

Understanding the Polity and Political Dynamics in Contemporary Sri Lanka: Historical Overview

Sarath Vitharana¹ & Chaminda Abeysinghe²

¹Department of Sociology, University of Kelaniya.

²Department of International Studies, University of Kelaniya.

Correspondence: cabeysinghe@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined the polity and political dynamics in contemporary Sri Lanka by focussing on the historical evolution of the political dynamic. The polity is referred to as a politically organized unit. Politics are the activities associated with the governance of a politically organized unit. It deals with decision-making in a group or other forms of power relations. Since human beings decided to form a politically organized unit (state), the establishment of political institutions has occurred. Subsequently, due to the function of the political institutions, political actions, peoples' behaviors caused to determine the politics. Historical evidence shows the polity and politics of a country could dynamic according to the constitutional, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors. The problem of this study is that what are the significant dynamics that can be identified in contemporary Sri Lankan polity?. And what are the factors that affected political dynamics? The study is utilized the qualitative method. The data has been collected from secondary sources, and the content analysis method is used for the analysis. The study found that the political dynamics have occurred since the establishment of a state in the country. Moreover, the existing political system has been formulated by constitutional, political, and socio-economic reforms introduced by the British and post-independent governments. The escalation of political violence, consolidation of ethnic-nationalism, the rise of democratic authoritarianism, escalation of cyber politics, the collapse of the traditionally dominant political parties, and rise of new power coalitions have been identified as the political dynamics in contemporary Sri Lankan polity. It also found that the country's recent political dynamics have primarily been determined by the constitution introduced by 1978. Apart from that, ethnic unrest, nepotism, fragile political institutions, and lack of economic development have been instrumental for the political dynamics in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Polity, political dynamics, Sri Lanka, political history

1. Introduction

Polity or politics is an important social institution whose status positions are organized around the members of a society to be important society-wide affairs. As stated by Barrie Axford, "Politics is important. Even if we did not know this as a matter of institution, we would be left in no doubt after a day spent looking at television programs and reading from most newspapers. Political ideologies and decisions shape life and

death issues such as war and peace, law and order, economic transactions, the values of a society and the myriad ways in which people of different nations interact with one another all involve political influences (Axford, 1997: 3). In this sense, modern-day societies stand with respective political systems shaped by established political institutions. Anyone in the modern world cannot come out from the influence of politics on their lives.

As an Island nation identified as Ceylon by western colonial rules and recorded a long history, Sri Lanka has also undergone drastic changes like many other countries. According to the chronicle evidence state of Sri Lanka was established in the 5th century B.C. under King Pandukabhaya (Sri Sumangala and De silva, 1917: 76-78 verse). After installing the monarchy, power, and functions of the monarchy, power relations between peoples and king, nature of administration and bureaucracy, its political institutions were determined by the prevailed feudal political-economic atmosphere (Liyanagama and Gunawardena, 2014: 102-103.)

Notwithstanding some changes, such as political instability caused by the local and foreign aggressions, we could not see any significant changes in politics and political system during medieval Sri Lanka. However, the invasions of the western colonial masters started in 1505 instrumental for the significance of the political dynamic in Sri Lanka. Under the protégées and Dutch minor administrative changes were taken place since they were restricted into the shore areas of the country. However, British colonial rule bid to capture the entire country was succeeded in 1815; the country's political system was entirely changed under the successive government and political reforms introduced by the British.

The Colebrook- Cameron reform was the comprehensive government and political reform which discontinued the feudal political system and transformed it into the modern democratic government structure. Including executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government. Apart from that, economic, social, and educational reforms introduced under the Colebrook significantly caused a social and economic transformation to form liberal democratic polity in the 20th century. The Donoughmore and Saulbury constitutional reforms, which were introduced on the eve of independence, further strengthened the liberal democratic political system by establishing the West minister model of government in pre-independent Sri Lanka (Karunananda, 2016).

Thus, as a newly independent country, Sri Lanka also practiced its governance and politics under the West-minister patronage model inherited from British colonial rule. Even though Sri Lanka was received independence in 1948, respective governments did not introduce significant government and political reforms, bringing major structural changes into the prevailed political system until introducing the First republic constitution in 1971. It was evident that, even under the first Republic constitution, national leaders sought to continue the West-minister model of the parliamentary democratic system with minor changes. However, soon after the overwhelming victory of the United National Party in 1978 (U.N.P.), the U.N.P. government introduced a presidential system that has comprised features of U.S. and French systems.

Moreover, the 1978 Constitution introduced a radical departure to the previously existing ward-based electoral system inherited from the British. It contributed to strengthening democratic political institutions of the country was replaced by introducing the preferential system of representation. Some argued that structural changes introduced under the constitutional reform in 1978 phenomenally will be contributing to the transformation of the parliamentary democratic polity and enhanced the dynamic nature of politics in Sri Lanka (Perera, 1978). The main objectives of this paper are to examine the nature of the polity and political dynamics and to identify the factors that affect the aggravation of political changes in contemporary Sri Lanka.

1.2 Research questions

The questions of the study include;

What is the meaning of polity?

What is the historical development of polity in Sri Lanka?

What are the factors that determined the political dynamics in contemporary Sri Lanka?

1.3 Methodology

This research was primarily conducted as qualitative research. It used secondary data. Secondary data sourced from journals, articles, working papers, books, magazines, newspapers, lecture reports, bulletins, and internet-based data were utilized for the research. The electronic and print materials like textbooks, journal articles, newsletters, bulletins, newspapers, diaries, magazines, workshops, conferences, and seminar papers were utilized in sourcing data for the study. Archives of libraries in Universities and research centers across Sri Lanka as well as internet facilities were also used in sourcing. This study utilized content analysis and descriptive-analytical tools.

2. Literature review

2.1 Emergence of political organization and institutions

Politics is defined as “the process within a STATE concerned with influencing the content and implementation of the goals, policies, etc. It pursues its *government*” (*Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 2006; capital letters and italics are original). In other words, a *state* is a form of a political entity by which a society is organized under a government agency. However, even today, some tribal societies are managed without any organized political organizations like state or government. In those societies, all decisions affecting the community members were made by a group of elders. There are some other such societies in which tribal chiefs and shamans exercise considerable influence. But, with the evolution of human society, societies have evolved different types of political organization because of the increasing size and complexity of communities. According to Jonathan Turner, “As populations began to grow, social life could no longer be organized informally or around kinship relations. Leaders who could tell others what to do were necessary to coordinate activities and, if need be, to control deviance and conflict. Once this step was taken, the government was born, and there was no looking back to the no coercive relations hunters and gathers” (Turner, 1994).

What would happen when there is no institution which is relating to secure public good? Here, in his book “*Leviathan*” published in 1651, Thomas Hobbes tried to describe what life would be like in a condition of anarchy; *Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war...where every man is enemy to every man...In such condition, there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no [agri]culture...no society; which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of a man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short* (quoted from Stark, 1987).

Since its emergence, the political organization has greatly influenced societal changes and development. As pointed out by Giddens, “We can, however, identify the three main factors that have consistently influenced social change: the environment, political organization, and cultural factors. Though the influence of political fact for social change in hunting and gathering societies were minimum, since there are no political authorities

capable of mobilizing the community, in all other types of society, political agencies strongly affect the course of development a society takes” (Giddens, 2000: 522-23). On the other hand, the expansion of economic productivity greatly influenced the government’s nature, how big it needs to be, and how big it can become (Turner, 1994). Particularly, when the economy encouraged population growth, the need of coordination and control of the society intensified. Therefore, in large, complex communities, political authority has to be organized and structured.

2.2 Basic elements of all polities and their functions

As politics is defined as the process within a state that pursues its government (*Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 2006), the two basic elements in the polities are State and Government. The *state* claims legitimate sovereignty over a specified geographical area organized under a government that exercises authority over its members. A government is an agency of the state, a complex legal system with power and authority to carry out the functions of the state. Key personal in the government may change, but the authority structure continues. In modern societies, governments formed by political parties formulate policies, initiate laws, and launch programs. The government has three distinct branches: legislature that is responsible for enacting the laws that govern the behavior of all individuals and institutions, including the government; executive that formulates policies and programs and administers the country under the law and judiciary in which interprets the law and safeguards the rights of all citizens (Abraham, 2005).

Modern nation-states and their apparatus, the government, perform a wide variety of functions. Here, the constitution of the United States has mentioned the functions of the state as below; “We the people of the United States, to form a perfect union, establish justice, insure democratic Tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and securer the Blessing of Liberty to ourselves and the Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United State” (quoted from Stark, 1987)

Although the extent of functions varies according to the type of government, every state assumes significant responsibilities in the following areas; social control, defense, and welfare. And, in particular, the state and its apparatus of government as the political organization, its economic and social functions in the civil society have become crucial in the early part of the twentieth century. Especially in the Third World countries, the state and thereby the government is significantly engaged with matters relating to the economy, administration, health care, education, and other crucial areas (Basu, 2005). Accordingly, it has the capacity of decision-making followed by translating them into realistic plans and effective implementation.

2.3 Different political system in the modern world

At present, there are more than 190 nation-states in the world that come under monarchies, dictatorships or totalitarian republics, and other forms of governing systems. However, classified those governing systems can be classified under three broad categories; Autocracy, Totalitarian, and Democracy (Abraham, 2005).

An autocracy is a form of government in which ultimate authority resides on one person (the autocrat) who occupies the top position in a hierarchy of power and from whom authority descends to the bottom of the hierarchy.’ The autocrat may be an absolute monarchy or military dictatorship that a single individual vests power and authority. In such a system, the autocrat is not accountable for his actions to his subordinates or subjects. In totalitarianism also, the state is supreme rather than an individual. In such a system, the monopoly of power is usually vested in a party or a ruling elite group. Like autocracy, the state controls and regulates phases of life, perpetuates its power, and decides what is best for its citizens. The centralized system of authority discourages any form of actual political participation, controls access to media and other sources

of information, denies people's right to assemble for political participation, and enforces strict conformity to state policies and their political ideology (Abraham, 2005: 169).

With the Greek meaning 'rule by the people,' democracy is a form of a political system that gives power to the people as a whole. In contrast to the direct democracy functioning in ancient Greece, all modern democracies are representative democracies. Under the representative democracy, power and responsibilities are delegated to the elected members of the legislature for a certain tenure by the constituencies under universal franchise, which allows all citizens to exercise their political rights.

In this sense, democracy's effectiveness depends on the enlightened voters who are politically conscious and active in the democratic process (Macionis, 2005: 436; Abraham, 2005: 169). However, it is to be said that as well as representative democracy, some other forms of the political system, including many single-party systems, usually attach themselves with the epithet, people's democracy – on the ground that they involve rule in the interests of the people as a whole (*Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 2006). But, this interpretation does not give real meaning to the concept of democracy in any sense.

And, in modern democratic states, citizens are entitled or may lay claim to civil rights. According to the Collings Dictionary of sociology, three significant sets of rights can be identified as follows; (a) civil rights that include the right of freedom to information, and right to freedom of association and organization and equality before the law; (b) political rights that contain the right to vote and to seek political office in free elections; (c) social and economic rights including the right to welfare and social security and perhaps full employment, right to share in the economic organization, etc. (*Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, 2006: 70). However, due to many reasons, there is a question that whether citizens of modern democracies can entertain these rights effectively?. In particular to political rights, wealthy people may have far more political clout than poor people due to economic inequality. For instance, media magnate Michael Bloomberg spent almost \$70 million of his own money (about \$90 per vote cast for him) in his successful bid to be elected mayor of New York City in 2001 (Macionis, 2005: 437). Even though some countries in the developing world stand for democratic governance, they control access to media and other sources of information, deny people's right to political participation, and enforce rigid policies which contribute to their political ideologies. The emergence of this kind of situation is the major obstacle to the function of modern democracies. To some extent, this kind of emergence results from a lack of a better political culture of a given society.

3. Transformation of Sri Lankan political system

3.1 Historical transformation of Sri Lankan polity before the Colonial Era

As the current evidence show, the monarchical political system of Sri Lanka started about 543 BC with prince Vijaya who came from the western part of India. After subjugating the aboriginal inhabitants, Vijaya encouraged emigration from mainland India and made himself ruler of the island. The realm (called Sinhala after Vijaya's patrimonial name) was in the island's dry zone. Members of the dynasty founded by Vijay reigned over the island for several centuries. During this period, particularly after adopting the 3rd century B.C. of Buddhism as the national religion, the Sinhalese created a highly developed hydraulic civilization.

From the late 3rd century A.D. to the middle of the 12th century, the island was drawn into conflicts among those South Indian states of the Pandayas, Pallawas, and Colas. It became an integral element in the power struggles that came in frequent invasions, which increased the intensity of impact. The final episode was an unmitigated disaster – Magha of Kalinga's campaign of plunder and destruction in the thirteenth-century form which the hydraulic civilizations of Sri Lanka's dry zone never recovered. This situation caused the

island to partition into several petty kingdoms, flowed Sinhalese power to the southwest of the island, and made room for establishing a Tamil kingdom in the North of the island thirteenth early decades of the seventeenth century. By the sixteenth century, the center of power of the island had gradually transferred to the wet zone.

There are very few parts of Asia with a long record of western influence and control than Sri Lanka's coastal regions. In that context, in 1505 AD, firstly Portuguese made their first appearance and conquered the island's coastal areas. In 1658 AD, the Dutch ousted the Portuguese and consolidated their power in coastal areas until the British exiled them in 1796 AD. The most significant European influence on the country came in the century and a half period of British rule. In 1798, the British made the entire island a crown colony except for the kingdom of Kandy. In 1815 15 January, the British governor of the maritime provinces, Sir Robert Brownrigg, declared war against the king of the Kandyan Kingdom and captured the city of Kandy on 1815 14 February with the support of the Kandyan chiefs (Karunananda, 2016). On 18 February, the British succeeded in capturing King Sri Wikrama Rajasinghe, and it was the endpoint of Sinhala monarchs started with Vijaya. 02 March of the same year, between British and Kandyan Sinhala Chief, signed a convention to hand over the Kandyan Kingdom to the British Crown that ended in 1948. The British period of rule was marked by native rebellions in 1817-8 and 1848. But, the British crushed those rebellions brutally. The establishment of the British rule in the Kandyan region in 1815 marked the end of a long-lived monarchical political system of the island and the beginning of a new system inclusive of novel social, economic, political, and cultural characteristics.

3.2 Political transformation during the British period

The first years of British rule did not make a considerable political transformation on the island. Even after gaining control over the island, the British ruled the low-country Maritime Provinces and the Kandyan Provinces separately. In 1829, the British Crown sent W.M.G. Colebrook to examine and report all the laws and regulations, customs of the "Crown Colony of Ceylon," and all matters relating to its government. Next year, Charles K. Cameron was added to Colebrook to inquire into and report on the judicial councils and traditions of the "Crown Colony of Ceylon." In 1833, with the recommendation of the Colebrook- Cameron report, the low country Maritime Provinces and the Kandyan provinces were integrated so that the whole country came under a single administration. A state Council of five leading government officers was set up to advise the governor about the affairs of the king's budget. And a legislative council which consisted of fifteen members comprising nine ex-officio members and six unofficial was also established. The governor selected the unofficial members from amongst the leading businessmen and landowners of the country. Three of them represented the Europeans, while the three others were to represent the Sinhalese, the Tamils, and Burghers (*Sri Lanka: 50 Years of Independence*, 1998).

Colebrook- Cameron's political initiation was continued until the beginning of the 20th century with small changes like the system of elective elements granted to select the unofficial members to the Legislative Council in 1920. The numbers of voters were minimal as the voting rights were confined to those with high property income and educational qualifications. The number who registered as voters in 1924 was 204,997, or roughly 4 percent of the country's total population (Wilson, 1973: 371). During this period, some local groups were demanding drastic political transformation, while some other groups sought to maintain colonial rule without any changes. As pointed out by Jayawardena (2000: 302-46), there were three broad trends among the politics of the new class of Sri Lanka that emerged during the colonial regime. The first trend was represented by the conservative group, who had close collaboration with the colonial administration since the beginning of British rule and held a high-rank post like Maha Mudeliyar, which was granted to the local aristocrats' loyalty to the colonial regime. They consistently opposed even the most moderate political reforms and

openly spoke out to preserve the status quo. The second trend was exemplified by moderate reformists led by the new wealthy class. They had achieved economic success initially through commercial activities opened during the colonial regime and later earned their social advance through English and higher education. This group supported British rule but combined this loyalty with demands for more political and economic rights for their class; however, it did not demand radical political reforms like an adult franchise. The third trend within the bourgeoisie was represented by those few radicals who were critical of imperial rule. They had identified themselves with the various political reform movements and working-class agitation that began in the late 19th century. When the Donoughmore Commission came to Sri Lanka in 1927 to inquire into and report on the working of the system of government, the first two groups together opposed the granting of the universal adult franchise to the country. The third group, which appeared for radical political reforms, only demanded granting the universal adult franchise to the country.

The year 1931 was a turning point for the drastic social, economic, and political transformation in the island in the coming years. Two equally important constitutional reforms were implemented in the country under the Donoughmore political reforms in 1931. First was the introduction of universal adult franchise for citizens over 21 years of age; one of Asia's earliest experiments with the universal franchise; the second was the introduction of a new constitution, partly modeled on the structure of a semi-autonomous parliamentary system, publicly known as 'State Council,' with constituency-based election system of representation based on universal adult suffrage. This political innovation made up the political crucible of mass politicking on elected politicians; therefore, those elite politicians who were ambitious with national politics had to adjust to a new form of mass politics to stabilize their political existence among the masses.

3.3 Development of political parties and mass politics

There was no political party system in the country when the first election was held in 1931 to select the members for the 'State Council.' candidates in most constituencies kept trust on the conventional appeals to caste and religious loyalties, apart from other parochial considerations. The vast majority of electors who were casting a vote could hardly understand and respond to the election system for the first time. As a result, nine of the fifty elected seats returned their members without a contest. Political party organizations that could have addressed the entire island did not keep pace with the island's remarkably rapid growth of the electorate and the regular elections. This was assumed because of the influential individuals who ran the political ground as their fiefdoms; these influential individuals were opposed to reducing their influence and authority inherent in a more structured organization (Silva, 1988). In this context, after four years of the first State Council election, the first political party in Sri Lanka was formed in 1935 by a group of young men, educated abroad and with Marxist ideas, by the name of 'Lanka Sama Samaja Party' (L.S.S.P.) with a considerable working-class support base. Even in the election for the second State Council in 1936, there were no political parties except L.S.S.P. The L.S.S.P. and the Communist Party (C.P.), a splinter group of the L.S.S.P. formed, posited themselves as alternatives to the U.N.P. in the 1947 elections (Satkunanathan, not dated: 11). However, by the 1952 elections, their ability to win seats diminished as the parties of the Marxist-left was unaware of how to mobilize local support, and their attacks on religion and local culture only served to alienate the mass rural vote.

The inability of the Left parties 'to fuse Marxist philosophy with the traditional culture of the country' played into the formation of the center-right United National Party (U.N.P.) two years before the independence (in 1946). D.S. Senanayake, the leader of the State Council, formed U.N.P., bringing together Ceylon National Congress, the Sinhala Maha Sabha, and the Muslim League, reflecting national unity to take over the future political power of independent Sri Lanka. The U.N.P. has always positioned itself as the country's protector against Marxists who claimed threatened democracy, religion, and culture. Economically, it espoused a mixed

economy policy, focusing on fostering the private and business communities (Satkunanathan, not dated: 11). However, since the beginning of the party, a gap between the leaders and the general public could be seen.

D.S. Senanayake, who had been the last leader of the State Council, hurriedly organized the representatives of many groups, communal and otherwise, into the United National Party. He had the backing of the British government, of the local Westernized intelligentsia, of the feudal land-owning class, and the capitalist commercial class. Though belonging to all communities, his colleagues in the cabinet were all drawn from the same social stratum and proved to be like the top administrators themselves, not significantly different in taste and outlook from the former colonial administrators. There was a wide gap between the ruled and the rulers in Sri Lanka, and many, it seemed as if no change had occurred with independence (Wijesinghe, 1974: 70-71).

In this context, the most distinctive feature of the U.N.P. was that although it opened membership to various political groups, the party consisted mainly of elite members.

During this period, parties representing the interests of the Tamil minority began to emerge. The All Ceylon Tamil Congress was formed in 1944 after the departure of Tamils from the Sinhalese-dominated Ceylon National Congress. The Federal Party was founded in 1949 by a splinter group of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (A.C.T.C.). The other party was the Ceylon Indian Congress, formed in 1939, which later became the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC.) in 1950. The C.W.C. was severely affected by the disenfranchisement of the Tamils of Indian origin, which prevented it from winning seats until 1977 (Satkunanathan, not dated: 11). In one sense, this situation exemplified the failure of the local political elites to create the ethnic harmony that to be formed during the freedom movement. On the other hand, distrust was exacerbated by the appointment method to the Legislative council on a communal basis, which was put in place by the colonial rulers.

Another new party emerged during 1951, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (S.L.F.P.) founded by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was a founder member and high-level cabinet minister of the first post-independent government led by U.N.P. and, at one time, virtually the heir to the U.N.P. leadership. However, he stood on behalf of Sinhalese sentiments represented by the Sinhalese majority. Since the early 20th century, the Sinhala Buddhist majority, mainly Sinhala nationalist forces including the vernacular language-oriented intelligentsia, rural level non-official middle class were waiting for the rehabilitation of Sinhala language, culture, and religion. Independence did not mark a significant breakthrough for them. The U.N.P. did not have direct links with them, and, therefore, they continued to be in a position of socio-political isolation. Within this situation, those groups felt that they had become second-class citizens even after Sri Lanka became an independent state in 1948. Thus, since the beginning of independence, there were criticisms against the ruling party until 1956. When Bandaranaike was his firm conviction that he would not be the heir to the party's leadership, he broke away from the U.N.P., gave the leadership to the above forces, and formed S.L.F.P. in 1951.

4. Politics in Post- independent Sri Lanka

4.1 Duality of the governing parties and rise of ethnic politics

The 1956 elections saw the beginning of divisive ethnic politics and the emergence of a two-party system with the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P., which forced the Left parties to abandon their revolutionary rhetoric and move towards the center. However, as pointed out by C.R. de Silva, two different party systems operated in the country, as in the North and East, the contest was between the two Tamil parties, the Federal Party and the Tamil Congress, while in the rest of the country the S.L.F.P. and U.N.P. battled for seats (Silva, 1990). This

death knell for independent candidates led to the consolidation of the party system in Sri Lanka and growth in party loyalty. Even today, independent candidates have little chance of being elected. For example, no independent candidate was elected in the 2004 parliamentary elections (Satkunanathan, not dated: 11).

The next significant fact that emerged with the election of 1956 was, as is already stated earlier, the establishment of the domination of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism on the country's political culture. In the mid-fifties, as already mentioned, the S.L.F.P. claimed to be the party that protects Buddhism, Sinhala language, and culture while the U.N.P. on the right and the Marxist on the extreme left. In practice, however, the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. were similar on the ethnic issue, with both parties resorting to divisive ethnic politics to win seats. For example, the U.N.P. changed its policy on the language issue and supported a 'Sinhala Only' Policy when it realized the S.L.F.P. had gained electoral advantage through this policy. In the 1960s, both the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. grew closer ideologically regarding Buddhist restoration and became choices at subsequent elections (Satkunanathan, not dated: 11). With the adoption of a republican constitution in 1972, the state of Buddhism was further firmed. Chapter II of that constitution stated that: "The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give Buddhism the foremost place, and accordingly it shall be the duty of the state to protect and foster Buddhism while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Sector 18(1) (d)." Under the constitution reform introduced in 1978, special recognition for Buddhism was restored. One significant consequence of this transformation of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism for state-building was the concept of a polytechnic polity ceased to be politically viable any longer. The emphasis on Sri Lanka as the land of the Sinhalese-Buddhists carried on popular emotional appeal. The concept of a multi-ethnic polity was a meaningless abstraction (Silva, 1988). The minorities, particularly the Sri Lanka Tamils, refused to assume that Sinhalese nationalism was interchangeable with the more significant Sri Lanka nationalism. As a result, 1956 saw the beginning of almost three decades of ethnic and linguistic tensions on the island that claimed thousands of human lives and countless devastative socio, economic and political consequences.

4.2 Youth uprising and Outbreak of political Violence

Since the beginning of the 1970s, Sri Lanka experienced brutally violent political uprising from Sinhalese and the minority Tamils. As pointed out by Jayadeva, Uyangoda, the over-extension and increasing authoritarianism of the state invariably led to alienating other groups in society. They found the state either unwilling or unable or both to address their demands and grievances. In effect, they believed that the system was weighted against them and that the only alternative left was to take up arms against it. Violence breeds violence, and there have been periods in Sri Lanka's recent political history where violence has become the primary arbiter of political grievance (Uyangoda, 1998). In this context, the first vigorous protest against the political system explained here came from the Sinhalese Marxist youth organized under *Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna* – JVP (People's Liberation Front) in the very beginning of the 1970s.

As a revolutionary Marxist youth movement that was based on Sinhala-dominated Southern parts of the country, JVP first challenged the S.L.F.P. government in 1971. The situation behind the youth uprising of 1971 can be summed up as follows. The youth who joined hands with JVP in this event had benefited from the expansion of distributive welfare policies of the country. Notably, the development of vernacular education after 1956 gave more space to rural youths for their social mobility. Subsequently, with the expansion of public enterprises, the state sector was considered as the leading sector to employ those educated youth. However, there was an issue on the state's capacity to fulfill the growing aspirations of the young population under slow economic growth. Alailima pointed out, "It had ceased to be so by the time growing numbers of educated rural youth, who had benefited from free education, were confronted with stagnant opportunities as a result of economy's poor performance" (1997: 151). This situation vehemently terminated the aspiration of educated rural youths in rural areas. On the other hand, when political patronage,

power, and prestige, became the primary source of distribution of the wealth and public sector job opportunities, rural youth felt that the governing party leaders of the rural level had ill-treated them.

Notably, by the 1970s, there was a tendency in which party leaders took all the decisions on providing job opportunities at the rural level. “By 1970, the competitive examination had become a virtual farce and even minor positions such as office peon...were appointed by high ranking politicians such as Minister of State” (Obeysekera (1974: 380). In this context, those educated rural youth in southern areas led by the JVP took up arms against the government in 1971.

However, within three months, the then S.L.F.P. government was able to suppress the JVP insurrection in 1971. Most of its leaders were jailed. They were released after the U.N.P.’s victory in 1977. The JVP had come to mainstream politics at the beginning of the 1980s. But, again, JVP had been forced to go underground and do clandestine politics when it was unfairly and wrongly banned by the U.N.P. government in 1983, accusing of involvement in the July riots in 1983 against Tamil population who lived in Sinhala dominated areas of the country. The JVP came out to fight against the government in 1987. As we noticed, the U.N.P.’s political culture after 1977 in the village level was more corrupt than pre-1977. Party political affiliation, politically based revenge, political favoritism, nepotism, political victimization, etc. mainly featured in the political culture at the village level after the U.N.P.’s election victory of 1977. Subsequently, during 1987-89, governing party leaders of the village level and their allies were the first proximate targets of the JVP attacks. However, within two years, the U.N.P. government wiped out the JVP again through JVP members’ brutal massacre, including almost all its high-level leadership. After the crushing of the second southern rural youth insurrection, the then president appointed a commission in 1990 to examine the root causes of the youth unrest of the country. This official inquiry into the uprising emphasized the role played by a certain style of politics; Political abuse the abuses and excesses of politicization which gave rise to a strong perception of injustice, erosion of people’s confidence in social and political institutions, especially among the young, and its inability to fulfill youth aspirations which in effect had been the major reasons for youth insurrection of the country (Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth, 1990: 1-2). The report had then recommended the pursuit of democratic criteria to select the people for state benefits.

4.3 Escalation of Election-related violence

One of the significant characteristics of the Sri Lankan political system is that violence and intimidation have increasingly occupied a prominent place during and after the election period in recent decades. The causes that affected this situation should be analyzed within the political system that developed during past decades.

Since the political transformation had taken place in 1956, it could see the emergence of political mediators from both governing parties (the S.L.F.P. and the U.N.P.) for handling state affairs. And, the relationship between politics and the masses within the distributive welfare mechanism was based on the contending parties’ offer of the necessities to the masses to win or retain power through their votes. In this context, organizational party political formation further strengthened the relationship between the voters and politicians. It was significant both from the perspective of politicians and voters. Firstly, it was substantial within the framework of mobilizing electoral support for the politicians. With the increased participation of the masses in the electoral system, the Members of the Parliament became the patrons for dispensing favors and amenities for their constituents in return for the votes base. In such a context, politicians could assure their support for their party members through the local party bodies. Secondly, it was significant from the voters’ point of view that they could gain access to the state resources, mainly through their party political affiliation, as followers of both parties. Therefore, effective connections with party politics became more important as a basis of power to handle and gain state benefits. Since the 1970s, politically mobilized dynamic

groups sometimes barred the politically inactive peoples' access to different kinds of state benefits. At the same time, they enjoyed those benefits through their political relations with politicians.

The next exciting phenomenon observed in politics during recent decades was the inclination of these politically dynamic leaders to undertake government contracts and other lucrative business. They have been able to adjust to this process successfully as they have effective connections with politics. This situation has become more acute since the late 1970s. Sometimes, these dynamic leaders could carry out even some illegal business under the protection of their political engagements. Generally, governing political parties gave such chances to their local level leaders as they are the actual agents of both parties. When one party lost the power, those leaders also lost their opportunities to gain government contracts and other politically backed lucrative business, including legally dubious business, because members of the winning party used to take over such things. It has been observed that such a situation has been functioning in Sri Lanka for the last five decades. The successive governing parties institutionalized a mechanism for the continuation of such a system. The development of this political structure paved the way for the conflict between the members of governing parties. As pointed out by Gunathilake (1988);

When a political process is perceived and approached primarily as a patronage system, it engenders its special political attributes. Political power then becomes largely dependent or relies mainly on an extensive range of small benefits conferred and favors granted. The system depends increasingly on the operation of personal networks. Rights and obligations based on merit, efficiency, and equality, which have to be exercised and fulfilled in a more impersonal setting, cannot be easily affirmed and sustained. The abuse of power and discrimination on political grounds becomes almost an accepted part of the system. At the same time, the standards of integrity in public life are undermined; corruption grows and is more readily tolerated by political parties as well as the larger society

Those who were victimized within this system criticized the situation when they were in opposition. But, when competitors came to power, they also followed the same strategy during their regime and tried to prolong their tenure by force. In this context, elections in past decades have been deeply associated with violence and intimidation. This situation is generalized during the polls related to power transition at the national level, as a parliamentary general election. Although this process was not much apparent before the 1970s, it became a stabilized process since the late 1970s, including post-election violence.

The occurrence of post-election violence was not rampant until 1977. However, the newly appointed U.N.P. government openly gave moral supports for party members to spread violence against the defected party (Perera, 1998; Obeyesekere, 1984a, 1984b). Perera (1998) pointed out, "Immediately after its massive electoral victory of 1977, the newly elected U.N.P. government granted the leave for police officers. Usually, in the pre and post-election contexts, such leave is canceled to maintain law and order given the known potential for violence. Taking complete advantage of the new government's apparent invitation to engage in violence U.N.P. thugs, many of them roamed electorates setting fire to and looting the properties of supporters of the opposition" (Perera, 1998:20). The subsequent significant development has been preventing opposition party members from casting their votes in the elections. Notably, this has happened during the parliamentary and presidential elections because those elections mark the power transition between the political parties.

The rationale behind this occurrence is vital. The governing parties become hesitant during presidential and parliamentary polls as to what would happen to them in case of a change of government. Due to these apprehensions, members of those parties attempt to prevent the voters from casting their votes during those election times using violence and intimidation and impersonation of others' votes, forced voting, etc. However, the above explanation does not mean that other elections like local government elections have been free from violence, intimidations, impersonation of others' votes, forced voting, etc., during past

decades. It has been well known that some of the elections were badly looted by governing parties during the past decades to strengthen their political power. This situation was further worsened when emergency regulation was enacted since the beginning of 1980 as a need to prevent terrorism. From this period, governing parties used these regulations not only to prevent terrorism but also to suppress the opposition parties to sustain the power. Within this context, almost all the elections held since the beginning of the 1980s embraced violence and intimidation. Some political analysts used the term 'criminalization of politics' (Uyangoda, 1997) to describe this situation because rival parties have engaged with killing, looting, destroying, etc., activities against each other and have mobilized even under-world elements for this purpose.

Until the 1980s, except for parliamentary general election and local government election, there was no other country election. However, with the introduction of the Provincial Councils' system under the 13th amendment to the constitution, elections were frequently held on parliamentary, presidential, provincial councils, and local government during six-year periods. From 1999 to 2006, there had at least one election every year. According to the reports of election commissioner and election monitoring organizations, it is a well-known fact that those elections, more or less, have not been free from violence, intimidations, votes rigging, etc. In this context, Jayadeva Uyangoda, a reputed political analyst, has commented on the electoral political system in this way; '... Recent developments in Sri Lanka's electoral politics are symptomatic of a deep crisis of democratic institutions. This crisis manifests itself in the form of our democratic institutions and practices being separated from the elementary normative principles of democracy' (Uyangoda, 1999). This writer's comment clearly shows the dilemma of the country's political system that has been faced.

4.4 The downfall of traditional parties and formation of new political alliances

The Westminster parliamentary system of government introduced by the British rule under the Saulsbury constitution arranged a democratic political atmosphere for independent Sri Lanka. The implementation of the parliamentary government system required a democratic political party system. Before the Saulburry constitution was introduced, Sama Samaja Party (S.S.P.) was established in 1936 by the local Marxist leaders who focused on the country's urban votes-base. Then, United National Party was established in 1946 under the leadership of Cyclone National Congress, Sinhala Maha Sabha, and other minority parties come from Tamil and Muslim communities. Since the beginning of the U.N.P., liberal democratic ideology was acknowledged by the leadership as the party's ideology. The first election under the Saulburry constitution was held in 1947, and U.N.P. formed a government under the leadership of D.S. Senanayake.

However, the competitive, dual-party system is determined to the smooth and healthy function of the parliamentary government system. Since S.S.P. was significantly constrained for the urban and suburban communities, it required alternative political parties to compete with U.N.P. island-wide. The formation of the S.L.F.P. under the charismatic leadership of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike likely filled that vacuum in 1956. As a party leader, Bandaranaike introduced a social democratic ideology that was stressed the center-left social welfare - ideology firmly deviate from U.N.P. Thus almost all of the leftist parties and Nationalist parties backed the S.L.F.P. led government accordingly. Since 1956 all of the successive regimes were formed by the U.N.P.-led collation, and S.L.F.P. led collations until 2010. During this period, the internal party conflicts were triggered due to the policies and leadership issues in both U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. Breaking away of party's starlets Anura Banadaranayake and Maithreepala Senanayake from S.L.F.P. and Gamini Dissanayake and Lalith Athulathmudali U.N.P. in end 1980s can be cited as notable instances for above argument. However, those hindrances were not significant to make an impact for change the domination of U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. in national political spheres.

However, on the eve of the presidential election in 2015, S.L.F.P.'s general secretary, Maithreepala Sirisena, braked away from the party and contested the presidential election became the candidate of the UNF. His victory created an internal issue of the S.L.F.P. since he was expecting the party's leadership while ruling the country as the leader of the UNF government. This circumstance affected the general election. The majority of the S.L.F.P. members of the parliament organized as a joint opposition in parliament under Mahinda Rajapaksa's leadership and formed S.P.J.P. as a new political party. The charismatic, legendary leadership of the Mahinda Rajapaksa challenged the conventional political party domination of the post-independent Sri Lanka and won the local government election, which was the first election contested by the S.P.J.P. after its establishment in 2017. The culmination of the political victory of the S.P.J.P. was recorded with the history-making triumph of the common candidate, Gotabaya Rajapaksa of S.P.J.P., in the presidential election held in 2019. One of the striking political phenomena seen in this scenario was the collapse of the S.L.F.P., and it became a coalition party under S.P.J.P.

Mr. Sajith Premadasa, deputy leader of the U.N.P. and presidential candidate of the UNF in 2019, breaking away from the U.N.P. and formed the Jathika Samagi Janabalavegaya ((J.S.J.B.), becoming the opposition party of the country with the support of minority parties. Similar to what happened to S.L.F.P., U.N.P., the ruling party and first national party of the country, could not secure a single electorate in the general election held in 2020.

Political- economic and social development that occurred during the previous decade has to be instrumental for changing political functions of the party system. During this period, parties' policies and ideologies which were the significant factors for electing government in the early decades, have become irrelevant in contemporary politics. Moreover, traditional parties such as U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. losing their political reputation, while leaders' characters have become a key factor for political gain. Furthermore, election results show a tendency to increase the number of floating votes during the last decade.

4.5 Trend towards the majoritarian- nationalism and democratic-authoritarianism

The victory of the M.E.P. government in 1956 was a significant phenomenon in nationalistic politics of the post-independent arena. It was instrumental for deviating the pro-western political-economic stances toward regaining lost pride of the Sinhala-Buddhist cultural inheritance. Mr. Bandaryekes and his pro-Singhalese Buddhist political forces enriched the nationalist ideology, setting the political atmosphere in favor of the majoritarian and nationalist agenda by undermining pluralist politics in the island nation. The nationalist centralization policies brought by the successive S.L.F.P. led governments during the 1960s. In the early 70s, U.N.P. leaders who followed the liberal democratic and pluralist political ideology encouraged politically changed their tradition and introduced a new constitution in 1978. Under the 1978 constitution, the presidential system was established with a new representative system overlooking the Westminster parliamentary system, which was instrumental in establishing democratic governance since the 1940s. Many analysts argue that the executive presidential system has transformed the established plural-democratic government into a democratic-authoritarian system (Perera, 1978). J.R. Jayawardena, founder of the new government system in the country, led the country towards the highly centralized authoritative direction by dismantling opposition parties accordingly.

Even though the country's leadership speculated that open economic reform with government reform would contribute to the country's development, the Sri Lankan state had to confront two youth uprising within a short period. One appeared as an ethnic issue from North and east, while the second came from the south as a JVP youth uprising. However, even though the emergence of ethnic conflict paved the way for establishing consensus-oriented and pluralist politics, successive leaders didn't deliberately seek sustainable democratic

solutions rather than go for a devastating war to eradicate the L.T.T.E. terrorism from time to time. Meanwhile, to deal with terrorism and secure their political survival, some political leaders started to irritate the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism accordingly. President Mahinda Rajapaksa's military camping and its victory over L.T.T.E. made an immense contribution to consolidating the nationalist forces again in the country.

However, governance issues that arose during the post-civil war scenario made a significant impact on Rajapash's regime and eventually paved the way for the victory of UNF, led by Maithrepala Sirisena and Ranil Wickramasinghe in 2015. The minority parties of the country, including the main Tamil and Muslim parties, were extended their support to the UNF government promptly. They convinced the value of consensus-oriented plural democratic governance in the country. Mahinda Rajapaksa's unexpected defeat revealed the significance of the minority's votes base for forming the country's stable government. Even though the UNF government was fully backed by democratic and pluralist forces such as the political movement for Just society, inefficiency and internal power struggle among the collation parties hindered the government's progress. However, the Easter-Sunday attack in 2019 severely affected the rejection of the UNF government. These circumstances severely contributed to exaggerating Nationalist sentiment and the significance of the powerful government, which would not depend on the minority political interests. The pro-Sinhala and anti-minority rhetoric of the SLPP's campaign demonstrated commitment to centralized and authoritarian rule by filling this vacuum.

Wednesday, 5 August, saw the landslide general election victory of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), led by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. The vote sets Sri Lanka on a path to bring fundamental political and social change. With 59 percent of the vote, the SLPP won enough seats to achieve the two-thirds parliamentary majority they requested to get the mandate which was required to amend the constitution (Keenan, 2020). Thus, the S.P.J.P. government introduced the 20th amendment to the constitution to enhance the power of the executive presidency, which was checked and balanced by the 19th amendment.

4.6 Surge of Cyber Politics

The development of Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T.) and the expansion of globalization significantly contributed to transforming the entire world into a digital age. Remarkably, Information and communication technologies have profoundly changed both the private and public spheres in western democracies at the beginning of the millennium. The term, cyber politics, came to notice during the campaign carried out by Howard Dean, who contested the 2004 Presidential nomination from the Democratic Party in the U.S.A. Before the contest, Howard Dean was not a well-known persona. However, by using cyberspace to carry out his campaign, he managed to get the attention of many and become a front-runner for the presidential nominee. This trend encouraged others to run their political campaigns in cyberspace, which brought cyber politics into the limelight (Werawatta, 2016). Subsequently, the internet has radically changed the way people communicate with each other and interact with state and private corporations in the entire world. Thus it has reshaped the polity and created new opportunities for political engagement and organization in respective countries. This paradigm shift, popularly termed cyber politics, is used to organize the polity in the international arena.

When it comes to the Sri Lankan context, cyber politics has been appeared in the second decade of the millennium. The Presidential Election 2015 and the General Election 2015 can be taken as the culmination of cyber politics in Sri Lanka. Since then, every politician in Sri Lanka is using the internet and social media for their campaigns and many have allocated huge budgets for this particular purpose.

During the Presidential Election 2015, Mahinda Rajapaksa and Maithripala Sirisena employed social media and the internet to a more significant extent. One of the reasons for the victory of Maithripala Sirisena was the cyber political campaign. When the Election Commissioner cut off propaganda campaigns through traditional media such as television, radio, newspaper, rallies, public meetings, and poster campaigns, the only mode of media that had no restrictions was the internet and social media. Through a social media campaign, Maithreepala Sirisena managed to tap into the intellectuals and the youth who voted for him. When the election results were analyzed, it was clear that voters in urban areas favored President Sirisena, and he managed to secure a majority of the votes. One of the main reasons for that was the social media campaign he carried out, which reached out to computer literates. His social media campaign was designed so that the intellect was fed information about his campaign exposing his opponent. This had a significant impact on the minds of the computer literates. According to the theory of the strength of weak ties, social media has a ripple effect on the message, and intellectuals talking on behalf of President Sirisena at the grass-root levels worked in favor of him.

Subsequently, the post-2015 political scenario is significantly manipulating by cyber politics. The United National Front (UNF) government's image was systematically tarnished by the social media agents and the opposition political parties. Meanwhile, the Image of the Gotabaya Rajapaksa as a charismatic leader who defeated the L.T.T.E. terrorism and the leader who won the heart of the common people became the candidate of the Podhu Jana Permuna build by a cyber-political campaign effectively. Thus P.J.P. was able to record an overwhelming victory due to the contribution of a cyber-political campaign organized by the joint opposition. Many argue that S.P.J.P.'s presidential candidate, Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa's landslide victory, was architected by manipulating cyber politics in Sri Lanka. With this analysis, people started noticing the power of social media. Today, it has become a persuasive tool and the trend that politicians use in their campaigns.

5. Conclusion

The main objectives of this study are to examine the political dynamic and identify the main factors that contribute to the political dynamic in contemporary Sri Lanka. Politics is referred to the specific political orientations—attitudes towards the political system and its various parts and attitudes towards the self's role in the system. One of the primary observations on politics is that it differs from country to country as well, as it is dynamic. This study arrived at several conclusions as below; first, the nature of the polity and political dynamic of the country have been mainly determined by prevailing political institutions and political-economic process throughout entire political history. The transformation of the indigenous, feudal political system into a western type of political system was taken place due to the British's political, economic, and constitutional reforms.

Second, the political system in contemporary Sri Lanka was determined by the successive reforms introduced by the British and successive governments during the colonial and post-independent scenarios. The parliamentary government system introduced under the Soulbury constitution in 1947 was prevailing in the early decades in the post-independent era. Thus, that system contributed to architecting the nature of political power struggle, political behaviours, political party system, and country's political process. Apart from that, political and economic issues changes triggered in the independence scenario have also contributed to the introduction of constitutional reform in 1978, which diverged the existing parliamentary system into a presidential system.

However, government reforms introduced by the UNP. government in 1978 significantly influenced the discontinuation of the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P. dominant political system. The preferential representative system,

which replaced the ward-based majority system, has transformed the power relation between government and constituencies and representatives and voters. Moreover, it contributed to replacing the dual-party system with a multi-party system, which became the means of power politics. Apart from that, the procedural changes brought into the representative system, such as the district electoral system, nomination list, and party dominating popular voting system, have created an unnecessary competition among the parties and the parties resulting in an exaggeration of political violence in the country.

Moreover, political violence triggered due to the L.T.T.E. military campaign and JVP youth uprising of the south has caused exaggeration of the country's political dynamic in different ways. First, it has paved the way for the rise of ethnonationalism (Singhala-Buddhist Nationalism) to encounter threats from internal and external anti-states forces. Second, it has significantly contributed to the change of the plural democratic political process into democratic authoritarianism. The S.P.J.P.'s victory in the presidential election in 2019 and the 20th amendment to the constitution are practical instances for the argument.

Furthermore, the significance of cyber-politics has increased in the contemporary Sri Lankan political context. The change of the governments since 2015 has been happening with the effective contribution of cyber politics. The professional cyber agents have undertaken the image-building process of the political campaigns in respective parties, and they have become regulators of making public opinion in contemporary Sri Lanka. The development of the I.C.T. sector can be identified as the main factor for the intensification of cyber politics.

Moreover, the downfall of the U.N.P. and S.L.F.P., which were the dominant political parties in the post-independence era, can be identified as a powerful political dynamic in contemporary Sri Lanka. The emergence of new political parties and coalitions has been redesigned the political landscape of the country. Under the performances of the fragile-political institution, deteriorating economic and social conditions have aggravated nepotism, which has contributed to the political dynamic and the rise of the segment of floating votes of the country. Thus, it can be concluded that the political dynamic of the country is aggravated in contemporary Sri Lanka

References

- Abraham, Francis, (2005) *Contemporary Sociology: An Introduction to Concepts and Theories*. U.K.: Oxford University Press.
- Alailima, Patricia. (1997). Social Policy in Sri Lanka. In *Dilemmas of Development: Fifty Years of Economic Changes in Sri Lanka*. Ed. W.D. Lakshman. Colombo: Sri Lanka Associations of Economics.
- Axford, Barrie (1997) 'Individuals: Is politics really about people?' in *Politics: An Introduction*, ed. Barrie Axford et al. London: Routledge.
- Basu, Sibaji Pratim. (2005). 'State: In Europe and the Third World,' in *Political Sociology*, ed. Satyabrata Chakarborthy, India: Laxmi Publication.
- Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (2006) ed. David Jary and Julia Jary. Glasgow: Harper Collins Publisher.
- Giddens, Anthony (2000) *Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gunatilleke, Godfrey. (1988). The Elite and the Masses – Two Political Cultures. In *Political culture in Sri Lanka*, ed. C.R.de Silva and D. Wisumperuma. Colombo: Sri Lanka Foundation Institute.

- Jayasuriya, Laksiri. (2011). 'Post-Civil War Sri Lankan Electoral Politics and the Future of Liberal Democracy. *Asia Pacific World*. Vol.2 (1) P.P. 25-53. U.S.: Berghahn Book.
- Jayawardena, Kumari. (2000). *No bodies to Somebodies: The Rise of the Colonial Bourgeoisies in Sri Lanka*. New Delhi: Leftward Books.
- Karunanada, U.B. (2016). *Sri Lankan Economy Under the British Era -1796-1946*. Colombo:Gadage
- Keenan, Alan. (2020). *Sri Lanka's parliamentary election: Landslide victory of the Rajapaksa put democracy and pluralism at risk*. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2020/08/12/sri-lanka-parliamentary-election-landslide-win-for-the-rajapaksa-puts-democracy-and-pluralism-at-risk/>
- Liyamagamage, A. and R.Gunawardena. (ed) 2014. *Anuradhapura Yugaya*.(Singhala). 4th edition(Singhala),Godage:Colombo.
- Macionis, John J. (2005) *Sociology*. (Tenth Edition). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Moore, Mick (1985) *The State and Peasant Politics in Sri Lanka*. Cambridge: Cambridge University press.Colombo: Ravaya Publication
- Obeyesekera, Gananath. (1974). Some Comments on the Social Background of the April 1971 Insurgency in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). In *Journal of Asian Studies*. Vol: 33(3). Pp.367-384.
- Obeyesekera, Gananath. (1984a). Origins and Institutionalization of Political Violence. In *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis*, ed. James Manor. London: Croom Helm.
- Obeyesekera, Gananath. (1984b). Political Violence & The Future of Democracy in Sri Lanka, In *Sri Lanka the Ethnic Conflicts: Myths, Realities & Perspectives*. Ed. Committee for Rational Development. New Delhi: Navrang.
- Parliament Elections Act (No. 1 of 1981). Colombo: Government Publication Bureau.
- Perera, Sasanka. (1998). *Political Violence in Sri Lanka : Dynamics Consequences and Issues of Democratisation :* Colombo : Center for Women's Research and Education.
- Perera. N.M. (1979). *Critical Analysis of the New Constitution of the Sri Lanka Government*. Colombo: V.S.Raja.
- Presidential Commission on Youth. (1990). *Report of the Presidential Commission on Youth*: Colombo: Government of Sri Lanka.
- Satkunanathan, Ambika. (Not Dated). *Working Democracy in Sri Lanka*. Delhi: Center for the Study of Developing Societies.
- Satkunanathan, Ambika. (Not Dated). *Working Democracy in Sri Lanka*. Delhi: Center for the Study of Developing Societies.
- Silva, C.R. De. (1990). The Political Party System of Sri Lanka. In *Party Systems and the Democratic Process-Seminar Report*. Colombo: Sri Lanka foundation Institute.
- Silva, Kingsley. De. (1988). Impact of History and Tradition on Sri Lanka's Political Culture: An Exploratory Essay. In *Political Culture in Sri Lanka*, Ed. C.R.De Silva and D. Wisumperuma. Colombo: Sri Lanka Foundation Institute.
- Sri Lanka: 50 Years of Independence* (1998). Rathmalana: Ravaya Publishers.

- Sri Sumangala H. and D.A. De Silva Batuwanthudawa. (edi),. (1917). *Mahavansa*. Ceylone Government Press: Colombo.
- Stark, Rodney. (1987). Devient Place : A theory of the Ecology of Crime. In *Journal of Criminology*. Vol: 25(4)
- Turner, Jonathan (1993) *Sociology: Concepts and Uses* New York: McGraw-Hill College.
- Uyangoda, Jayadeva. (1997). Gangsterism: It's Political Sociology. In *Matter of Violence: Reflection on Social and Political Violence in Sri Lanka*. Ed. Jayadeva Uyangoda and Janaka Biyanwila. Colombo: Social Scientist Association.
- Uyangoda, Jayadeva. (1998b). Sri Lanka's Political Violence: Fifty Years of Its Making. In *Sri Lanka: 50 Years of Independence*. Rathmalana: Ravaya Publishers.
- Uyangoda, Jayadeva. (1999). Emergency Regulations and the Electoral Process. Colombo: Social Science Foundation.
- Werawatha, Rangamini. (2016). *Cyber Politics in Sri Lanka: From Poster to Post*.
<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/cyber-politics-sri-lanka-from-poster-post-rangamini-werawatta>
- Wijetunga, W.M.K. (1974). *Sri Lanka in Transition*. Colombo: Wesley Press.
- Wilson, A.J. (1974). The Development of the Constitutions -1910-1947, In *History of Ceylon*, Vol: 3 ed. K.M.D. Silva. Colombo: University of Ceylon