the 'Sinhala Only' policy in June 1964 and joined the Government. N.M. Perera, a Marxist was appointed as the Finance Minister. 56

At this point a new alignment of caste forces appeared. Originally, under D.S. Senanayake Sinhala 'Goigama' and Tamil 'Vellala' both belonging to farming community were working together. The Sinhala 'Karava' or the fishermen were intensely against this policy. The 'Sinhala Only' policy and the  

56 Ibid., p.633.
settlement on the take over of the Catholic schools brought the 'Karava' in force into Government circles. The Tamil 'Vellalas' were ousted and Sinhala 'Goigama' and 'Karava' joined hands to keep the Tamils out. 57

Tamils in Government service saw the writings on the wall, many of them left their posts and went to Africa, Australia, Britain and Canada. Sirimavo Bandaranaike gave easy exits to these Tamils and filled Government jobs with the Sinhalese. 58

**Employment of Tamils in Government Service in 1956, 1965 and 1970 in Percentage**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceylon Administrative Service</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical Service, Postal, Railway, Hospital and Custom Services</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professions, Engineering, Doctors and Lecturers</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Forces</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>


58 ROBERT N. KEARNEY, op.cit., p.135.
This is not the whole story. After 1956, biggest concerns were the industries and Government Corporations. Tamils were shut out because of the 'Sinhala Only'. Between 1956 and 1970, 1,89,000 were recruited by these concerns and 99 percent were Sinhalese. Ceylon Transport Board, the biggest employer in South Asia recruited 52,000 upto 1970, and 98 percent were Sinhalese. Out of 22,374 teachers recruited by Badiudden Mahmud, 18,000 were Sinhalese and 2,507 were Muslims.

The Tamils after 1960, found themselves faced with increasing determination to enforce the Sinhalese Only policy completely throughout Ceylon. A growing sense of desparation and frustration overtook the Tamil leaders of the Federal Party, and they identified themselves with Irish Nationalist. The Federal Party President warned, "your right to be Tamils and all that it means is in peril ...... The menace must be resisted here and now, else it will be too late."


60 A WORLD BANK REPORT-1966.

In 1964, Sirimavo Bandaranaike attempted to gag the Lake House Newspapers. The U.N.P. hatched a plot with C.P.de.Silva, the Minister of Lands. C.P.de.Silva crossed the floor with 13 S.L.F.P. members. Sirimavo Bandaranaike's Government was defeated. Parliament was dissolved and fresh elections were ordered in March 1965.

The summary of the events relating to Sri Lankan Tamils for the period from 1956-'65 given above will form the prologue for my thesis on the impact of these events on Tamilnadu and on the Indo-Sri Lanka relations during the same period.

Agitation in Tamilnadu:

There has always existed close contact between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Tamils of Tamilnadu from time immemorial. They are inseparable ethnically, socially and culturally speaking. They speak the same language and profess the same religion. The liberation of India and Sri Lanka from the clutches of British colonisation, promoted a political consciousness of sovereignty in both the new States. As a result, the Sri Lankan Tamils and the Tamils of Tamilnadu drifted apart. When conflict arose between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in Sri Lanka and developed into brutal racial-riots,

the Tamils in the South and North of Palk Strait tended to come closer emotionally.

In Tamilnadu, the Indian National Congress was in power from 1948-'66. The Congress was in power at the Centre in India from 1946 to 1996 with two brief interregnum, when the Janata Party and the National Front were in power from 1977 to 1979 and from 1989 to 1991 respectively. 63

In contrast to the interest taken by the Dravidian Parties in the affairs of the Sri Lankan Tamils, the nationalist parties of India showed no particular interest in Sri Lankan affairs. The concern of the Indian Congress both at the Centre and at State level in Tamilnadu has rather been lukewarm almost bordering on indifference. At the initial stages, the demand for a separate State for the Sri Lankan Tamils did not create much enthusiasm on the Tamils in Tamilnadu. But as time passed while the Sri Lankan Tamils were subjected to great hardships and physical violence by the Sinhalese, the Tamils in Tamilnadu were deeply disturbed and took serious steps to help the Sri Lankan Tamils. 64

During 1958 language riots, while hundreds of Sri Lankan


64 NAM NADU (Tamil Weekly, Madras) - 7 July 1956 - p.1 for details see - DRAVIDA NADU (Tamil Weekly, Madras) - 12 August 1956 - p.3.
Tamils wore brutally murdered as Tamil women were raped and the Tamil property worth millions were looted and their homes set on fire nearly 12,000 Tamils in the Sinhala areas were forced to shift to the North and to the East as refugees. Thereafter the Tamils in Tamilnadu became anxious for the safety of their kith and kin, the Sri Lankan Tamils.

It is to be noted that even in this hour of intolerable suffering of the Sri Lankan Tamils, the Congress Government at the Centre and the State of Tamilnadu were not greatly perturbed. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (D.M.K.) which was in the opposition roundly condemned the Indian Government at the Centre and at the State of Tamilnadu for their inexplicable silence. D.M.K. Party through a resolution observed:

"What has the Tamilian Government at Madras done? It has not even cared to take note of the situation. It is very busy with its campaign of vilification against the D.M.K. ...... had there been a more responsible and sympathetic Government at Madras it would have gone to any length to convince Delhi that the problem should not be shirked, as it involves lives and future of millions of Tamilians." 

"The one and only aim dear to this Government is to be in the good books of the masters in Delhi and it is not in the least worried about what happens to the Tamilians in Ceylon." 66

The D.M.K. asked the Government at the Centre through a press statement:

"How is the Government of India which has been vocal on many other problems like the plight of Indians in South Africa is indifferent now? One is tempted to ask, is it because the sufferers in Ceylon are Tamils and not the Indians?" 67

The D.M.K. organised many meetings and processions all over Tamilnadu to focus public attention on the sufferings of the Sri Lankan Tamils. A leading D.M.K. Party member N.V. Nadarajan said that Tamilnadu must be ruled by the Tamils so as to go to the rescue of the Tamils abroad. Yet another D.M.K. Legal luminary V.P. Raman said:

"Blood boils whenever and wherever Dravidians are put to suffering." 68

66 Ibid.
Raman suggested a Round Table Conference on Sri Lankan Tamils where all concerned will sit and evolve a satisfactory solution. He suggested the adoption of the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact' of 1957 as a minimum formula to begin with.

The D.M.K. in its Annual General Council Meet, through a resolution condemned the Sri Lankan Government and urged the Indian Government to use its good offices to redress the grievances of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Swathanthra Party leader and a former Governor-General of India C. Rajagopalachari expressed his concern and extended his support to the Sri Lankan Tamil cause. He declared his support for the autonomy of the Tamils and for parity of status for the Tamil language with the Sinhala language.

The 'Nam Tamilar' (We Tamils) movement played a prominent role in calling the attention on the Sri Lankan Tamil plight. They proposed a "Greater Tamilnadu" incorporating Sri Lanka, South Africa (Northern part) and Malaya with Tamilnadu. The Sri Lankan Prime Minister was very upset over this proposal.

69 Ibid.
70 CEYLON DAILY NEWS - 25 September 1958 - p.5.
71 Ibid.
Tamilnadu with its population 60,000,000 has been a nightmare to the Sinhalese. They have always suffered from a fear psychosis on this issue. The 'Nam Thamilar' movement published a map depicting Sri Lanka as part of the "Greater Tamilnadu" and the Sinhalese saw red. In Sri Lanka and India, authorities were greatly perturbed. Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister condemned the "irresponsible attitude of Nam Thamilar Iyakkam and the tremendous problem that it created for the Indo-Sri Lankan relations."

In India, D.M.K. Party gave up the demand for a separate Dravidanadu since 1962. The Sino-Indian war marks a watershed in the political development in India. The Government of India made the call for "Separatism" a reasonable offence by passing of the sixteenth amendment, to the Constitution of India. The Sri Lankan Government always took advantage of this factor and made every effort to crush the Sri Lankan Tamils, economically, politically and even physically. It will be unfolded under J.R. Jayawardene's rule as Prime Minister and later as President of Sri Lanka.

The struggle for the language - rights in Sri Lanka always evoked sympathetic chord among the Tamils in

Tamilnadu. The anti-Hindi agitation left indelible scars on the history of Tamils of Tamilnadu. Hence they were quick to react and rush to the support of the Sri Lankan Tamils struggling for their language-rights.

When the Federal Party announced its Civil Disobedience Campaign in 1961 for securing the Tamil linguistic rights, the Tamils of Tamilnadu backed them to the hilt. When the Federal Party leaders were arrested, the D.M.K. protested against the Sri Lankan Government at a public meeting especially called for this purposes. The D.M.K. passed a resolution supporting the Sri Lankan Tamils and condemning the Sri Lankan Government. The resolution condemned the unsympathetic attitude of the Congress Government in Tamilnadu and urged it to bring pressure on the Government of India for a permanent solution to the problems faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka.

The following resolution passed by the D.M.K. Convention, effectively conveys the feelings of the Tamils in Tamilnadu and their total support to the demands of the Eelam Tamils:

(1) The D.M.K. Convention strongly condemned the brutal suppression of Eelam Tamils by the Government of Sri Lanka and calls upon the Government of Sri Lanka

74 DRAVIDA NADU (Tamil Weekly-Madras) - 12 August 1956 - p.3.
75 Ibid.
to grant the reasonable demands of the Eelam Tamils which is being put forward in non-violent actions.

(2) The D.M.K. Convention is greatly perturbed over the inactivity of the Indian Government in finding a solution to the sufferings of Eelam Tamils.

(3) The D.M.K. Convention condemned the inactivity of the Tamilnadu Government in taking urgent action to request the Central Government of India to intervene and put a stop to the sufferings of the Eelam Tamils.

(4) The D.M.K. Convention conveys its sincere appreciation to the Eelam Tamils who under heavy suppression are carrying on their freedom struggle to win political and language rights.

(5) The D.M.K. calls upon men of goodwill around the world to request the Government of Sri Lanka to stop all oppressive methods and grant reasonable demands of the Eelam Tamils. 76

The D.M.K. leaders forwarded a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka through the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commissioner in Madras. The memorandum asserted that the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka should not be treated

as an internal problem of Sri Lanka. In the slogans carried during the procession, the D.M.K. called for the intervention of the Prime Minister of India.

The Reaction of Indian Central Government:

All the thunder and lightning of the D.M.K. had no impact whatsoever on the Indian Central Government. Nehru the Indian Prime Minister had never deviated from his stand that the Sri Lankan Tamil problem was an internal problem of Sri Lanka. When N.G. Ranga, Indian Lok Sabha Member asked Nehru if he had talked to Sri Lankan Tamil leaders to find out their views Nehru spoke with resentment and replied that the matter is:

"..... entirely improper, absolutely improper to get in touch with leaders of the opposition parties and agitational parties in another country, which would be extraordinary thing from many points of view, national and international law and practice." 77

The demand of the Federal Party for a Federation was a nightmare to the Indian Central Government. India was in mental fear that Tamilnadu will demand Federation. All the

77 LOK SABHA DEBATES (India), Vol. 55, No. 61, 5 May 1961; Cols. 1568-93.
beastly murders, rapings, looting and arson let loose on Sri Lankan Tamils had no meaning to Nehru.

Indian Central Government was greatly worried about security problems. D.S. Senanayake and the U.N.P. did not trust India. They were pro-vest. Sri Lanka also has a defence Pact with Britain. D.S. Senanayake allowed the British Navy and Air Force to stay in Trincomalee and Katunayake even after independence. Bandaranaike came close to India. Bandaranaike asked British Navy to leave Trincomalee and the British Air Force to vacate Katunayake base. Bandaranaike admired Nehru and gave full support to the Non-Alignment Movement and to the doctrine of Panchaseela. Bandaranaike and Nehru became family friends.

Hence Nehru's reluctance to come to the aid of the Sri Lankan Tamils is understandable.

After the massive defeat of the U.N.P. in 1956 J.R. Jayawardene called S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike "a puppet following Nehru's foreign policies and driving the British out and annoying Americans. In future hostile Indian Government may occupy Trincomalee to protect Indians in Sri Lanka."$^{80}$

$^{78}$ H.S.S. NISSANKA, Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy; A Study in Non-Alignment, (New Delhi, 1984), p.9.

$^{79}$ Ibid.

Nehru was the Prime Minister of India from 1947-'64. During that period Sri Lanka had six Prime Ministers, namely, D.S. Senanayake (1948-'52), Dudley Senanayake (1952-'53), Sir John Kotelawala (1953-'56), S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike (1956-'59), W. Dahanayake (September 1959 - December 1959), Sirimavo Bandaranaike (1960-'65).

Throughout this long period (1956-'65) the Indo-Sri Lankan relations remained friendly and Sri Lankan Tamils had to face the fury of the Sinhalese all along. It is significant that Chelvanayagam, never attempted to meet Nehru. It is relevant to mention at this juncture that, the Ceylon Workers Congress leader S. Thondaman tried to meet the Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri during the time of the signing of the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964. But he was not permitted to see the Prime Minister of India.

In 1965 General Elections, Sirimavo Bandaranaike was defeated and Dudley Senanayake came to power. The normal trend of Sri Lanka, Federal Party politics came to an end and the U.N.P. politics, favourable to capitalist and Western countries was launched by Dudley Senanayake. Dudley Senanayake's period 1965-'70 is discussed in the Chapter III.