



ETHNIC ISSUES OF THE TAMILS OF SRI LANKA AND THE POLICIES ADOPTED BY THE TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT DURING THE TENURE OF THREE CHIEF MINISTERS

- A Comparative study

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Abstract

The beginning of the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is seen as a part of their "Divide and Rule strategy" in the countries which were under the British rule. After the country got her independence, the impact of the aggravated ethnic problem of Sri Lanka began to affect the neighbouring country, India especially the Tamil Nadu State. It started to interfere into the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka as their national benefits. In this regard, the former Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu State Karunanithy, M.G. Ramachandran and Jeyalalitha are considered to be the chief ministers who had interfered into the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs. In the case of M.G. Ramachandren, he was the one who had direct contacts with the movements which fought for the liberation of the Tamils of Sri Lanka. He was the one who had tried his best to resolve the Sri Lankan Tamils' ethnic problem. In the five terms of Karunanithy as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the four terms, the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka aggravated. As a result, he had lost one term of office as Chief Minister. He was actively engaged in the efforts in resolving the Tamils' ethnic problems. However, he was criticized for not taking timely action to avoid the "Last War" (Iruthi Uththam) when it was at its peak. As far as Jeyalalitha is concerned, although she engaged herself in the Tamils' ethnic problem to find a permanent political solution, she did not have strong policy till the end of her tenure. Her activities showed that she was the one who had some policies for and against the Tamils' affairs of Sri Lanka from time to time. However, there are differences in policies which were adopted by the three of them with regard to the Tamils' affairs of Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study clarifies their policies and activities with regard to the Sri Lankan Tamils' ethnic affairs.

Key words: Tamil Refugees, Ethnic Problem, Confronted Policies, Political background

Introduction

Behind one reason for India especially the Tamil Nadu to get involved in Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs is that Sri Lanka is its neighbour country. The main reason was that there has been an outcome of the long standing political and cultural relationship between the Sri Lankan Tamils and the people of Tamil Nadu. It is true that the Tamil Nadu very well knows the depth and the root of the ethnic problems which were going on in Sri Lanka. Although the Central Government of India had taken steps with regard to the ethnic problems in Sri Lanka for a long time as its territorial benefits, it is evident to see that the people of Tamil Nadu who have the navel cord relationship with the Sri Lankan Tamils always have sympathies on the Sri Lankan Tamils. When the ethnic problem had got aggravated in Sri Lanka since 1980^s, Sri Lankan Tamils started to migrate to Tamil Nadu as refugees, and India started to interfere into the politics of Sri Lanka. The then Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Karunanithy, M.G. Ramachandren, and Jeyalalitha took their initiatives towards the ethnic problem of Sri Lankan Tamils, by pressurizing the Indian government and warning the Sri Lankan Government. However, the actions of these three personalities did not have similar characteristics or principles. This study clarifies the different approaches that these three personalities undertook with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs. The information and data for the study based on historical, comparative and critical approaches were obtained from interviews, observations, conversations, contemporary newspapers, magazines, and the website. The main hypothesis of the study is that the initiatives which the three chief ministers undertook with regard to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka were not similar. The main problem of the study is that the political factors were behind all the efforts initiated by them with regard to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka. The main objectives of the study are to bring to light the background of the interference into the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs by the above said three Chief Ministers, the initiatives that they undertook and the challenges that they encountered. It is also notable that the literature reviews were not directly related to the said study.

The Interference of India

In the beginning, the Central Government of India did not have much concern about the Sri Lankan Tamils affairs. During the introduction of "Sinhala Only Act" in 1956 and the struggles of Sri Lankan Tamils thereafter, the Central Government of India was maintaining a very good relationship with the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. In 1980, Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India adopted anti American policy and the attention of America drew on the neighbouring countries of India such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan. (Wilson, 1988). India also did not like the influence of America on its neighbouring countries continuously. In these circumstances, India began to interfere into Sri Lanka's affairs for its own territorial benefits while the ethnic problems of Sri Lanka were getting aggravated. It is true that Sri Lanka had trust on America to solve the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka and the Central Government of India came forward to help the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs as

a challenging against America. At this juncture, the security of India was considered important.

Since 1980s, as the Sri Lankan Tamils' problems were getting aggravated, many of the Tamils who were living in the Eastern and Northern Sri Lanka started to migrate towards Tamil Nadu as refugees. In this period, many Liberation Movements including the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) started to function widely based in Tamil Nadu (Balasingham, 2003). Immediately after the "July Riots in Sri Lanka, there was a massive support for Sri Lankan Tamils and their liberation struggles from Tamil Nadu. This led the Tamil Nadu politicians to support the Sri Lankan Tamils and they started to get votes from the people of Tamil Nadu during the elections in India. In the course of the time, both the Central Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu had to interfere directly into the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. Both Sri Lanka and India have accused each other as India interfered into their internal or national affairs. Sri Lanka accused of India providing training to armed groups in particular. When M.G.Ramachandren who was a sympathizer of the Sri Lankan Tamils was as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, tension prevailed between the Tamil Nadu state and the Government of Sri Lanka.

M.G.Ramachandren and the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs

When the Sri Lankan Tamils' ethnic problem was getting aggravated after 1980, the people of Tamil Nadu expressed their concern over the Sri Lankan Tamils in many different forms. They expressed their condemnations on Sri Lankan Government. They supported the people who went there as refugees and consoled them. Above all, when the Indian Army carried out their hooliganism in the Eastern and Northern regions of Sri Lanka in the name of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), the people of Tamil Nadu expressed their opposition without considering the IPKF as their own forces ('Jeyalithavin Varalaru', 2007). They raised their voice for the Sri Lankan Tamils beyond their politics. All political leaders including the Chief Ministers at that time acted in favour of the Sri Lankan Tamils and engaged in finding solutions to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka.

Among the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, it is true that whoever writes the history of the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, it is inevitable to avoid M.G.Ramachandren. The reason was that M.G.R. had a blood relation with Sri Lanka and he was a real sympathizer of Sri Lankan Tamils. When the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka was its peak, he was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He wished all the Tamil movements which struggled in the name of separate Tamil Eelam would be united. In the latter part of 1970s, even when he was not the Chief Minister and some Eelam supporters like Kuttimani and Thangathurai were arrested in India, he requested the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Karunanithy not to hand over them to the Government of Sri Lanka, but, Karunanithy handed over them to the Government of Sri Lanka. It is very rare to find a man like M.G.R. who lived as an honest man for the people in political life and general life ('Jeyalithavin Valkkai', 2009). He extended all his assistance and supports to the Sri Lankan Tamils personally and through the Central

Government of India and the Government of Tamil Nadu. There are no differences of opinion that he was the true sympathizer of the Sri Lankan Tamils even at the time of his death bed.

There have been two different opinions about the ethnic problem which prevailed in Sri Lanka and the liberation struggles within India even today. That is to say, the stand of the Central Government on the ethnic issues of Sri Lanka is different from that of the Government of Tamil Nadu. It is notable to highlight here that there were instances where the Government of Tamil Nadu had compromises with the Central Government of India willingly or unwillingly. During the situations of compromise, some of the rulers of Tamil Nadu had ignored the ethnic issues of Sri Lankan Tamils in order to achieve their own political agenda, benefits and powers. M.G.R was away from gaining these kinds of narrow political benefits. Since 1980s onwards, M.G.R supported the Sri Lankan Tamils and extended his supports to the Tamil liberation struggles in Sri Lanka directly and indirectly. He assisted the liberation movements ignoring the opposition of the Central Government of India. There were meetings with the leader of the Liberation Tigers. He donated a sum of money to LTTE from time to time from his own pocket. He tackled some of the problems raised by the Central Government of India without taking into account the opposition from the Central Government of India. He accepted that the “India – Sri Lanka Act” (1987) considered only the geographical benefits of India. (Balasingham, 2003). Above all, there are news that he was very supportive to the establishment of Tamil Eelam by LTTE. As such, the late M.G.Ramachandren was the unprecedented leader in terms of the ethnic issues of Sri Lankan Tamils.

M.G.R. was bold enough to take steps to solve the ethnic problems of Sri Lanka and acted to implement them with the Central Government of India during his tenure as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He continuously emphasized that the welfare of Tamils in Sri Lanka should be preserved and whenever the Central Government of India proposed the solution packages to the ethnic issues of Sri Lanka he took every possible step forward to move them to the next stage with the participation and meetings with the Tamil Nadu Politicians and the Tamil Movements. He was very much interested in seeing that the impact of his political career should become the right solution to the ethnic issues of Sri Lanka (Arunthavarajah, 2016). An attempt was made for a Peace Accord between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Movements of Liberation backed by the people and the other political parties of Tamil Nadu and M.G.R. in 1985. The negotiation was held between Sri Lanka and the other movements including LTTE in Thimphu. After the demise of M.G.R., Karunanithy, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, changed himself as the sympathizer of the Sri Lankan Tamils. However, it is true that we cannot see Karunanithy in place of M.G.R. Everybody will agree that if M.G.R. had been alive, the hooliganism of the Indian Peace Keeping Force would not have happened in the Eastern and Northern provinces of Sri Lanka. Karunanithy could only express his concern over it but, he could not do anything concrete at that time.

Karunanithy and the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs

Karunanithy was another Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, India who was a man of importance when the Sri Lanka Tamils' affairs were getting aggravated. He is looked at as a person both for the period of boom and the recession of the Sri Lanka Tamil Liberation Movements. He was bravely engaged himself in the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs and as a result, he was the one who lost his government. It is noteworthy to mention here that next to M.G.R, he is well reminded of his involvement in the Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs by all and Karunanithy had a lot of influence from most of the Sri Lanka Tamils with regard to their affairs.

There were many things related to him that started to leak in the wake of his demise. One of them was about his stand for the Tamil people of Sri Lanka during the final stage of the war that happened in Sri Lanka. At the time of the final phase of war, there were opinions in the media for and against Karunanithy who was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. However, we should look into it from the common stand. Even before, Karunanithy became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, he was keen on the problems of Tamils in Sri Lanka and took many initiatives for the welfare of them. It should be well studied as to how far it was suitable to criticize him taking into account only the particular event that occurred in 2009. There have been several criticism levelled against him by some people regarding the final phase of the war in Sri Lanka. He was having fun along with the Central Government of India; He did not pressurize the Central Government of India; he could have left the collusive Government. He was a person of power hungry. We must understand one thing that without talking about Karunanithy this discussion will be not complete because Karunanithy once told that the decision of Central Government of India about the Tamils' affairs in Sri Lanka was his decision. Jeyalalitha who once told, "If there is a war, the people are liable to die" would have done the same if she were the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in place of Karunanithy.

After 1983, the Tamil youths were given military training and other facilities in Tamil Nadu. It would not have been done without the help of the Central Government of India. The politicians know their country and their own people first. Their people's welfare is their prime concern. They can think about any other things later. That is natural. When Rohingyas were roaming from Myanmar as refugees, though there were many Islamic countries where Rohingyas live, they did not give them refugee asylum (Arunthavarajah, 2017). But it cannot be denied that Tamil Nadu gave asylum to many a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee. It has been extending its supportive hands towards the Sri Lankan Tamils so far. Karunanithy is the person who faced a lot of problems because he acted and spoke for the Sri Lankan Tamils. He was criticized by most of the people for the reasons like the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, former Indian Prime Minister, the confrontations between Tamil Liberation Movements and the difficulties and inconveniences caused to the people of Tamil Nadu by them. During the tenure of Karunanithy, the members of the Tamil Liberation Movements were roaming around Tamil Nadu with arms and weapons in public. They were given

free transport facilities like the Sri Lankan refugees. Finally, as a result, Karunanithy was made losing his power in 1991 by the Central Government of India. The reason that the Central Government of India told behind this topple of the power was that the law and order in Tamil Nadu were disrupted during the Karunanithy's regime in Tamil Nadu (Arunthavarajah, 2017).

From the latter part of 1989, Jayalalitha propagated that there were close relationships between D.M.K (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) and the LTTE in order to capture the power in Tamil Nadu. She joined hands with Subramaniam Swami, a former M.P, So. Ramasamy, a Journalist and Ram, Editor, The Hindu and created a massive wave of opposition against Karunanithy in Tamil Nadu and finally she succeeded in it. She told in public that there was a danger to her life by both Karunanithy and the LTTE. In the meantime, the assassination of Rajiv Ghandhi also occurred when he had come for the Parliamentary election propaganda. Many connected Karunanithy with this murder. The murder of Rajiv Ghandhi happened in Tamil Nadu and everybody knew that the accusation would be put on Karunanithy and he would be defeated in the election. In this background, his actions would have been planned in order to safeguard his government and himself in the final phase of the war (Arunthavarajah, 2017). Therefore, it is true that Karunanithy did not want himself trapped in the unnecessary inconveniences again. After the topple of the power, the relationship between D.M.K and Congress was very close and cordial. He did not want the relationship drifting apart. It is notable to highlight here that Indra Ghandhi put many accusations against D.M.K government in 1976 and the Karunanithy's Government was toppled. Under this circumstance, there were opinions that Karunanithy did not allow any public rallies in favour of Sri Lankan Tamil affairs in Tamil Nadu during his tenure in the ninties.

Jeyalalitha adopted two different policies on Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs namely one before 2009 and another one after 2009, but Karunanithy had never expressed his views against the Liberation Movements and Tamil Nadu in any instances. He was persistent in his policies. However, as mentioned earlier, it cannot be denied that he had some kind of negligence and instability towards Sri Lankan Tamil affairs because of the events that had already taken place.

When "Sinhala Only Act" was passed in Sri Lankan Parliament, Karunanithy made a condemnation against it in the convention held in Sithambaram at the age of 34. D.M.Kers including Karunanithy held a march in Tamil Nadu in support of the Sri Lankan Tamils' rights in 1961. Karunanithy and Anpalagan resigned from their post condemning the ethnic problem broken out on Sri Lankan Tamils in 1983. He met the then Tamil leaders including S. J. V. Selvanayaham and A. Amirthalingham and expressed his support. He looked after the people who went as refugees. He was engaged himself in many protests in support of Sri Lankan Tamils. He tried his best to unite Liberation Movements. He supported them. Jeyalalitha was the one who sent back the Sri Lankan Tamil scholars who went to the World Tamil Research Convention on the ground of security, but at the same time, Karunanithy was the one

who held Semmoli Convention and made Sri Lankan Tamil Scholars sit beside him. the Leader of LTTE who had close contact with M.G.R. was away from Karunanithy. At the same time, the former leader of TELO, Sri Sabaratnam joined Karunanithy. In the meantime, Karunanithy held a convention (TESO – Tamil Eelam Supporters Organization) in support of TELO and in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils in Madras in 1985. Many important Indian Leaders, Vajpayee, Deve Gowda and N.D.Ramarao participated in the convention, which was said to be the Eelam Support Convention (Arunthavarajah, 2017). K. Veeramani and Pala.Nedumaran were considered as instrumental Tamil Nadu leaders along with Karunanithy to hold this convention. In fact, though these were the outcomes of the opposition politics with M.G.R, there were some accountabilities in them. As the demise of Sri Sabaratnam and the death of M.G.R happened within a short period, LTTE was compelled to have contact with Karunanithy willingly or unwillingly. Karunanithy made several condemnations against the hooliganism of the Indian Army in the name of Indian Peace Keeping Force after 1987. Karunanithy was the one who wanted the IPKF expelled from Sri Lanka.

When the IPKF returned to India during the regime of V.P.Singh, Karunanithy who was the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu did not go to the welcome function. Karunanithy was the one who bravely told that he would not go to the function to welcome the army who killed Sri Lankan Tamils. It can be guessed from the statement of the Indian army officer, Colonel Ajith Pinthar who said after some time that even stray dogs had not come to welcome them who had returned from Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. Many criticized this incident as disrespect to the Indian sovereignty. There were news that when the Indian army were consolidating in Sri Lanka, Y. Gopalsamy who was the member of D.M.K came to Tamil areas in Sri Lanka by sea. He knew the situations prevailed at that time and met the leader of the LTTE secretly (Balasingam, 2003). The Eelam Support Rally organized by Karunanithy in 1995 and the hunger strike organized by Karunanithy in 2009 were politically motivated activities. Although they were criticized by some as funny actions, they were staged as the forms of struggle in support of Sri Lankan Tamils by Karunanithy.

There is no multi-talented experienced politician like Karunanithy in Indian Tamil Nadu politics. Some incidents which had occurred before and after the assassination of Rajiv Ghandhi had put him in trouble. In this circumstance, his support for the Tamil Eelam Liberation started to go towards instability. The main reasons behind this were the political compromises that he initiated and the inappropriate new collusions. As a result, he could not take any decisions independently violating these elements (Karunakaran, 2018). Karunanithy started to use Eelam struggle in accordance with the union or collusion that he had and in accordance with the situations prevailed in the provinces in his later period.

Jeyalalitha and Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs

If a question is asked whether Jeyalalitha who identified herself as the heir of M.G.R. followed M.G.R.'s policies and principles with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs, the answer would most probably be "No". In this regard, it can be said that all the efforts which she undertook did not satisfy the Tamils of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. Even if she had done some actions really on the ground of sympathy for the Sri Lankan Tamils, they would have had some kind of political motivations in many instances. As far as Sri Lankan Tamils are concerned, they had utmost trust and a lot of confidence on her. The moment the news of her demise spread in Tamil Nadu, the Sri Lankan Tamils too were badly grieved.

In the wake of the death of Jayalalitha, Sri Lankan Tamils, the leaders of Sri Lankan Tamils, some Tamil Eelam Organizations and their supporters and Sri Lankan Diaspora deeply expressed their condolences. All activities of the Northern Provincial Council were stand still and postponed for a day. Condolence messages were read out in the Northern Provincial Council. The Chief Minister of Northern Provincial Council, C.V. Wickneswaran, R. Sampanthan, S. Sritharan, Sivajilingham, Tamil People Forum, the leaders of the Sri Lankan Tamils diaspora and the some Pro LTTE organization based in Europe countries issued messages on condolences on the demise of Jeyalalitha. Black flags were hoisted in business enterprises in the Northern and Eastern provinces in Sri Lanka on the day of her funeral. Many business enterprises were closed for business that day. Condolence meetings were held everywhere. It could be said that they were the respects accorded to her as Jeyalalitha had a great concern over Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs during her latter part of her life.

In the case of Jeyalalitha, She did not give prominent place for the Sri Lankan Tamils' issues in her early political agendas or activities. During the last period of time when M.G.R. was alive and in power, Jeyalalitha was given important posts by M.G.R. Jeyalalitha was the one who was the leading propagandist in the M.G.R.'s political stages. There is no news that Jeyalalitha acted in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils even in one single instance during the last period when M.G.R. was alive. Whenever M.G.R. took initiatives in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils, It was Pandiruttu Ramachandren who was there with M.G.R. (Balasingam, 2003).

Jeyalalitha was first elected as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in the Legislative Council general election held in 1991 (Vasanthi, 2012). The main campaign aspect that she highlighted to win the election was "the opposition against the Tamil Liberation Movements" especially "Opposition against Tigers" campaign. Jeyalalitha was able to secure numerous votes from the people of Tamil Nadu campaigning that Tigers were grown well during the tenure of Karunanithy and she would expel them out of Tamil Nadu which was completely contrary to the policies and principles that M.G.R. had on Tamil Liberation Movements and Sri Lankan Tamils. The History would witness that during the tenure of M.G.R. he managed a lot of disturbances and pressures from the Central Government of India for the Sri Lankan Tamils

(Balasingam, 2003). Jeyalalitha who won the election by campaigning against the Tigers engaged in implementing the promises which she had given in the election campaign. It is researchable to know as to how Jeyalalitha who was against LTTE changed herself in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils in later days.

After the death of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India, during the first office of Jeyalalitha (1991-1996), there were many restrictions imposed on the Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu and their supporters. She was actively engaged in sending all Sri Lankan Tamils back to Sri Lanka especially after the death of Rajiv Gandhi. She also said that if meetings or conferences were held in support of Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu, legal actions would be instituted against the parties concerned. Thereafter, many of those who were supporters of Tamil Eelam movements from Tamil Nadu and persons who belong to several political parties were arrested and prisoned. Jeyalalitha had issued several reports during the rule of Karunanithy saying that due to the armed culture of LTTE in Tamil Nadu, there was a threat to the national integrity and the law and order were affected.

The law of "POTA" Act was imposed on Y.Gopalsamy and Pala Nedumaran. Several restrictions were imposed on those refugees who migrated to India from Sri Lanka. There were also several restrictions on ordinary Sri Lankan Tamils in getting visas to visit Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka. She removed the quota system placed for the children of Sri Lankan Tamils in vocational colleges in Tamil Nadu. She banned Sri Lankan Tamil children being enrolled into colleges and schools ('Jeyalalitha', 2016)

Once, she said that LTTE had to be banned as it was a threat to her life. She continuously insisted the Central Government on it. In 2002, she made a resolution in the Legislative Council of Tamil Nadu that leader of the LTTE had to be arrested in Sri Lanka and brought to India. If the Sri Lankan Government could not arrest and deport the leader of the LTTE, the Law Council should request the Central Government of India to take necessary actions to send Indian Army to Sri Lanka to complete task. In 1987, M.G.R indirectly opposed the resolution that the leader of the LTTE had to be arrested and handed over to the Central Government of India and sending of Indian army to Sri Lanka. Karunanithy was the one who insisted that Indian army had to be expelled from Sri Lanka. It is notable here that Jeyalalitha indirectly supported that Indian army to remain in Sri Lanka. So, it shows that there were no changes in the policies of Jeyalalitha with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils affairs from 1991 to 2009. In this regard, Sri Lankan Tamils too did not see Jeyalalitha as their supporter in any circumstance.

When Jeyalalitha was the Chief Minister, she arrested and put behind bars many persons like P.Nedumaran, Y.Gopalsamy, Pandiruttu Ramachandren, Ramadas and Pulaimaippiththan who were engaged in demonstrations in support of Sri Lankan Tamils. She took actions against those who expressed their condolences in Tamil Nadu whenever the members or the leaders of the Liberation Movements or public died in the war front in Sri Lanka. During the final phase of the war, she expressed

her views through a report published on January 17 2009 “If there is a war, people are to die. Sri Lankan army never think of killing Sri Lankan Tamils. It is inevitable that innocent people are killed when a war happens”. She then in 2011, completely changed her policy in favour of the Sri Lankan Tamils and for the demand of their separate Tamil Eelam. It was for the sake of the election and her action made all the people from the general public to the politicians shocked.

The critic Yatheenthra says that two resolutions were made in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council during the term of Jeyalalitha. One of the resolutions in 2002 is that she proposed that leader of the LTTE should be hanged to death. The other resolution is that a referendum should be held for the policy of separate Tamil Eelam which the leader of the LTTE fought for (Yatheenthra, 2016). These two are contradicting to each other. The incident that the Tamil intellectuals from Sri Lanka including Professors Velupillai, Sivaththamby, and Sanmugathas who arrived at the Chennai airport in order to participate at the World Tamil Research Conference in Thanjavoor in 1995 were sent back to Sri Lanka made all the Tamils in the world angry. It was said at that juncture that it would be a threat to the security of Tamil Nadu. The media and advisor who guided Jeyalalitha were those who are against Sri Lankan Tamils and Liberation fighters. Some Journalists like the editor of *Thinamalar*, Ram the editor of *Hindu Newspaper*, and So Ramasamy, the editor of *Thuklak*, S. Supramaniam Swami could be included in the circle. (Thevananth, 2016). It is not worthy to mention here that they were the people who supported Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and condemned the activities of Tamil Movements. The death of Rajive Gandhi who was the close friend of Jeyalalitha might have been instrumental for her to adopt such policies.

Jeyalalitha's concern over Sri Lankan Tamils' affairs

Jeyalalitha was the one who changed her policies with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils from time to time in order to capture the power in politics and to satisfy the Central Government of India. Jeyalalitha was the one who started raising voice for the Sri Lankan Tamils who were badly affected during the final phase of the war from the mid of 2009 and became a sympathizer of the Sri Lankan Tamils. During this period of time, he was much praised by the media. She identified herself as the Tamil Eelam supporter. Her Tamil Eelam support and her activities with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils were extremely stronger than that of the long standing supporters of Tamil Eelam Liberation like Nedumaran, Seeman, Y.Gopalsamy., Thirumavalavan, Manivannan, Ameer and Kolaththoor Mani.

Her sudden decisions, reports and activities made even Karunanithy shocked. That was why, Karunanithy too was drawn behind her decisions. Karunanithy too had to release reports in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils in competition with Jeyalalitha. Jeyalalitha made campaigns, aiming at the election in 2011, that she was going to send Indian army to Sri Lanka in order to safeguard the Sri Lankan Tamils who were undergoing hardships. She was able to secure numerous votes from the people of

Tamil Nadu in the election by her vigorous and highly sensitized speeches. She once told that she would engage herself in giving Sri Lankan Tamils Dual Citizenship if she became the Chief Minister in 2016. After winning the election and when she was alive she held a letter politics in this regard and she did not take any concrete decisions.

She told that she would urge the Central Government of India to provide permanent citizenship to all Sri Lankan Tamils who went to Tamil Nadu as refugees and have been living there for a long time since 1983. The more Jeyalalitha was contradicted with Colombo, the more she was appreciated by the Tamil National elements in Tamil Nadu and the supporters of Tamil Eelam at the same time. She was popularized as the icon AMMA which is inherently called in Tamil Nadu was found a place even in the minds of Sri Lankan Tamils by her activities later on. These were aimed at identifying Karunanithy as “Tamil traitor” and it had a hidden agenda of filling the votes’ bank in the Legislative Council election which was to be held in 2011. She who had once told that she would arrest leader of the LTTE by sending the Indian army to Sri Lanka later told that she would safeguard Sri Lankan Tamils by sending the Indian army to Sri Lanka.

She raised her voice that India would support the resolution of Assembly of United Nations with regard to the violation of human rights in Sri Lanka during the final phase of the war in Sri Lanka and the accusations of the violation of humanitarian laws by the Sri Lankan Government. She pressurized Delhi that India should support the resolution passed in Geneva by America. As a result, Karunanithy too had to issue similar reports in response. When Jeyalalitha boycotted the visit of Indian Parliamentary group to Sri Lanka, D.M.K told that their Parliamentarians too would boycott their visit to Sri Lanka. Jeyalalitha from time to time requested the Central Government of India to provide them with opportunities to live freely with absolute sovereignty. It can be seen that generally the Sri Lankan Tamils affairs have positive and negative aspects of the two major political parties of Tamil Nadu since 1980. In this connection, the Sri Lankan Tamils affairs have been the unwritten theory of the politics of Tamil Nadu Dravida Iyakkam till now. (Thanapalasingham, 2016). Although Karunanithy and Jeyalalitha followed two different policies with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils affairs, both of them were compelled to follow the policies in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils affairs at a certain stage.

Jeyalalitha took several decisions in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils during the final phase of the war and secured the biggest support of the people of Tamil Eelam and Tamil Nadu. She met the Tamil Nadu Legislative Council session and requested to impose an economical ban against the Government of Sri Lanka in consideration of the problems faced by Sri Lankan Tamils. She made a resolution the Logshaba in 2013 that there must be a referendum for the separate Tamil Eelam. Behind the opposition expressed that India should not participate at the Commonwealth Conference in Colombo in 2013, the then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had to give up his visit to Colombo at the eleventh hour. Jeyalalitha was the one who drew the attention of all the Tamils in the world towards herself by making a resolution that

India should act against the effort by America to withdraw resolution about human rights on Sri Lanka by United Nations in 2015 ('Jeyalalitha' 2016).

There is an opinion that after the death of Rajiv Gandhi, the status of whole India in terms of Sri Lankan Tamils affairs was different. In this scenario, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was condemned by Jeyalalitha and she who openly told that those who were involved in the assassination should be punished later expressed her opinion in favour of the accused and for their release in 2011. She also told that she would recommend general amnesty to those who were involved in the murder, met some of the relatives of the accused and consoled them. She who told that those who were involved in killing Rajiv Gandhi should severely be punished later told that she was ready to grant them a general amnesty.

As far as the Rajya sabha election of Tamil Nadu held in 2016, there were chances of winning for Karunanithy till the last hour. Nobody came consecutively for the second term as the Chief Minister in Tamil Nadu after M.G.R. and everybody's expectation was that D.M.K would capture the power. Some of the opinion polls expressed views that such victory would never be a landslide one. So, there was a need for Jeyalalitha to break it. She also had the necessity to win the election as she wanted to exonerate herself from the cases of corruptions. At this juncture, although the Sri Lankan Tamils problems are brought to an end, the people of Tamil Nadu wanted to give pressure to Sri Lankan government considering the welfare of the Sri Lankan Tamils. Jeyalalitha was compelled to release reports and make decisions in a bid to win the support of the people of Tamil Nadu in the election.

As Karunanithy joined Congress during the final phase of the war and Jeyalalitha accused Krunanithy of enjoying the destructions. This kind of propaganda favoured Jeyalalitha in winning the election. In this background, she requested the people of Tamil Nadu to vote for A.I. A.D.M.K for the establishment of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka at the Parliamentary election campaign in Erodu. She told that if the Central Government favourable to her is formed, she would do it and whereby she obtained the collaboration of most of the Eelam supporters and most of the votes. Finally she won the election. There are some information that LTTE were engaged in getting the support of Jeyalalitha during the final phase of the war. The internet released some of the letters that the LTTE had sent to Jeyalalitha. All these letters were sent to Jeyalalitha two months prior to the end of the war (Yatheenthira, 2016). Generally, the Sri Lankan Tamils affairs have been used during the Legislative Council elections and Local Government elections held in Tamil Nadu as a key instrument both to capture and topple the power. During the last Legislative Council election held in Tamil Nadu state in 1991, the strategy that Jeyalalitha applied was the anti LTTE policy and the restriction on the Sri Lankan Tamils in order to win the election. In the wake of the death of Rajive Gandhi, most of the people of Tamil Nadu wanted Jeyalalitha to form a Government. On the contrary to it, she made her election campaigns giving preference to LTTE support and the sympathy on the Sri Lankan Tamils.

The reason for it was that there were a lot of sympathies on the Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu after the final phase of the war. Jeyalalitha was the one who led her politics knowing the pulse of the people. Even when she met Ranil Wickramasinghe and Chandrika Kumaratunge who were the Prime Ministers of Sri Lanka at the times of the negotiations held between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in 2002, she did not meet Sri Lankan Tamil leaders in this connection. Jeyalalitha's actions and decisions were appreciable as a result of her last minute attitudinal changes. Although they had hidden political motives, it created a confidence and trust among the Sri Lankan Tamils that there was a leader in Tamil Nadu to raise voice for the Tamils. She told in the Lok Sabha that what happened in Sri Lanka was a genocide. She met the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14th June 2015 and urged him to take action against the Government of Sri Lanka. She defined the forces as accused. She banned the Sri Lankan sportsmen to enter Tamil Nadu. She pressurized for the international investigation. Above all, She was very strong in recapturing Kachchathevu. She was considered as a leader who gave much trouble to the Sri Lankan Government in the critical and crucial situation. Today the Sri Lankan Tamils have lost a strong Tamil leader who can pressurize Delhi.

Jeyalalitha was recorded first in the history by replying to a Sri Lankan Tamil leader to the congratulatory letter sent by the former Chief Minister of Northern Province, C.V.Wickneswaran on her being elected as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In the letter she said that as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu she had taken all the necessary actions she could for the last 5 years to safeguard the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils who have the navel cord relationship with the people of Tamil Nadu and for them to get justice. She also said in the letter that she would continue to take action for the Sri Lankan Tamils in the Eastern and Northern Provinces to get justice ('Jeyalalitha', 2016)

Conclusion

The above said three Tamil Nadu Leaders who were engaged in Sri Lankan Tamil affairs mentioned above are not alive today. M.G.R. and Jeyalalitha were from A. I. A.D.M.K and Karunanithy was from D.M.K. If it is looked into on the basis of a political party, Jeyalalitha did not follow the permanent policy of M.G.R. with regard to Sri Lankan Tamil affairs. She adopted a policy before 2009 May and another policy after that. As far as Karunanithy is concerned, although he was from another political party, he somewhat adopted M.G.R's policy with regard to Sri Lankan Tamils affairs. Although there were some fluctuations, there were not many changes. His silence during the final phase of the war in Sri Lanka has blunted all the efforts he had taken for the Sri Lankan Tamils for a long period of time. In this context, it can be observed that the first one had adopted a strong and permanent policy till the end; the second one had adopted somewhat unstable policy; the third

one adopted two different policies in two different periods with regard to Sri Lankan Tamil affairs. None can deny that except the first one, the second and third ones had a lot of political motives and factors in the policies they adopted with regard to Sri Lankan Tamil affairs.

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