

ABSTRACT

This report discusses briefly the background of the ethno-political conflict of Sri Lanka and the problems and issues related to the devolution of political power in the country in a post-war scenario.

The ethno-political conflict in the country which involves the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils has been there from the beginning of our history. This conflict which arose through administrative problems confronted by minorities gradually developed into an ethno-political conflict resulting in a civil war which attracting international attention. Study of history through available literature suggests two main causes for this problem. The colonial divide and rule policy and ignorance of the Sinhala majority politicians who were more concerned with political power with racial harmony undermined. Even though Government military forces defeated the LTTE who fought for a separate country as a solution for the ethnic problem, the root causes still exist. Therefore, after defining relevant technical terms, need of a political power sharing structure to the country are discussed. They are (i) The Non-quantifiable expense of resources and opportunities (ii) Consequences of a military defeat of terrorism-without addressing the root causes and grievances of minorities (iii) Alienation of Tamils in the long run (iv) Unprecedented interest of foreign countries / organizations (v) Growing concern of the other minority groups (vi) Achieving economic growth (vii) Existence of the Tamil diasporas, and (viii) An environment free of armed groups.

In the chapter two, pre-independence constitutional reforms are discussed giving special attention to reforms introduced by the British. It is clear that those reforms led to sound political demands relating to political power sharing.

The third chapter is a brief review of post independence provisions introduced by the Sinhala majority Governments. It is clear that these reforms introduced by Sinhala majority did not satisfy the minorities. Instead they only brought about the three decades of war experienced by the country.

The effects of two major constitutions introduced after independence namely the republic constitution of 1972 and republic constitution of 1978 on the ethno-politic conflict were then discussed. The 1972 constitution failed to address the grievances of the Tamils positively. The amendments introduced to the constitution of 1978 in 1987 to establish a Provincial Council system was the best solution so far suggested in terms of solving the minority grievances. However it was not fully implemented. The 13th amendment was the result of discussions of all political parties to resolve existing conflicts. Finally, some identified constraints are reported with the need to immediate commence of a political dialogue to resolve the problem of power among the people of the country.