

We are one people on a small island

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Like all right thinking people born in Sri Lanka, my wish is for the country to go forward to a period of Peace and prosperity for all its citizens. I am a Tamil from the North and have lived in peace with Sinhalese, Muslims and Burghers in the South of Sri Lanka and enjoyed their friendship which I look back to with immense happiness. I have also lived and worked abroad for many years and been able to integrate with people of different cultures. This too has given me a dimension to widen my thinking and be spared of being enslaved with archaic ideas, which several of my people back home are saddled with.

When approaching the problem of Sri Lanka from this distance I have looked at the following facts which are most relevant to me:

1. The statistics and the demographic pattern in Sri Lanka are as follows:

Department of Census & Statistics, Sri Lanka -Year 2012

With a total population of 20,263,723, the Sinhalese people; 15,173,820, Sri Lanka Tamils; 2,270,924 and the Indian Tamils; 842,323. On a percentage basis, Sinhalese strength is 74.88%, SL Tamils 11.21%, and Indian Tamils 4.16%.

Proportion of Sri Lankan Tamils in the North and East (N&E) to the total numbers in the country

From the statistics, Sri Lankan Tamil population of 29.66% dwell outside the North and East, and only 43.49% of the Sri Lankan Tamils populate the North. If the Upcountry Tamils are merged with the Tamils from the North and Eastern Provinces as a Tamil entity, the percentage of Tamils living outside the North and East is 49 percent.

231,318 Tamils live in Colombo.70 per cent of the population of Wellawatte, in the city of Colombo is Tamil.

What has to be accepted is that the people living outside the North and East generate a large income and on no account should their livelihoods or their capacity to earn be endangered.

Post independence

During the last 64 years, the qualitative facets of human life in the North and East was badly affected with crime,

terrorism, racial conflicts, and social class division among Tamils, which affected the minds of the Tamils to take to terrorism, separatism, and a racial xenophobic outlook.



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2. Comparison of the Indian model for Sri Lanka

India has a population of over one billion people. The wealth distribution, natural resources and their technical capability, is totally different to Sri Lanka. India cannot be governed by one Parliament in Delhi.

The population of North Sri Lanka is around 1.5% of the population of Tamil Nadu, and that of East Sri Lanka is less than one percent. N&E Tamil population together is around 2.28% of the population of Tamil Nadu.

Can we think of dividing Tamil Nadu into states at the rate of 2.28% per state, in which case Tamil Nadu has to be divided into 44 state administrations? This is not practical.

India will have to be divided into several hundreds of federal states.

The population of Tamils in Sri Lanka is small and does not warrant separate administrations. Without strong integration with the rest of the country the North is not a viable unit.

A Federal government or Provincial Government system for a country is germane from the following criteria only:

- The ethnic group(s) should be com-

prised with large population

- Gross natural resources are distributed around the country.
- Revenue accrual in each district / province / state is large.
- Industrial concentration is distributed.
- The country should have its income adequate to meet expenditure.
- Export earnings should be sufficient to accommodate state allocation.
- People concentrated in districts should not be racial / xenophobic / religious fanatics / practice superstitious racial beliefs.
- All citizens should be nationalistic and patriotic.

3. The reality of the situation in the North of Sri Lanka

Jaffna is not a highly fertile land and has no resources and has limited water supplies. The only products are rice, tobacco farming and fishing. Even this is inadequate to feed the Tamils. Foreign exchange earnings for the country are earned in the South through rubber, tea, gems, some agrarian products, garments and now the large remittances from workers abroad. The foreign exchange income from these activities is what helped the people in the North and financed all the activities like health, education and employment. The trend has always been that when a person from the North qualifies in medicine, engineering or any other profession he or she sought employment in the south of Sri Lanka, which has many more opportunities.

4. Provincial Council System

The current Provincial Council system imposed by the Indian crafted 13th Amendment has no real value. It has not accelerated economic development, nor has it improved ethnic relationships, nor can it bring about good governance.

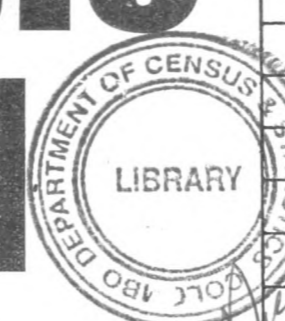
Some Tamil Politicians both in India and in Sri Lanka are promoting this for their own agenda.

In real terms the main engine of growth is in the South. The entire free education system which has enabled Tamil professionals and scientists to get employment abroad is financed by the Sri Lankan Government, with funding generated in the South.

The best economic option for Sri Lanka is to have one government in Colombo with all communities working and sharing a common objective towards a national development without discrimination of any group. Each community has its strength. The skill is to work out formats, and institutions to make the

Distribution of Tamil Population

Districts	SL Tamils	Indian Tamils	Total Tamils	% of total Tamil Population
Colombo	231,318	27,336	258,654	8.31%
Gampaha	80,071	10,879	90,950	2.92%
Kalutara	24,362	23,611	47,973	1.54%
Kandy	71,640	83,234	154,874	4.97%
Matale	24,756	23,400	48,156	1.55%
Nuwareliya	31,867	375,795	407,662	13.09%
Galle	15,228	5,641	20,869	0.67%
Matara	8,562	11,984	20,546	0.66%
Hambantota	2,111	136	2,247	0.07%
Jaffna	577,246	499	577,745	18.56%
Mannar	80,568	394	80,962	2.60%
Vavuniya	141,269	1,292	142,561	4.58%
Mullaitivu	79,081	2,182	81,263	2.61%
Kilinochi	109,528	1,682	111,210	3.57%
Bataloa	381,285	1,015	382,300	12.28%
Ampara	112,750	165	112,915	3.63%
Trincomalea	115,549	6,531	122,080	3.92%
Kurunagala	18,763	3,582	22,345	0.72%
Puttalam	47,523	2,503	50,026	1.61%
Anuradhapura	5,065	957	6,022	0.19%
Pollanaruwa	7,356	1,190	8,546	0.27%
Badulla	20,335	149,662	169,997	5.46%
Monaragala	9,783	4,590	14,373	0.46%
Ratnapura	54,658	62,595	117,253	3.77%
Kegalle	20,250	41,468	61,718	1.98%
Total	2,270,924	842,323	3,113,247	100.00%



best use of this energy and make all Sri Lankans feel that they are a part of a common enterprise. This structure has to be stimulated to enable the Districts, the Pradeshiya Sabhas, Municipalities and Village Councils to have powers to develop the areas at the periphery efficiently without excessive expenditure.

5. Importance of Language

Sri Lankans should be encouraged to learn their mother tongue, English, and have an effective competency in the third language. If Sri Lankans can learn and speak Italian, Latvian, Hungarian, German, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and all those languages around the globe where they have gone for employment, as students or refugees, what stops them from learning Sinhalese or Tamil as the need be in Sri Lanka?

In Tamil Nadu, most Tamils can speak Hindi, and they consider it prestigious to speak it. Most Tamil MPs in Delhi do speak Hindi. Why are the Tamil MPs in Sri Lanka so myopic and possess devastating inhibition when it comes to learning Sinhalese?

This originates from a complex haunting the more irrational Tamil politicians. Although in real terms the DNA of the Sinhala and Tamil is almost identical, there are atavistic tendencies

to consider the Sinhalese as Aryans. Even the legend of the killing of Dravidians by Vishnu, an Aryan, is cited to divide the two communities.

6. It is time to work

It is time for all to work on a formula to live in Peace, and live fruitful lives in the small island of Sri Lanka. Actually, we can never go to the madness of war again. We need hard headed and rational thinking, which will give leadership to the Tamil people, which in turn will integrate with all the people in Sri Lanka and make a collective contribution for its betterment. This call goes to all the people of Sri Lanka. Everyone has to work to create the correct climate with prudent thoughts, words and deeds.

The Tamil politicians should exit from the folly of naming their political parties as "Tamil Ealam Liberation...." or "Federal Party", but initiate naming starting with "Sri Lanka....". The Tamil politicians should respect the Sri Lankan Constitution.

Finally, we have to realize that the bulk of the people are here to stay. They have no other country to go to.

Ref:
<http://www.statistics.gov.lk/PopHousat/CPH2011/index.php?fileName=pop42&gp=Activities&tpl=3>