

# India's Role in Promoting Peace in Sri Lanka after LTTE

S.M.ALIFF

Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts & Culture, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka.

---

**Abstract:** In this paper I propose to highlight some of the important problems which have a bearing on India's role in Sri Lanka. The end of Eelam War has opened a new chapter in India. The India's role in Sri Lanka is deep and continues to grow after the war. Sri Lanka relations India has long been the country with the greatest influence over Sri Lanka but its policies to encourage the government there towards a sustainable peace are not working. Despite India's active engagement and unprecedented financial assistance, the Sri Lankan government has failed to make progress on pressing post-war challenges, and also, Sri Lanka is not able to move forward in finding a political solution to the Tamil issue. In this context, India as a concerned neighbour needs to accelerate its role in engaging Sri Lanka constructively with the end of the three-decade civil war.

India's role in Sri Lanka assumes more significance now than before, with the end of war and devolution of power sharing to the minority of Sri Lanka in crisis. While the LTTE is wiped out militarily and isolated internationally, the existing militarisation in Jaffna with war crime charges at UN and awaiting political solution in a dilemma. The call for India's greater engagement with Sri Lanka had resurfaced domestically with a demand from Tamil Nadu parties urging India to play a more proactive role pertaining to rebuilding and sustaining peace in post-war Sri Lanka, and in ending assault on Indian fisherman at Palk Strait. On other hand, the fostering of ties between Sri Lanka and Pakistan and China push for more primed hands-on role from the point of view of India's long-term strategic interest. The post-LTTE scenario with the unsettled humanitarian and political questions, along with the increasing role of external powers in Sri Lankan affairs, demands India's greater role than before.

This study focuses on the current crisis of India's role in Sri Lanka after end of internal war in the Island. The fundamental questions of this research are the following: what are the roles plays by India in promoting peace in Sri Lanka after the war? Why India's peace supporting initiations not work in Sri Lanka? And finally concludes with suggesting overcoming the present crisis.

This research is critical one based on interpretive analysis which has used both quantitative and qualitative data. Here, the stated purpose is examined by studying mainly secondary materials. This secondary data collected from books, reports, journals, news papers, official documents and research articles.

**Keywords:** Sri Lanka Ethnic Conflict, Indo-Sri Lanka Relations, Peace in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka and Regional Powers.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When the Sri Lankan government declared victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009, this marked the end to one of the world's most protracted and brutal internal armed conflicts. During the course of the 26 years of civil war, an estimated 84,000 people have lost their lives, while hundreds of thousands have been forcibly displaced (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, n. d.).(Kristine Höglund & Camilla Orjuela: 2011).The events were accompanied by massive war crimes and human rights violations (ICG:2010), the displacement of the thousands of people mainly Tamils, and hug losses among the civilian population. Given such a dramatic situation taking place in close proximity to India and

emotionally involving Indian Tamil Nadu people represented by parties belonging to the governing coalition in New Delhi- we would have expected regional power India to have acted decisively. In particular, we would have assumed that India would adopt peacemaking measures in order to prevent the escalation of violence in its immediate vicinity.

It is a well-documented fact that an end to a war does not guarantee a sustainable peace. Research shows that around 30% of all terminated armed conflicts relapse into violence within five years. .)( Kristine Höglund & Camilla Orjuela :2011) . Since the 1990s, the interest among international actors in conflict prevention has increased significantly—one rational being that it is much more cost-effective in terms of both human lives and economic resources to prevent violence than to manage it once it has erupted. The risk of renewed violence in the aftermath of a war makes post-war conflict prevention particularly urgent.

In Sri Lanka, the government did win the war as they defeated the LTTE in 2009 however; winning the peace remains a much greater challenge. Many of the underlying conflicts which had driven the LTTE's violent struggle for Tamil self-determination remain unresolved. The brutality of the war, the centralized and Sinhalese-dominated political system, and the Sri Lankan government's lack of interest in political reforms or power sharing and minority rights suggest that the 2009 victory has failed not only to address many of the problems underlying the conflict, but also aggravated some of them. While the LTTE are virtually eradicated in Sri Lanka, the support for Tamil separatism remains high among the large Tamil Diaspora, which was a key contributor of funds for the LTTE during the war (International Crisis Group,2010)

The end of Eelam War has opened a new chapter in India -Sri Lanka relations. India need not now be worried about the presence of the third navy (Sea Tigers), Air Force (Air Tigers) and suicide cadres in the Indian Ocean. But the absence of LTTE does not mean that there is no threat arising from the Indian Ocean, rather the close relations of Sri Lanka with China and Pakistan has increased strategic concerns for India.

It has long been assumed that if any country could encourage Sri Lanka to seek a sustainable political settlement/ peace to its ethnic conflicts it would be India.(ICG:211) Certainly, no lasting settlement is possible without Indian acceptance. With India's rise as a global economic power and its growing ambition to play an influential role internationally, many analysts and Western diplomats continue to hope that India can help influence Sri Lanka's post-war policies. To date, India, like other governments that support a sustainable peace in Sri Lanka, has struggled to contain the Rajapaksa administration's strongly Sinhala nationalist and authoritarian policies.

Apart from the peace in Sri Lanka, some major factors still remain the determinants of the India-Sri Lankan relations. These factors not only have an impact on the cordial relation between India and Sri Lanka but also promoting peace in Sri Lanka. With the end of the violent phase of the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis, these issues would play in determining the nature of India- Sri Lanka relations. However the ethnic conflict has had an enormous impact on these issues, which is likely to continue for the coming years. This paper seeks to better understand what roles played by India bring peace in Sri Lanka and why India has been struggling to make its influence in Sri Lanka.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE ETHNIC CONFLICT**

The rise in internal conflicts and its debilitating impact on international peace and stability makes it eminently relevant to understand the approaches to resolve these conflicts and their impact. Till the early 1990s, international actors ignored the impact that internal conflicts can have on international peace and stability, their attention being focused on the ideological battle between East and West and the consequent inter-state conflicts and movements against colonialism, rather than internal conflicts in multi-ethnic states. The management of inter-state conflicts has been over-emphasized, ignoring the claims and demands of various ethnic, cultural and religious minority groups within states for equal distribution of resources and for a say in the political decision-making process. However, by the 1990s internal conflicts have become a glaring feature of international relations, because of the rising assertion of minority groups against majoritarian governments in multi-ethnic states and because of the failure of peace-keeping and peace-making methods. (C.R. Mitchell,1991, M.Samatha 2011)

Thus, the peace-building approach to conflict resolution looks at the conflict as an inherent part of the society which should be resolved through normal political and economic means. The peace-building approach is that it is a long-term

activity or a process which can be implemented even in pre-conflict, ongoing and post-conflict situations with an assumption that development and peace promotion by the state with the help of international actors can strengthen the prospects of peaceful co-existence and decrease the likelihood of outbreak, recurrence or continuation of internal conflicts. With this perspective, donors have incorporated and recognized the issues of conflict resolution in their policy towards conflict-affected countries by delivering aid to even conflict-affected regions within a country as well as addressing the issue of promotion of inclusive peace process.

Sri Lankan neighbor such as India have played a prominent role in the peace-building process at various levels. India's efforts helped in substantial resource-transfer to the Sri Lankan government and also directed the government's political and economic policy. India's official position on the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has been clear and relatively consistent for the past three decades. It has consistently endorsed peace through devolution of power to the northern and eastern provinces, urging the full implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution, to be followed by further constitutional reforms.

### **3. SOUTH ASIA REGION AND INDO –SRI LANKA RELATIONS**

Sri Lanka's place in South Asian states-system has undergone a fundamental change in recent years, partly as a result of the aggravation of the internal conflict in the island and its internalization, and partly because its strategic importance to India and other big power became considerably enhanced consequent to changing configurations of politics in the international system as well as in the region itself.

The geo-strategic environment in which Indo- Sri Lanka relations have been taking place has undergone change in some respects in recent years due to a number of factors, among which the most war against LTTE, growing relation between China –Sri Lanka, and changes in the strategic scenario in South Asia. But the basic parameter of this relationship, the post war reconciliation in Sri Lanka, remains unaltered over time.

India's relation towards Sri Lanka in recent years has been influenced by several factors. There is first, the all important 'Tamil Nadu factor- the role of the Tamil Nadu government and political parties in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, as well as the pressure which they have been bringing to bear on the government in New Delhi in respect of this ethnic conflict, the sense of identity which has long prevailed between the Tamils of South India and the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka's increasing reliance on China and other non –western countries is partly a result of the enormous pressure placed by the 'international community' and its human right campaign from 2009. The Asian power such as India and China are both increasingly involved in much needed and welcomed economic and infrastructural development in Sri Lanka. However, given Sri Lanka's strategic location in the Indian Ocean and the so-called 'Great Game' emerging in the region after the LTTE.

### **4. INDIA'S EARLY ROLE IN SRI LANKA**

India pursued a range of policy approaches over the past three decades, none of which succeeded in achieving a peaceful settlement of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflicts or ensuring minority rights. Past interventions have in fact helped deepen the conflict and led to significant mistrust of India's intentions among large parts of the Sri Lankan public. In Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, the Sinhalese and Tamil parties initially maintained very different perceptions about third party involvement. While the Sri Lanka governments considered the ethnic conflict as an internal matter, the Tamils, particularly the LTTE, attempted to internationalize the conflict as a strategy to gain external legitimacy(Sivarajah:1995). The government of Sri Lanka had in the past rejected the idea of international third party involvement on the premise that the conflict was purely internal one. (Uyangoda, 1996).The Indian involvement to find peace in Sri Lanka got underway during the early period of the conflict. There are three major factors that played a role in the Indian decision to peace making in the conflict in Sri Lanka;

- i. Considerations of Indian regional hegemony,
- ii. India's National security, and
- iii. Politics in the state of Tamil Nadu ( Keethapocalan.S.I.2005:211)

Major influences pushed India's policy response to the Sri Lankan conflict: the active engagement of foreign influence by the Sri Lankan government and demands of India's own Tamil population for India to act on behalf of the Sri Lankan Tamils. India's complex interests and concerns in Sri Lanka determined the way in which the Indian state gained entry into the conflict in Sri Lanka. During the anti-Tamil riots of 1983, India officially expressed its concern over the plight of the Tamil and peace in Sri Lanka. This could perhaps be characterized as an initial step of India's role in Sri Lanka to make peace. From 1983-1987, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi's governments offered financial support and training for the half-dozen Tamil militant groups then active in Sri Lanka, including the LTTE (ICG:2011, Dixit: 2003; and Santos: 2007).

The official Indian rationale for India's involvement in the Sri Lankan crises was because of the influx of the Sri Lankan Tamils to India as refugees. As the civilian administration in the North and East was completely disrupted due to the armed conflict, thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils sought refuge in Tamil Nadu. (Gamini Keerawella:1995) ( Mrs. Gandhi in her statements made it clear that she considered India as a chief mediator and not a mute spectator. Throughout 1983 – 1990, India never abandoned its role of being a mediator a protector of the interests of the Tamil minorities in the island. (K.M. De Silva: 1998)

India continued to supply the militants while working with Colombo to broker a peace deal and end the fighting. There was also a political- diplomatic track that India followed to gain entry to Sri Lanka's conflict. Immediately after the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, the government of India was sent a high level officer in Sri Lanka about the plight of the Tamil people and report back to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. G. Parthasarathi, the newly appointed Indian Special Envoy, was expected to bring the conflicting parties to the peace table. He succeeds in that mission. Subsequently, he presented a peace proposal, which came to be known as the 'Annexure C', to devolve power to the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. This peace proposal was discussed in the All Party Conference summoned by the President of Sri Lanka, unfortunately, the initiative and efforts of India to bring about peace in Sri Lanka ended unsuccessfully, but soon abandoned due to lack of support from concern parties.

Although, the sudden demise of Indira Gandhi and coming to power of Rajiv Gandhi as India's new Prime Minister created cordial relationship between the two countries, India continued to its role in Sri Lanka bring peace. Under the new Prime Minister, India renewed talks were organized between the conflict parties in Thimpu, Bhutan. Talks at Thimpu formed the second attempt at a direct dialogue with the Tamils of Sri Lanka with support of India. Since Thimpu talks were also failed. India transformed its role from one of mediator to negotiator. (Keethapocalan.S.I.2005:214) It negotiated a power sharing arrangement with the government of Sri Lanka and signed an agreement which came to be known as the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987.

On 27 July, 1987, Sri Lanka's President J.R.Jayewardene and India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed an inter-state agreement to end Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict and bring peace through a political settlement. The main points of the agreement were for the Sri Lanka to create a system of devolution of power through a constitutional amendment. Devolution was meant to grant a measure of political and administrative autonomy to the province.

Eventually, India failed in the peace making process in Sri Lanka. This failure had a number of dimensions as mention as Keethaponcalan

- i. The outcome of India's intervention failed to restore peace in Sri Lanka; rather it escalated the violence.
- ii. Since the LTTE rejected the peace process and fight with IPKF
- iii. New President took over presidency in Sri Lanka. He ordered the IPKF withdrawn from Sri Lanka, because IPKF presence as violation of the nation's sovereignty.

With the withdrawal of the IPKF in 1990, India's role as effective peace maker in Sri Lanka came to an end. Since then particularly after the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was allegedly killed by the LTTE, India although closely watching the development in Sri Lanka, began to follow a hand off policy. It is no coincidence that India hasn't attempted a military intervention in the region since, and that it's Gujral Doctrine, based on the notions of non-intervention and non-reciprocity in relations with regional neighbors, was formulated just few years later. The second main event shaping India's policy towards the Sri Lankan conflict in the context of its more cooperative regional policy under the Gujral Doctrine, the Indian government accepted the involvement of external actors in Sri Lanka affairs.

In January 2000 Norwegian government formally announced it's willing to help resolve the conflict in Sri Lanka. Norwegian initiative has gained the backing of European Union as well as USA. Significantly, India has also consented to the Norway's facilitatory role in Sri Lanka. This factor is crucial because it was conceived that India would not allow any power outside the South Asian region to intervene in the conflict in Sri Lanka. Indeed a large number of Indian intellectuals and opinion maker continue to criticize the Indian government for its 'hand off policy' in Sri Lanka. Some of these experts argue that allowing an external power to play a leading role in Sri Lanka could prove to be costly in terms of India's national interest. Nevertheless, the Indian government continued to adopt a friendly approach to the Norwegian involvement, although it keeps a close watch on the developments in its neighbor. Although, Norwegian involve in peace making process in Sri Lanka, they have taken precautionary steps to address the Indian concern by frequently visiting New Delhi and briefing the relevant authorities including the top Indian political leader.(Höglund/Svensson 2009: 181). While at the level of diplomatic interactions India continued to reiterate its preference for both a peaceful termination of the civil war and a political settlement of the underlying conflict, it attempt to devise long-term-oriented conflict-management initiatives.

Similarly, during the years of Norwegian mediation, the goal of "lasting peace" became a standard formulation in India's declarations,(Quoted in Deatradi:2010), confirmed by India's quite support for the peace process. And from 2003 to 2009 India repeatedly expressed the goal of a "negotiated political settlement" encompassing forms of power devolution meeting "the aspirations of all communities"(Ibid).

During final war time the Indian government had begun to fashion a three-part strategy: diplomatic and logistical support for the completion of the war was combined with modest pressure on the Sri Lankan government to minimize the humanitarian cost of their offensive, while Rajapaksa was urged to "allow devolution of power and autonomy to the northern and eastern province, to meet the legitimate aspirations of the ethnic minorities of Sri Lanka".(ICG:2011)

## 5. AFTER THE LTTE

The end of Eelam War IV has heralded the current phase in India – Sri Lanka relations. When India was not directly involved, however its influence was decisive India played a crucial role in the military defeat of the LTTE, but never claimed credit for it. (N.Manoharan:2012). Although India did not openly support Sri Lanka in Eelam War IV, its subtle involvement of was clearly evident. Initially there were repeated denials from the Government of India on the supply of arms to Sri Lanka, however news paper reports show that India in addition to sharing of intelligence, also give tactical weapons to the Sri Lankan armed forces. This, mostly tacit, support by India for Sri Lanka's military campaign fit New Delhi's desire for stability and peace in the region. Post-LTTE New Delhi's broad concerns have been resettlement and development of post-war Sri Lanka in the short term and bringing peace a lasting political settlement of the ethnic issue in the long run.

Although the LTTE is out of the picture, the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka remains an important aspect that continues to steer India-Sri Lanka relations. Despite India's bitter experience during its military intervention in Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990, it has built upon its close political, diplomatic, strategic, and trade relations with that country. These have become all- embracing over the years, with increased linkages in all areas of interest. So it is not surprising that India signed its first ever Free Trade Agreement with Sri Lanka, paving the way for their two-way trade to grow to \$4 billion. When Sri Lanka's internal political environment turns favorable, it is likely to sign the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) proposed by India to cement their trade and economic relations further..( R. Harihara:2012). These have invariably impacted India-Sri Lanka relations in the post-LTTE phase. Since the end of the civil war in May 2009, salient examples of India's assistance to Sri Lanka include a financial aid package worth US\$100 million to give food, clothing and shelter, and also to expedite the process of removing landmines and resettling. In June 2009, India's UN Ambassador sharply criticized Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, for her insistence on pursuing a war crimes investigation against Sri Lanka after the UN Human Rights Council voted against it.(DeSilva-Ranasinghe:2011)

The pattern of India's behavior is consistent and clear: it wants to decisively settle the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka, which is vital to its own national security, and prevent a scenario that could possibly revive radical Tamil nationalism as espoused



by the LTTE. In addition, by attempting to secure its interests in Sri Lanka, India has is trying to position itself to have a greater say in Sri Lanka's internal affairs, thereby enabling it to contest, and possibly limit, the growth of Chinese influence on the island. Given that Sri Lanka is located just off India's southern periphery and astride the strategically important east-west shipping route, it will continue to be of concern for Indian strategic planners. As such, India's foreign policy towards Sri Lanka will continue to be at odds with that of the West, and shall continue to focus on political stability, rather than confrontation.

Meanwhile, Many Sri Lankans belonging to the conservative Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist segment believe that the Tamil insurgency in their country was India's creation, after Tamil militants took refuge in Tamil Nadu following the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom. They overlook the subsequent sacrifices India made during its military operations in Sri Lanka against the LTTE to facilitate the implementation of the India-Sri Lanka agreement. The Sri Lankan anti-India lobby, mainly supported by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (Peoples Liberation Front) JVP, construed the military intervention as an indirect bid to help create Tamil Eelam. This lobby, now joined by the right-wing Jathika Hela Urmaya (JHU) has been strengthened by the reassertion of Sinhala superiority at the end of the war, and as a corollary, the defeat of what they consider Indian machinations to keep Sri Lanka divided. This lobby is vociferous and enjoys some indulgence from the administration. So they cannot be ignored.

A major stumbling-block in India-Sri Lanka relations is the peace and ethnic reconciliation issue. President Rajapaksa has not fulfilled his repeated promises made to India at the highest levels that he would implement the 13th Amendment (devolving powers to provincial councils) in full as part of the ethnic reconciliation process. Before the war he constituted the All Party Representative Committee (APRC) to evolve a framework for devolution of powers to the minorities. The committee expected to elaborate a power sharing package representing a "southern consensus" (ICG:2007), several drafts were elaborated by the APRC in 2007, one of them proposing the relatively progressive solution of devolving power to the provinces. However, the President managed to delay the release of the APRC's final proposal (Chandra Destrada:2010,15). In fact, the report simply recommended that the government implement the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the constitution, a by-product of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 which had no ever been put into practice. (Reddy:2008).

Interestingly, in January 2008, the government of India defined the APRC interim report as a "welcome first step", and in the following months New Delhi continued to call its implementation. Therefore, on the issue of power sharing we can observe a convergence between India's and Sri Lanka's preferences, with India adopting the position put forward by the Sri Lankan government.

However, its recommendations were put in cold storage. After the war, the government's talks with the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) have been stalled after a dozen rounds as the President wants a parliamentary select committee to evolve political consensus on the issue.

While the regional power India is not offering to broker talks and a political settlement, it has been highly active in calling for peace based on devolution of power under the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Sri Lanka Constitution. On a visit to Sri Lanka in December 2010, Indian Foreign Affairs Minister S.M.Krishna reiterated India's commitment to 'meaningful devolution' to the Tamil majority areas based on the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka. (Ladduwahetty:2010) . A joint press statement issued in New Delhi by the government of India and Sri Lanka on 17 May, 2011 on 'genuine reconciliation' further presses the Sri Lanka government to concede Tamil regional autonomy. It states the following

'... A devolution package, building upon the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, would contribute towards creating condition for reconciliation...The External Affairs Minister of India urged the expeditious implementation of measures by the government of Sri Lanka, to ensure... early withdrawal of emergency regulations into human rights violation.' (Ladduwahetty:2011).

Opposition against this statement was mounting in Sri Lanka. Sinhalese nationalist organizations are condemning the agreement as representing another attempt at Indian intervention to undermine Sri Lanka's political, economic independence and to create a Tamil region in the north that is subservient to India. (Dayasiri: 2011). India's call for 'building upon the 13 amendment', 'early withdrawal of emergency regulations' are likely to intensify ethnic polarization and instability in Sri Lanka not peace.

With the LTTE gone, the Indian government may have lost its best opportunity to influence Sri Lankan policy. So long as the LTTE posed a security threat, the government needed the military and political support of India and other governments – to provide the weapons, intelligence and legal and political cover to ban, weaken and ultimately destroy the Tigers. That powerful leverage has now been lost. (ICG:2011).

## 6. TAMIL NADU FACTORS AND INDIA'S ROLE IN SRI LANKA

The relations between India and Sri Lanka have been greatly influenced by domestic political factors in recent years. S.U. Kodikara said that 'to any observer of recent trends in Indo Sri Lanka relations what appears most striking is the relevance of domestic political factors to the foreign policy process in both countries.( Quoted in A.Sivarajah: 1990)

The nature of Tamil minority in Sri Lanka affects India's domestic politics as much as that of Sri Lanka's politics, because there are nearly seventy million Tamils in the state of Tamil Nadu in India who belong not only to the same ethnic stock as Tamils in Sri Lanka but also speak the same language and practice the same cultural patterns. Whatever communal problems between the Tamil- Sinhalese take place in Sri Lanka; The Tamils in Tamil Nadu press the central government of India to take up the issues with Sri Lanka to short out the problems. The domestic political factors constantly dragged India into the Sri Lankan affairs. In particular, the pro-LTTE attitude of some political parties and groups in Tamil Nadu was further intensified by the composition of governing coalitions in New Delhi. During the 2004-2014, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), some of whose representatives had clear sympathy for the LTTE, was the third largest member of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) central government. In the final months of war, the DMK's repeated threats to pull out of the coalition to induce New Delhi to exercise pressure for a ceasefire on the Sri Lankan government are an indicator of DMK's interest in events affecting Sri Lankan Tamils as well as of the DMK's influence.(Murari:2009)

Given such a dramatic situation taking place in close proximity to India and emotionally linking Indian Tamils living in Tamil Nadu—represented by parties belonging to the governing coalition in New Delhi- we would have expected regional power India to have acted decisively.

During war against LTTE and after the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the Tamil Nadu political parties and another pro- Tamil groups very active and made massive pressure on central government of India act decisively against Sri Lanka. Given the wave of Tamil sentiment coupled with pressures from Kazhagam political groups (AIADMK, DMK, MDMK, etc.) back home, the whole discourse has finally reached a stage, where India perhaps, cannot afford to escape expressing its serious displeasure to Rajapaksa regime for even trying to dilute the 13th amendment and go a few steps further in condemning the violation of human rights against Tamils and other minorities.

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) threaten withdrew its support for the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government. The DMK is one of the oldest allies of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and a prominent party in the state of Tamil Nadu, so its withdrawal was significant. The Tamil party was demanding unconditional support from India for the U.S.-backed resolution.

In March 2012 and 2013, India voted for a UN resolution condemning Sri Lanka for human rights violations in its war against the LTTE. India initially showed reluctance to vote on a nation-specific resolution but changed its stand after political parties in Tamil Nadu exerted pressure on the United Progressive Alliance government to go with the resolution. The DMK, in particular, threatened to pull out its Ministers from the UPA government on the issue.

Viewed in this background, India's vote for the U.S. resolution may be considered a major departure from the past in India-Sri Lanka relations.(Hariharan.R:2012) Initially, New Delhi tried to soft pedal the Sri Lankan President's lackadaisical attitude to India. But New Delhi was fast losing credibility at home and it became an irritant in its relations with Tamil Nadu coalition partners. Over a period of time, Sri Lanka's inaction had its adverse fall out on Tamil Nadu politics as well. To trivialize the developments in Tamil Nadu as merely coalition politics would be ignoring their strategic implications. By voting for the resolution India has sent a clear signal to Sri Lanka to speed up national reconciliation process with all its ramifications spelt out in the resolution. In the process it has also sent a signal to the people of Tamil Nadu and Tamils everywhere that their concerns have not been marginalized in India's agenda. (Ibid)

Boycotting the CHOGM in November 2013 and had voted against Sri Lanka on a US-sponsored resolution at UNHRC in March 2013 will only widen the divide between Delhi and Colombo and inadvertently strengthen China's influence in Sri Lanka and the broader South Asia region, which was interpreted as a sign of betrayal by the Lankan government. Since then, there has been lack of spontaneity in relations between India and Sri Lanka.

In this context, the fact that Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalitha Jayaram has become the first mainstream Indian politician to advocate the internationalization of the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka, has provided India with a politically palatable justification for changing its position on international accountability. In recent months, she has urged the Indian government to press the UN to declare those responsible for the killings of Tamil civilians as 'war criminals'. (Indian Express:2011).

So any exercise to improve India-Sri Lanka relations now will have to be taken up as a challenge by the national political leadership rather than as a diplomatic exercise. Given the complexity of Indian coalition politics, this may be a difficult task. To move forward from this disadvantaged position, India will have to take action to control the call for revival of Tamil Eelam issue by Tamil Nadu politicians in tandem with similar efforts by pro-Eelam activists among the Tamil Diaspora. Otherwise, India will not be able to create the climate of confidence required to build a win-win relationship with Sri Lanka. (R. Harihara:2012). This explains how Tamil Nadu's pro-Tamil politics influenced the central government and contributed to the latter's indecisive policies on Sri Lanka.

## **7. SRI LANKA ATTEMPT TO REPEAL THE 13<sup>TH</sup> AMENDMENT AND INDIA'S REACTION**

A Bill was presented by JHU MP Ven. Aturaliye Ratana and is titled the Twenty First Amendment to the Constitution. The Bill was seconded by UNP Puttalam District MP Palitha Range Bandara. The Bill states that the 13th Amendment seeks to weaken the Government of Sri Lanka whilst strengthening the Provincial Councils and thereby destroying the unitary character of the state, territorial integrity, and the sovereignty of the people. And also said that

"The 13th Amendment, though based on the constitutional structure of India, denies the government of Sri Lanka to intervene in the event of province acting against the interests of the republic, although the Central government of India is empowered to intervene in similar situations..." (Sandasen Marasinghe and Irangika Range: 2013). Repealing the 13th Amendment is justified because it is a byproduct of a political intervention by India following the Indo-Lanka Accord.

JVP Propaganda Secretary Vijitha Herath told the media that even members of the government have now realized that the 13th Amendment would not resolve the ethnic crisis and also said, the 13th Amendment that has been forced on the country as a product of the Indo-Sri Lanka accord of 1987 has compounded the ethnic issue. He said the people should stand against any solution that is forced on the country by an outside party. (Colombo Page, 2012)

the visit of a delegation from the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), Sri Lanka to India the Official Spokesperson, Ministry of External Affairs, India said the Prime Minister stated that he was deeply concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka.

"He stressed on the expectation that the Sri Lankan Tamil community would lead a life of dignity, as equal citizens, and reiterated that India would make every effort to ensure the achievement of a future for the community marked by equality, justice and self-respect."

It was noted that the proposed changes raised doubts about the commitments made by the Sri Lankan Government to India and the international community, including the United Nations, on a political settlement in Sri Lanka that would go beyond the 13th Amendment. The changes would also be incompatible with the recommendation of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), set up by the Government of Sri Lanka, calling for a political settlement based on the devolution of power to the provinces. (Asia Tribune:2013)

Amidst mounting protest against 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment in Sri Lanka, Indian Foreign Affairs Minister visit to Sri Lanka on October 2013 insist Sri Lankan government on "full implementation" of the Sri Lankan Constitution's 13th Amendment, which devolved powers to the provinces and also said Khurshid also "emphasized on the need to fully implement the



provisions of the 13th Amendment and to go beyond it so as to ensure meaningful development of Sri Lanka. He urged Rajapaksa not to do anything to dilute the provisions of the 13th Amendment”.

### **8. SRI LANKA’S ASSURANCE TO INDIA**

When the Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris visited New Delhi in May 2011, a joint press statement with the Minister of External Affairs of India stated:“... the External Affairs Minister of Sri Lanka affirmed his government’s commitment to ensuring expeditious and concrete progress in the ongoing dialogue between the Government of Sri Lanka and representatives of Tamil parties. A devolution package, building upon the 13th Amendment, would contribute towards creating the necessary conditions for such reconciliation.”In January 2012, after meeting with President Rajapakse – visiting Indian Minister for External Affairs, Hon. S. M. Krishna speaking at a joint press conference with Minister G.L.Peiris,said:“The Government of Sri Lanka has on many occasions conveyed to us its commitment to move towards a political settlement based on the full implementation of the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, and building on it, so as to achieve meaningful devolution of powers. We look forward to an expeditious and constructive approach to the dialogue process.”

This is not the first such assurance made to the Government of India. On 25th December, the Indian External Affairs spokesman stated “[I]n this context we have been assured by the government of Sri Lanka on several occasions in the past, of its commitment towards pursuit of a political process ... leading to the full implementation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, and to go beyond, so as to achieve meaningful devolution of powers and genuine national reconciliation.” It is in this context that the government proposes to strip the 13th Amendment of the limited concession it offers to devolution.(Sumanthiran.M.A :2013)

Not only has the government failed to keep its many promises to India to move towards a political settlement based on the full implementation of the 13th Amendment and build on it so as to achieve meaningful devolution of powers, but it shamelessly proposes to strip away the limited concession to devolution that exists.

### **9. CHINA ROLE IN SRI LANKA AND INDIAN CONCERN**

The growing presence of the Chinese in Sri Lanka, when India-Sri Lanka relations are under stress, has disturbing strategic connotations for national security. Chinese actions are closely related to the domestic and external policy dispensations of the new Chinese leadership under Xi Jinping as well as China’s desire to takeover South Asia’s under-exploited markets dominated by India so far.

In the South Asian context, China’s policy prescription would translate as: vigorously defending the integrity of its borders, pursuing its territorial claims, developing strategic communication lines to the border areas and not losing sight of its economic interests. The PLA’s repeated intrusions along India’s border in Ladakh and enlarging presence in Sri Lanka validate this.

India’s emergence as a rapidly growing economic and military power dominating the Indian Ocean adding to China’s strategic concerns. China has unresolved border dispute and unfulfilled territorial claims with India have continued to simmer. China nurtures deep suspicions about India’s role in sustaining the activities of exiled Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama as well as India’s growing strategic relationship with the US and Japan.

China’s strategic forays in Sri Lanka are likely impact the US and the Western powers also as it gives China a strategic foothold midway on Indian Ocean’s international sea lanes of communication. President Rajapaksa has been aggrieved about the way Sri Lanka was treated by the US and the West over allegations of human rights violations during the Eelam War IV and its aftermath. In the last stages of the War in April 2009, the US offer to send marines to evacuate the LTTE leadership trapped in a narrow strip of land caused a lot of suspicion about the US intentions in Sri Lanka. This was further aggravated after the U.S. sponsored a successful resolution seeking Sri Lanka’s accountability for its human rights an aberration in the UN Human Rights Council meeting in March 2012..

China established itself as a friend of Sri Lanka by meeting Sri Lanka’s wartime requirements after it was “let down by friends.” So far China is reported to have provided over \$1.8 billion worth of arms to Sri Lanka. China's Poly

Technologies is estimated to have supplied \$37.6 million worth ammunition and ordnance for the army and navy in 2007. China National Electronics Import Export Corp provided Sri Lanka a JY 11 3D radar at a cost of \$5 million. China also provided diplomatic support for Sri Lanka at the UN.

Since the end of Eelam war in 2009 there had been a steady increase in exchanges at governmental, military, and political levels between the two countries. President Rajapaksa has visited China six times since came to power in 2005. During President Rajapaksa's August 2011 visit to Beijing, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao expressed the country's readiness to help with Sri Lanka's economic development, promote communication between the two countries with regard to infrastructure construction, enlarge two-way trade and investment, and strengthen cultural and personnel exchanges. (R Hariharan: 2013)

In his last visit in May 2013, President Rajapaksa met with President Xi Jinping during which China and Sri Lanka agreed to upgrade their relations to a strategic cooperative partnership. A Xinhua report on the visit said "According to the new consensus, the two countries will maintain high-level exchanges, enhance political communication, and support each other's efforts in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity" indicating Beijing's strong desire to build its strategic relations with Sri Lanka.

China's strategic clout in Sri Lanka is increasing every day. These will have serious connotations for India's national security and maritime security. Political perceptions of President Rajapaksa are likely to favour China as a counterpoise to reduce his dependence upon India. The strategic dimension Chinese have added now could make rapid headway unless the drift in India-Sri Lanka relations is halted. The strong anti-Sri Lankan flavour of Tamil Nadu politics has caused serious damage to India's carefully nurtured relationship with Sri Lanka. (R Hariharan: 2013).

A prominent Indian academic and human rights activist agrees, "India has lost out [politically and economically] because Sri Lanka has more choices for friends. Strategically it's lost out because of China's presence". He continued, "India has always thought that its cultural links with other countries in the region would ensure its role as the preeminent external influence. This is an utterly naïve thought and something the Sri Lankans proved a myth. (ICG:2011) Beijing's importance to Sri Lanka, and the challenge it poses for New Delhi, is economic as well as political and military.

## 10. CONCLUSION

From the days of non-involvement in Sri Lanka's policy the Indo-Lanka policy has come a long way. Politics and ethnic conflict have become one of the facets of bilateral relations. Since the end of the Eelam War IV a new chapter has begun in the India- Sri Lanka relations. It is likely that this period would be see the policy of involvement, mutual trust and harmony.

It is imperative that India adopts a pro active policy towards Sri Lanka, in order to not only save the people but also for its own security reasons. India's reluctance to put serious pressure on the Sri Lankan government is also due to strategic considerations, in particular its desire to counter the growing influence of China, whose financial and political support the Rajapaksa government has been cultivating. In fact, Indian policy makers were exposed to different kinds of pressures at different levels of analysis, but ultimately the skillful diplomacy of the Sri Lankan government and growing influence of external actors, especially of China, in India's sphere of influence induced New Delhi to "react" to events in order not to entirely lose its leverage on Sri Lanka. (Sandara Destradi:2010)

India's own growing economic interests in Sri Lanka have also tempered its political activism. New Delhi's traditional reluctance to work through multilateral bodies or in close coordination with other governments – due in part to its fear of international scrutiny of its own conflicts, particularly in Kashmir – has also significantly weakened its ability to influence Sri Lanka.

With the end of war, Sri Lanka has become closer to China, Pakistan and Israel because of their support to Colombo during the Eelam War IV. China building the Hambotota port cannot be ignored by India. The strategic dimension Chinese have added now could make rapid headway unless the drift in India-Sri Lanka relations is halted. The strong anti-Sri Lankan flavour of Tamil Nadu politics has caused serious damage to India's carefully nurtured relationship with Sri Lanka. Hence it is important that India looks at these developments with great concern and ensure an accurate policy towards Sri Lanka. India needs to devote in Sri Lanka to keep the latter in its zone of influence.

India's own restive domestic Tamil constituency, to which the central government needs to respond for electoral considerations, is pressing for stronger action. If it is serious about promoting a stable peace in Sri Lanka, India will have to rebalance its priorities and press more consistently and in concert with other powers for major political reforms in Sri Lanka. Parties in Tamil Nadu, in turn, will need to use their leverage with New Delhi in consistent and principled ways, even at the risk of sacrificing potentially profitable political deals

The capacity of India to engage actively in peace-building in Sri Lanka is limited. Yet, it wants to maintain some leverage over the political process in order to ensure that Tamil politics remain pluralistic, that the government offers a political package of devolution to the Tamils, and more importantly to attempt to check the influence of China and Pakistan on the country. For now, India's public statements on Sri Lanka convey some dissatisfaction with the manner its neighbour has handled issues relating to reconciliation and devolution, and private messages are understood to have become terser.

In the ultimate analysis, India's peace succeeded neither in bringing about a political settlement of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict, nor in bringing own the ethnic tensions. When peace effort failed, India was left with the only possible option: direct involvement. Whatever the merits of the post –LTTE scenario, it once again reaffirmed India's role as the peace maker of South Asian crisis. (N Manoharan:2013)

On the long-term aspect of the ethnic issue, India's consistent position has been in favour of "a politically negotiated settlement acceptable to all sections of Sri Lankan society within the framework of an undivided Sri Lanka and consistent with democracy, pluralism and respect for human rights." This was reiterated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a debate in Lok Sabha (6 March 2013) on the subject: "Our Government will remain engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka to promote a durable settlement of the Tamil problem that enables the Tamil citizens of Sri Lanka to lead a life of dignity and self-respect with equal rights."

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Asia Tribune,(2013), Indian Prime Minister expressed dismay over attempt by Sri Lanka Government to dilute certain key provisions of the 13th Amendment, 20,June
- [2] Bertram E S J Bastiampillai,(1995), 'Ethnic Conflict in South Asia and Inter-state Relations Specially in Relation to Sri Lanka in Shelton U Kodikara, (1990),South Asian Strategic Issues: Sri Lankan Perspectives, New Delhi, Sage Pub.
- [3] Colombo Page,(2013),,http://www.colombopage.com/archive\_12A/Oct19\_1350631477CH.php, Accessed on 2013/06/12.
- [4] Dayasiri, Gomin, (2011), Much blood on the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment but India still wants it? Daily Mirror, 7, June
- [5] De Silva,K.M(1998), Reaping The Whirlwind, Penguin Books ,New Delhi.
- [6] Dixit, Jyotindra Nath (2003), Sri Lanka, in: Dixit, Jyotindra Nath (ed.), External Affairs: Cross-Border Relations, New Delhi: Roli Books, 47-96.
- [7] Dos Santos, Anne Noronha (2007), Military Intervention and Secession in South Asia: The Cases of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, and Punjab, Westport, Conn./London: Praeger Security International.
- [8] Hariharan.R.(2013),China'sstrategicpresenceinSriLanka,http://www.colhariharan.org/2013/09/chinas-strategic-presence-in-sri-lanka.html.(Accessed on 2014/01/01).
- [9] Gamini Keerawella, "India's Involvement in the Sri Lankan Ethnic Crisis", in eds, Mahinda Werake et al, Security Dilemma of a Small State, South Asian Publishers (New Delhi, 1995).
- [10] Harihara. R , While Building Economic Linkages, also Bridge the Ethnic Divide Indian Foreign Affairs Journal Vol. 7, No. 2, April–June 2012, 115-155
- [11] Hariharan.R(2012), C3S Paper No.964 dated March 27, 2012/ http://www.c3sindia.org/srilanka/2833
- [12] Höglund, Kristine, and Isak Svensson (2009), Mediating between tigers and lions: Norwegian peace diplomacy in Sri Lanka's civil war, in: Contemporary South Asia, 17, 2, 175-191.
- [13] Indian Express, 'Jaya asks Centre to move UN against Rajapaksa for war crimes', 27 April 2011,http://www.indianexpress.com/news/jaya-asks-centre-to-move-un-against-rajapaks/782364/.

- [14] International Crisis Group (ICG) (2007), Sri Lanka: Sinhala Nationalism and the Elusive Southern Consensus, Asia Report No. 141.
- [15] International Crisis Group (2010) The Sri Lankan diaspora after the LTTE, Asia Report No. 186 (Colombo/Brussels, International Crisis Group).
- [16] International Crisis Group,(2011), India and Sri Lanka after the LTTE ,Asian Report No ,206
- [17] Keethaponcalan.S.I,(1995), ‘The Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka and Dynamic of Third Party Activities, in Jayadava Uyangoda, (ed), Conflict, Conflict Resolution & Peace Building: An Introduction to Theories and Practices, University of Colombo, Colombo.
- [18] Kristine Höglund & Camilla Orjuela (2011), Winning the peace: conflict prevention after a victor's peace in Sri Lanka, Contemporary Social Science: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences, 6:1, 19-37. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450144.2010.534491>
- [19] Ladduwahetty, Neville:(2010), Indian Foreign Minister’s reference to ‘Meaningful devolution’. The Island. 14 December.
- [20] Ladduwahetty, Neville:(2011), India-Sri Lanka Joint Statement, The Island 1,June.
- [21] Manoharan, N(2013)/ <http://www.eurasiareview.com/12082013-india-and-the-peace-process-in-sri-lanka-so-close-yet-so-far-analysis/> (Accessed on 2014/01/02).
- [22] Manoharan. N,(2012), Convert Military Victory into Political Opportunity of Reconciliation Indian Foreign Affairs Journal Vol. 7, No. 2, April–June 2012, 115-155
- [23] Mitchell.C.R, ‘Classifying Conflict: Asymmetry and Resolution’, The Annals of American Academy, 518 (1991): 23–38 ).
- [24] Murari, S. (2009), Karunanidhi renews resignation threat over Sri Lanka, in: Reuters, online: <<http://in.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-37625720090123>> (Jan, 02, 2014).
- [25] Reddy, B. Muralidhar (2008), Pressured to act, in: Frontline, 25, 03.
- [26] Samatha. M,( 2011),Prospects and Challenges of Peace-building: An Evaluation of External Actors in Sri Lanka, SAGE Publications Los Angeles, London,
- [27] Sandasen Marasinghe and Irangika Range: 2013, JHU presents Private Member’s Bill to abolish the 13th A, Daily News ,19, June.
- [28] Sandra Destradi ,(2010),India and the Civil War in Sri Lanka: On the Failures of Regional Conflict Management in South Asia, GIGA Working Papers ,( GIGA WP 154/2010 ), <[www.giga-hamburg.de/workingpapers](http://www.giga-hamburg.de/workingpapers)>.
- [29] Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe, 2011, Sri Lankan stability critical to New Delhi’s Indian Ocean ambitions, / <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/23/sri-lanka-s-stability-critical-to-new-delhi-s-indian-ocean-ambitions/> (accessed on 2014/01.02)
- [30] Sivarajha,A, (1995), ‘Internationalization of Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict’ in M.Werake and P.V.Jayasekara,(eds), Security Dilemma of a Small State: Internal Crisis and External Intervention in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Institute for International Studies.
- [31] Sivarajah. A,(1995), ‘Indo-Sri Lanka Relations and Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Crisis: The Tamil Nadu Factor in Shelton U Kodikara, (1990),South Asian Strategic Issues: Sri Lankan Perspectives, New Delhi, Sage Pub.
- [32] Shelton U Kodikara, (1990),South Asian Strategic Issues: Sri Lankan Perspectives, New Delhi, Sage Pub.
- [33] Sumanthiran.M.A (2013), ‘Amending the 13th Amendment Yet another broken promise’, Daily Mirror, 18, June
- [34] Sunday Leaders, 2014/01/26.
- [35] Uyangoda.J (1995),(ed), Conflict, Conflict Resolution & Peace Building: An Introduction to Theories and Practices, University of Colombo, Colombo.
- [36] Uyangoda,J, (1996), ‘Recent Attempt at Ethnic Conflict Resolution in Sri Lanka’, in F.Jandt and P.B. Pedersen, (eds),Constructive Conflict Management: Asia Pacific Case, California: Sage Pub.