In Pursuit of a High Degree of Human Security in Sri Lanka: An Agenda for Action

Sri Lanka today urgently needs a new security paradigm. Since the old paradigms not only failed to grasp the totality of security predicaments that Sri Lanka now has to contend with but also because they do not offer viable ways out from the pervasive insecurity that affect political, social, and economic life in the country. Instead, the human security approach offers a new paradigm of security so as to reconstruct the concept of security from the point of view of those who really need it. At the same time, it offers a more viable framework to build confidence and trust among all the constituent elements of the polity and to handle threats and reduce vulnerabilities more effectively.

One of the conspicuous characteristics of the present security crisis in Sri Lanka is its totality, manifested in different forms and on many fronts. Further, on account of the intensity and the totality of crisis and also of the violence accompanying it, peace and security have become the highest priorities of almost all Sri Lankans. What has been experienced up to-date is a steady deepening of the crisis. The efforts so far taken in the direction of resolving the crisis have been successful only in providing temporary respites to the parties involved in the direct armed conflict. It is high time now to break the vicious cycle of conflict and violence and to adopt a really 'new' approach to a more secure and stable polity. It is proposed that this new approach should be based on the concept of ‘Human Security’ recommended by the United Nations. The pursuit of freedom from fear and threat from the human security perspective would complement state security, enhance human rights and offer a sustainable development strategy. The human security perspective compels us to view the security of the state from a different angle and to pay more emphasis to people rather than to borders and territory. The UN Commission on Human Security points out that “(H)uman security thus broadens the focus from the security of borders to the lives of people and communities inside and
across those borders. The idea is for people to be secure, not just for territories within the borders to be secure against external aggression. And unlike traditional approaches that vest the state with full responsibility for state security, the process of human security involves a much broader spectrum of actors and communities—especially people.” Reformulation of state security from the human security focus complements and strengthens state security by attending to its inner weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The main element of the insecurity of the state relates to internal weakness and lack of legitimacy. The human security approach strengthens human rights as it seeks to protect people from a wide range of threats to individuals and communities. The ultimate objective of human security is to ensure a better life and living conditions individually and collectively. Hence, human security and human developments paradigms are interrelated and complementary.

In general, insecurity relates to both threats and vulnerabilities. Hence, strengthening security involves two processes: seeking to reduce vulnerabilities and to minimise threats. In order to grasp the totality of security, it is essential to address a wide range of vulnerabilities and threats, spreading over a wide range of fields.

The range of vulnerabilities can be identified as:

a) Sri Lanka’s strategic vulnerabilities as a weak and divided small state, strategically located in the South Asian subsystem marked by the strategic rivalry between the two main regional protagonists (India and Pakistan) who are locked in a multiple-level conflict relationship over territory, balance of power, threat perceptions, mutual accusation of interference in each other’s domestic affairs, and conflicting foreign policy approaches.

b) Structural vulnerabilities of the Sri Lanka state emanating from Sri Lanka’s low degree of national integration and related problems of post-colonial state formation.

c) Political vulnerabilities of the institution of governance because they are unstable and weak, and lacking legitimacy and institutional autonomy.

d) Vulnerabilities linked with its weak economic position in relation to trade and capital mobility.

The threats also range from violent conflict related ones to economic and environmental related ones.

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2 Ibid., p. 2.
a) Threat of war—conventional military aggression from external sources or show of force without formally declaration of war.
b) Threats associated with internal violent conflicts.
c) Threats emanating from the state itself and from state institutions.
d) Threats associated with poverty.
e) Environment degradation related threats droughts, floods, storms, soil erosion and siltation, etc.

Human security focuses on almost all of these threats and vulnerabilities and presents an agenda of action to reduce vulnerabilities and minimise threats.

6.1 ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE PEACE PROCESS
At present, the foremost priority in Sri Lanka in relation to security-building is to find a sustainable solution to the violent armed conflict. It has been the most fundamental cause of many human security violations over the years. Hence, the point of departure for any action in improving human security is finding ways and means to settle the ethnic conflict and to end the internal armed conflict. Presently, a very uneasy ceasefire situation prevails in the country. The basis of the prevailing ceasefire is the MOU signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE in February 2002. It is true that there are many shortcomings in the agreement. It is structurally flawed due to the fact that there is no reciprocity in accommodating the interests and demands of the parties to the conflict. The government made many compromises in the MOU that were not reciprocated by the LTTE. It must be noted that the Muslim dimension, a very important aspect of the problem, is not given due recognition in the ceasefire arrangement. The role of the people’s forums and the civil society organisations is one of the missing elements of the ceasefire agreement. The ceasefire and the peace process cannot be left solely in the hands of those who wield guns. It is not time-bound and provides for an open-ended ceasefire without any commitment to a political settlement. Despite all these limitations and shortcomings, however, the MOU was able to halt the war, though a subtle low-intensity conflict between the two parties is still continuing. The last four years has witnessed the longest ceasefire that Sri Lanka has experienced since the outbreak of direct armed confrontation.

In view of the enormous sufferings and destruction caused by the war, even the temporary halt of the direct armed confrontation was a
positive move. As subsequent developments proved, however, the ceasefire arrangement did not impact on the conflict transformation far. The MOU further failed to set in motion a strong peace process in Sri Lanka. In the present Sri Lankan context, the peace process constitutes three inter-connected processes: the ceasefire process, the negotiation process, and the reconciliation and reconstruction process. Presently, the negotiation process has been struck in limbo, despite attempts on the part of international mediators and other international actors. After six rounds of talks, the LTTE decided to withdraw unilaterally from the negotiating table in April 2003. They presented their proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority in September 2003 and froze the negotiation process by insisting that future peace talks must be based only on these proposals. Meantime, the UNF Government that broached the Ceasefire Agreement with the LTTE was voted out in the Parliamentary Elections held in April 2004 by the PA and JVP alliance (UPFA). The new Government could not revive the stalled negotiation process.

The ceasefire agreement based on MOU lost its initial credibility as the LTTE continues to carry out assassination of political opponents in the North-East and government military intelligent officers. It has had a very shaky existence from the very beginning in the light of numerous ceasefire violations by both the sides, although the majority of them have been from the LTTE side. Both parties are unhappy with the present state of the ceasefire situation.

The issue of ceasefire agreement came up in the Presidential Elections held in November 2005. The UNP leader, Ranil Wickramasinghe, was of the opinion that it is not the time now to attempt a revision of the CF agreement. The PA candidate, Mahinda Rajapaksa, carried out his Presidential Election campaign on the premise that the ceasefire agreement needs urgent revision. In the campaign, he declared: 'I want a ceasefire that does not permit killing'. On November 27, 2005, only ten days after Rajapaksa’s election victory, the LTTE leader stated in his annual heroes’ day statement that “over the last three decades of our national liberation struggle we have observed ceasefires and participated in peace talks at different periods of time in different historical circumstances. We knew that our enemy was dishonest and devious. We knew that these peace talks would not produce any positive results.” He further started in his statement that “I [Prabakaran] need not go into the details of the peace negotiations we had with Mr Ranil Wickremasinghe’s government in various world capitals under
Norwegian facilitation. It is suffice to say that Mr Wickremasinghe's administration was unable to resolve even the basic existential hardships and urgent humanitarian needs of our people. Adopting delaying tactics, Ranil's government was primarily focusing on setting up an international safety net aiming at decommissioning our weapons. It seems that presently only the international monitors and the people are interested in maintaining the ceasefire. The fate of the third element of the peace process, i.e. reconciliation and reconstruction, seems to be the same as the other two elements. At the inaugural session of the peace talks in Sattahip, Thailand, the Government and LTTE agreed to establishing a number of joint sub-committees to embark on the different aspects of reconciliation and reconstruction. These sub-committees included the Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs (SIHRN), Sub-Committee on De-escalation and Normalisation (SDN), Sub-Committee on Political Matters and Sub-Committee on women. With the withdrawal of the LTTE from the negotiation process, all these Sub-Committees have become defunct.

The Tsunami catastrophe in December 2004 presented a golden opportunity to build mutual trust and confidence by developing a joint mechanism for humanitarian action and the rebuilding and rehabilitation of tsunami-affected people and areas in the North-East. Utilising this opportunity, President Chandrika Kumaratunga, assisted by Dr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Secretary General of the Peace Secretariat, opened up a communication line with the LTTE once again and started negotiations for the establishment of a Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS). Despite the virulent opposition of the JVP, a constituent party of the ruling coalition who left the Government over this issue, and the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU), the Government signed the MOU for P-TOMS with the LTTE in June 2005. Ultimately the JHU was able to obtain a stay order from the Supreme Court against the implementation of the P-TOMS. The successor of President Kumaratunga, President Mahinda Rajapaksa, promised in his election manifesto not to go ahead with P-TOMS. The LTTE exploited this situation to the hilt to justify its political course. The LTTE leader was loud and clear when he said that "the international community expressed full support for the joint administrative structure worked out by both the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE. The international governments also expressed hope that a congenial environment for joint effort by warring parties had been created. But the Sinhala-Buddhist racist forces could not tolerate the

3 TamilNet, November 27.
emergence of a congenial environment of goodwill .... With the demise of the tsunami mechanism the Sinhala-Buddhist chauvinism killed the last hope of the Tamil people. Even the all-powerful President Kumaratunga could not provide a simple humanitarian project for the Tamils against the wishes of the Sinhala racist forces.¹⁴

As a consequence, dark war clouds are once again gaining momentum in the sky. Anton Balasingham’s speech at a London ceremony in the same month is a clear indication of this situation where he stated: “You can have your unitary state and we will have our own.”⁵ The persistent use of same slogans, epithets, vague phrases and chanting of same ‘mantra’ indicate that both parties are not serious about negotiated settlement. All the main parties to the conflict maintain that they are ready for a negotiated political settlement; but, in the light of adamant and recalcitrant positions on the framework of post-conflict arrangement and reluctance to compromise and mutual accommodation, it is not sure what is meant by a ‘negotiated political settlement’. It must be noted that negotiation is not a panacea but a policy tool to reach a settlement. Without a policy direction, the tool is of no consequence.

It is important to note that, in general, internal ethnic conflicts are more difficult to negotiate because the parties involved in a conflict believe that the character and policies of “their adversary is a cause of the war and only way to end the war is by eliminating their opponent. This creates survival stake for the combatants, who fear that defeat will mean death.”⁶ In the last analysis, the fundamental issue in the conflict is political power in the region—who will govern the North-East. The issues of power and governance are pivotal because of this reason and the peace settlement must ultimately address this issue. What is essential in this context to thaw the stalled peace process is a new breakthrough on the basis of human security. Adoption of the human security approach would force the contestants to change to move away from adamant positions and stalled frames of references. Combatants who pledge to fight to the end opt for negotiations only under three conditions: under external pressure; under internal pressure; and in a situation where sustained military confrontation is not possible due to various reasons. The Human Security Commission observes that putting the human security on the security agenda will inspire concern for vulnerable groups during conflict and buttress support

¹⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Anton Balasingham’s speech was reproduced in The Sunday Times, December 4, 2005.
for human rights. It further states "(I)n conflict situations, a rights-based approach, like a human security approach, reopens humanitarian strategies towards enhancing people's capabilities, choices and security. It stresses the right to life, health, food, shelter and education. It also emphasises non-discrimination policies, equality and equity, as well as the rights of specific groups, such as women, children, the elderly, the disabled and refugees. This leads to new policy options."7

6.2 STATE SECURITY AND RESTRUCTURING THE FORM AND CONTENT OF THE STATE

The stalemate in the armed conflict and the current impasse in the peace process highlight the importance of addressing the issue of how to restructure the form and the content of the state. Such reconceptualising is also important from the point of view of human security because of the dual role of the state as a threat and as a source of security. The role of the state is central in the human security agenda in the sense that it dominates many of the conditions that determine human security at other levels and sectors. At the same time, the human security approach provides necessary conceptual guidelines for the rebuilding of the post-colonial state. It directs us to view the security of the state from a fresh perspective.

The critical point of departure of the reformulation of security of the state is how to define the state. It is a fact that without a territory the state cannot exist and sovereignty distinguishes it from other social units. It is sovereignty that binds territory, polity and society together in the form of the state. As Barry Buzan correctly points out, the state is an idea held in common by a group of people.8 Antonio Gramsci, in his very perceptive analysis of the inner dynamics of the state observed that the state is nothing but an "entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over who it rules."9 Thus, the 'theoretical and practical activities' by which it receives its legitimacy constitutes a very important element of the state which is practically a politico-judicial abstract. In the construction of the security of the state it is essential to take into account not only its physical base10 and institutional expressions11 but also, perhaps more

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7 Human Security Today, op.cit., p. 27.
importantly, the idea of the state.\textsuperscript{12} It must be pointed out that security/insecurity of the three constituent aspects of the state are interrelated. It is the ‘theoretical and practical activities’ of the state, the idea of the state for Barry Buzan, that condition the character and the spirit of the institutional expressions of the state, ranging from the constitution to the school curricula. As Antonio Gramsci observes “The school as a positive education function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function are the most important state activities in this sense: but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end—initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling class (i.e. the state).”\textsuperscript{13} The insecurity of the state primarily relates to the failure to develop and present a strong and viable idea of what it should be like. It is the idea of the state that shapes its political identity. Unless the idea of the state is firmly planted in the minds of its population, the state has no secure foundation. Hence, the state becomes insecure not because of external threats but because of inner weaknesses, arising out of its failure to develop a strong idea of what it is all about. Presently, the Sri Lankan state is highly insecure because it has been unable to develop an idea of itself which would ensure the human security of its population. At this point, for an explanatory purpose, the adoption of the heuristic categories of ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ states in terms of socio-political cohesion is useful.\textsuperscript{14} Sri Lanka is a weak state in terms of its inner weaknesses stemming from the lack of a firmly held idea of the state, the divided human base, and the weak and politically-dependent institutional apparatus of the state.

Since Independence, Sri Lanka has failed to develop a strong idea of the state, one transcending the ethnic and religious divisions of the country. The structural weakness of the ruling bloc coupled with ‘lack of political foresight.’ to use the words of J.R. Jayewardene, has made it incapable of presenting a strong, non-sectarian organisation ideology.

\begin{enumerate}
\item The physical base of the state includes its territory and its citizens, natural resources and man-made wealth.
\item The institutional expressions cover a wide range of institutions through which the state exercises its power and authority.
\item Barry Buzan analyzes state security in terms of these three components of the state. For a good theoretical discussion of triangle security configuration of the state see Buzan, \textit{People, State and Fear}, op. cit.
\item Gramsci, \textit{Prison Notebooks}, op. cit., p. 258.
\item The main features of a weak state are: a) major political conflict over the organizing ideologies of the state; b) the presence of contending national identities; c) lack of clear and observed political authority; d) Conspicuous role for political police in day to day lives of the people; e) High level of political violence.
\end{enumerate}
The ruling bloc has failed to develop a broader concept of the nation to embrace the multi-ethnic society on the basis of equality and partnership or to present any other alternative organisational (political) ideology for the state to impress on others what the Sri Lanka state exists for. Instead, the ruling bloc has harped on the idea that establishes a 'special' equation between the state and one national identity and one religion—an exclusivist version of the Sinhala Buddhist state. This idea may be intended just for political consumption. The unitary state structure delivers a specific political message in this contest. Without necessary safeguards, the unitary state creates the impression that they are not structurally a part and parcel of the decision-making process. In a multi-ethnic and multi-religious context, this development has created a situation where other national and religious collectivities tend to be alienated from the state, making it highly insecure. The present human security discourse, especially the discourse of human rights and human development priorities, provides the necessary basis for an idea of the state that would unite all communities in the country. Such a strong idea of the state is a precondition for its security, only through which the state can win over the 'spontaneous consent of the great masses of the population', to use Gramsci's phase.

Further, the post-colonial Sri Lankan state failed to develop healthy and strong institutional structures to meet the challenges arising from post-colonial social, economic and political developments. On the one hand, the weak state was incapable of providing any clear norms and conceptual guidance for healthy institutional development. On the other hand, the absence of political consensus over key national issues and the very high degree of political interference in the public sector destroyed the independent initiative capability and relative autonomy of institutional apparatus of the state. Over-politicisation at the expense of their legitimacy made the institutional base of the state very vulnerable and insecure. When compared with India, the lack of relative depth and legitimacy of the institutional expressions of the Sri Lanka state is very noticeable. Indian democracy may be chaotic but it is definitely vibrant. For, example, The Economist has observed, "(A)long with free press and an active Supreme Court, the commission [the election Commission] is one of a number of stubbornly independent unelected institutions that help to protect Indian democracy from the elected politicians."\textsuperscript{15}

The organisation of the physical and human base of the state is directly linked to the form and institutional content of the state. Generally speaking, it is the ideology of the state that ultimately...

\textsuperscript{15} The Economist, February 21, 2004.
shapes its form. In addition to an idea of the state based on human security which would be acceptable to all nationalities of the country, the form and the content of the state need to be changed. In a multi-ethnic society, majoritarian political practices in a unitary state form would in effect kill the basic principles of democracy as South Asians understood the term in their traditional cultural setting. Political and social inclusion, not exclusion, is the norm in Sri Lankan society and culture. Historically, in rice-eating monsoon Asia socio-cultural diversity was not considered a threat. Devolution of power grants space for diversity and plurality and facilitates inclusion of diverse ethnic groups, paving the way for a more secure state. Devolution promotes human security. Devolution brings the decision-making process closer to the people and promotes more equitable distribution of resources. Further, it makes democracy meaningful, real and effective by making the government more responsive to the needs of the people.

The political crisis of the state is basically the crisis of the hegemony of the state. In that sense, the principal aspects of the ethno-political crisis of Sri Lanka is that the legitimacy of the state, authority of its institutional expressions and its territorial integrity is challenged on ethnic ground. Therefore, the point of departure in resolving the crisis is the re-structuring of the system of power and governance to accommodate the interests of all the sections in the multi-ethnic society of Sri Lanka on the basis of equality and partnership.

6.3 NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND HUMAN SECURITY

Human security further underscores the importance of adopting a policy on ethnic affairs. The growth of ethno-political consciousness and the assertion of the ethnic factor in social and political space is presently a world-wide phenomenon and not unique to Sri Lanka. Peace, stability and the human security of a country depend, to a larger extent, on the ability of the state to develop an ethnic affairs policy framework to ensure harmonious ethnic relations and a stable multi-ethnic polity. In a multi-ethnic society, healthy ethnic affairs policy should provide a framework and mechanisms within which different ethnic groups can work together while maintaining group-specific collective identities.

An ethnic affairs policy would address three fundamental issues of the multi-ethnic state:

1) The nature of relationship between different ethnic groups and the state.
2) How different ethnic groups in the country relate to each other.
3) The way different ethnic groups cooperate with institutions of power and governance.

In this frame of reference, correct ethnic affairs policy is an essential requirement of human security.

The concept of national integration provides a necessary policy framework and guide for ethnic affairs. National integration presents a framework for unity in diversity by providing a space for ethnic groups to remain distinct while developing mechanisms for closer interdependence. The essence of a national integration policy would be to encourage the unity of the polity by accepting and sustaining diversity. Building mutual confidence and trust among different ethnic groups is fundamental for healthy ethnic relations. In the broader public policy frame, national integration would involve making the state envisage two sets of value systems simultaneously:

a) Group-specific core values—values necessary for ethnic groups to survive as distinctive collective identities and to fertilise their cultural traits,

b) Shared civic values—all embracing civic values shared by all citizens which promote close interdependence among different ethnic groups in the country.

Accordingly, the national integration framework of the ethnic affairs policy in effect covers a vast spectrum of activities and is dispersed in almost all aspects of the public policy domain. The incorporation of national integration must be carried out in four policy spheres of the state:

1. Constitutional and Legal: This includes the promotion of new constitutional arrangements embodying devolution or other power-sharing arrangements to embrace a multi-ethnic social order.

2. Political and Administrative: The promotion of devolution-friendly administrative culture and service delivering mechanisms capable of responding to the requirements of a multi-ethnic society.

3. Resource-Allocation: Distribution of physical and human resources and development planning to promote balanced development and equitable distribution of benefits.

4. Socio-Political: The promotion of multi-ethnicity and a culture of peace through education and media.
To ensure human security in a multi-ethnic context, it is necessary to promote mutual understanding through interaction. Mutual understanding and interaction will help to reverse the vicious circle of entrapment of ethnic groups in an ethnic syndrome and over-commitment to ethnic identities. One of the adverse consequences of perpetuation of the ethnic conflict is the psychological distance of ethnic groups from each other. In order to counter this tendency, education and media must be geared to promote mutual understanding and appreciate diversity. A social environment necessary for human security could be created in this manner.

Recognition of language rights and the implementation of a language policy is an important aspect of human security. In the present political discourse of Sri Lanka, language is not only a means of communication, it is a feature of ethno-cultural collective identity, the depository of cultural heritages, the access to service delivery of the state, and a means of dealing with the state. In Sri Lanka language has figured as a great divider and it is the most outstanding ethnic marker between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Realization of the language rights by the Tamil-speaking people in Sri Lanka will constitute a key element of national integration.

The issue of an official language emerged as a key factor in politics in Sri Lanka in the wake of independence and gradually evolved to become the core of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. The adoption of Sinhala as the ‘official language’ created a situation which required non-Sinhala speaking public servants to learn Sinhala, creating a perception that lack of confidence in the official language would be an obstacle in their career advancement. The identification of one language (the language of the majority) as the language of administration, at least in principle, created a sense of inferiority among the users of Tamil and smacked of discrimination. The sense of alienation that this policy caused among Tamils led even to discourage the voluntary learning of Sinhala that was prevalent among them at that time. As a result, generations of Sinhalese and Tamils have grown up without being able to communicate with each other. The failure to understand each other brews mutual fear and suspicion.

It took nearly eight years to implement the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act of No.28 of 1958 which made Tamil the ‘Language of Administration’ of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In 1987, the 13th Amendment to the constitution declared the Tamil language to be the other official language and English the link language. The provisions of
Chapter IV of the constitution as amended are comprehensive in regard to the position and the use of official Languages (Sinhala and Tamil) and the link language (English).

The Department of Official Languages (DOL) was first established in 1956 to meet the challenges of the public service in implementing the Official Language Act No.33 of 1956. When the Tamil Language (Special Provisions) Act came into force in 1966 its implementation was also vested with the DOL. In the changed language atmosphere and after Sinhala and Tamil were declared Official Languages by the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, the Official Languages Commission was established in 1991 to monitor and supervise compliance with the provisions contained in Chapter IV of the Constitution. Under the provisions of the Official Languages Commission Act No.18 of 1991, the failure of a public servant to comply with language law would be an offence punishable by law. Therefore, when a public officer willfully failed or neglected to transact to issue copies or extracts in the relevant language, he/she could be guilty of an offence.16 According to the Official Language provisions, every person is entitled to institute proceedings, submit court pleadings and other documents and participate in court proceedings in either in Sinhala or Tamil. Any person who is not conversant with the language used in a court is entitled to obtain in such language any part of the record, or translation, as he/she may be entitled to obtain according to law.

Despite the adoption of a policy of tri-lingualism, many shortcomings in implementing this policy effectively and meaningfully have come to attention. Firstly, the public service officials are still not fully aware and prepared to discharge their duty pertaining to the language law and ordinary people too are not aware of their rights under the law. Secondly, the public service officials ability to speak in two or three languages is highly inadequate presently. The ground reality in Sri Lanka is that Sinhala has become the language of administration in provinces other than the northern and the eastern Provinces and Tamil is generally used as the language of administration in the north and the east. In June 2005, in its Report submitted to the Sri Lankan President, the Official Languages Commission observed that “The facilities for communicating with the central government and obtaining its services in Tamil are minimal. This situation amounts to a violation of the

16 A public officer who willfully fails or neglects to transact to issue copies or extracts in the relevant language is guilty of an offence and shall, on conviction after summary trial before a magistrate, be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs.1,00 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or to both (sect. 28 (1)).
Constitutional rights of the Tamil speaking citizens of the country. Apart from indignities they are made to suffer, they are put into innumerable inconveniences in transacting business with the government. The provincial administrations including that of the North-East miserably fail in serving the citizens inhabiting those areas who are not proficient in the Language of the Administration of the respective province in their own language which has official Language status.\(^7\) This situation prevails due to two factors. First, over the years, at least a sufficient section of the public service has not been trained to operate in both official languages. Second, the number of Tamil speaking employees in the public service is low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>295,734</td>
<td>3.09%</td>
<td>5.06%</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Councils</td>
<td>292,072</td>
<td>5.75%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>1.76%</td>
<td>19.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-government</td>
<td>247,845</td>
<td>3.20%</td>
<td>5.48%</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.1: Tamil Speaking Public Servants by Sectors and Ethnicity**

(2002-provisional)


Source: Official Languages Commission.

It must also be noted that during the past decade many initiatives were taken to address problems pertaining to the implementation of the Official Languages policy. Despite all these initiatives, the situation has not improved. The realization of the norms embodied in the constitutional provisions and the goals set forth by the Official Languages policy will remain elusive for some time still. A comprehensive work plan to improve the language rights of the people must be supplemented by the structural change in relation to the character of the state and its relationship with national identities.

### 6.4 GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN SECURITY

Fundamental restructuring of the form and the institutional content of the Sri Lankan state would enhance state security by addressing the vulnerabilities and inner weaknesses of the state. A state is an essential requirement for ensuring a high degree of human security.

The quality and the spirit of the state must be reflected in corresponding state institutions and public service. Accordingly, the institutional apparatus of the state and the public service need to be restructured, so that they can effectively carry out the new role and responsibilities of the changed vision and mission of the state defined in terms of human security. In this process, the promotion and capacity building of the sub-national and regional-level institutions of the state must receive priority. Good governance and human security are closely related.

Almost all governments in the past initiated some form of administrative reforms in line with the changes of the role and functions of the state. Many of these reforms were ad hoc and did not lead to any fundamental change in the structure or service delivering mechanism. After the 13th Amendment to the Constitution that established the Provincial Councils system, a high dose of decentralisation was injected into the public service. The reluctance on the part of the link ministries of the centre to administratively devolve power to the provincial administration and the failure on the part of the provincial administration to assert itself vis-à-vis the centre added more to the chaos of the system. It has been observed that “(D)incomplete decentralisation has resulted in high level of complexity and fragmentation of the system, an unwieldy and inefficient system of financing and inequitable personnel management procedures, and complex and frequent conflicting parallel systems of administration in the provinces. The ‘transaction costs’ of the system have been, and continue to be, high.”18 This situation of “neither here nor there” affects the effectiveness of the public service and hampers its ability to deliver services to the public. To change this uncertainty in the public sector and to systematically carry out a strategic plan for a public service reforms is therefore an imperative.

In the 1990s, Sri Lanka attempted to introduce a ‘New Public Management’ (NPM) package, partly as a response to the global environment and partly due to pressure from donor agencies. In their empirical survey on public sector reforms in Sri Lanka, Ramanie Samaratunga and Lynne Bennington, correctly conclude that the NPM package was implemented in Sri Lanka “in a piecemeal and ad hoc manner without any long-term vision. Without the necessary environment conducive to formulate and implement the new model, significant improvement in the process of public sector reforms cannot be expected. Greater transparency with necessary checks and balances is critical for the success of any reform in the Sri Lankan context where corruption

is endemic in the political culture." Further, the entire NPM package was viewed from a mainly technical point of view without any strategic sense of transforming traditional public sector institutions into more accountable and efficient public entities. The organisational ideology of the state and its institutions are organically intertwined. It is the ideology of the state that gives public sector institutions their definition and purpose. Therefore, Public Sector reforms cannot be viewed as simply a technical operation. The issue of the organisational stability of the state must be perceived in a broader political canvass.

The constitution of Sri Lanka endorses a wide range of fundamental rights as pointed out in chapter IV, but without a corresponding political culture it will not be possible to ensure the rights endorsed in the constitution. The relationship among the three frames through which political culture gets articulated, namely political structures, attitudes and political behaviour are dialectical. Therefore, a holistic view of political reforms is necessary. If we really want to change the grammar of politics, we have to begin with constitutional change. Since 1995, the PA Government brought constitution change into the centre of political discourse. A new draft constitution was presented to Parliament in August 2000 as a Bill. But without a bi-partisan approach, it failed even to go through the required parliamentary process. Two aspects of the constitutional order have been widely subjected to criticisms: the presidential powers and the electoral system. The political violence associated with the proportional electoral system based on a district-based constituency is becoming intolerable day by day. As a result, parliamentary elections bring chilling feelings to many people who are not directly involved in party politics. A new constitution would not automatically ensure human security, but, in the present political context, the move towards a new political culture to prepare more congenial conditions for human security must begin with a new constitution developed on the basis of a broad national consciousness.

Citizen participation in governance is also necessary in any politico-administrative framework that promotes human security. Citizen participation in governance in the broader framework of communitarianism has been advocated by the 'new centre' as an alternative to the neoliberal construction of the public realm. As Clark and Newman have argued, the recovery of 'community' takes place in the context of the impoverishment of the public realm effected by the New Right (Thatcher-Reagan Combine) ideology and policy. It further represents

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the ‘third way’ in society, providing an answer to the failures of the old left and the new right.20 Through enhanced user involvement, citizen participation would promote democratic legitimacy and make organisations responsive to the needs of their key stakeholders. When citizen participation is promoted in the Sri Lankan context, it is necessary to be conscious of certain inherent limitations of community-based management. This, of course, is not a solution to all the administrative ills of the public sector. As in the case of politics and economy, the community is also ‘underdeveloped’. The real challenge associated with CBM is not ‘only to achieve efficiency but to realise a community vision chosen and enacted by the residents.’21

Other important items in the human security agenda are how to curb violence and how to promote human rights in the country. Political violence and the violence associated with organised crime are two factors that affect the human security situation in Sri Lanka adversely. The use of terror and intimidation to achieve political aims and objectives is widespread. Terrorism continues to be one of the main sources of human insecurity in Sri Lanka. The end, however, does not justify the means, whatever noble the ultimate end is. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE and the JVP are political organisations that have used or are using terrorism as their political language. Today, the JVP has abandoned violence and is well settled in parliamentary politics. This is a very positive development from the point of view of democracy and human security, considering the situation of the country during the period of the southern insurgency. The Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Involuntary Removal or Disappearance of Persons in the Western, Southern and Sabaragamuwa Provinces vividly portrays the situation prevailed in Sri Lanka during the period 1988-1990 as “(T)he functioning of society, its administration, and law enforcement, were put to severe test. The merits and defects of a system can be better judged by its performance during a crisis situation. The evidence as a whole is a damning indictment of what happened during that dark era, whether it happened at the hands of the agents of the state, private persons who tried to take advantage of the situation to settle their personal grudges, or subversives. The evidence echoed the common yearning: ‘Never Again’.22 Hostage taking, revenge killings, indiscriminate

killings, ‘disappearances’ and corruption (i.e. ‘making money out of the misery of the family members of the disappeared’), ‘punishment’ for failure to obey commands were among the human right violations rewarded in this period. The vigilants operating under the cover of government forces were responsible for a majority of these violations. The Deshapremi Janatha Vyaparaya (DJV) was also responsible for at least some of these violations. The Disappearance Commission reported that “(T)he JVP always claimed that the DJV was a separate organisation shared common political views and their membership overlapped with each other....the present Secretary of the JVP, who gave evidence before the Commission reiterated this position and maintained that the JVP cannot be responsible for the actions of the DJV.....What was the popular perception? Thousands of witnesses who came before us saw no difference between the two; they used the name ‘JVP’ through out.”23 The LTTE's record of human rights violations is far worse. They are well recorded by the periodic reports issued by Jaffna University Teachers for Human Rights. According to Sri Lanka Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 of the US Department of State, “(T)he LTTE was responsible for an undetermined number of civilian disappearances in the northeastern part of the island. Most of the 400 to 600 police officers captured by the LTTE in 1990 are believed to be dead, as are over 200 security forces personnel captured at a battle in Pooneryn in 1993. Although the LTTE denies taking any prisoners of following the Mullaittivu battle in July 1996, it is currently suspected of holding them. The LTTE has not notified the ICRC of any new security forces prisoners since 1994.”24

It is necessary to draw lessons from the process through which the JVP has been integrated into the democratic system. Once the JVP was given a place in the political high table where policy decisions are

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23 Ibid., p. 160. The Commission Report further records that: “Many witnesses said that, caught between two forces as they were, their life during this period was like a ‘nut in a nut-cracker’ (girayata ahu vechcha puwak gediyak vagei) they felt that there existed a kind of ‘dual power’ situation in the country. The state has lost its hegemony, and some referred to the authority of the JVP as Punchi Aanduwa (small government). The JVP had imposed its own curfews, organised island-wide hartals, and called for frequent strikes. Some joined these protest movement under JVP threat. Many witnesses said that their families suffered at the hands of both the security forces and the JVP during this period. [a witness stated] ‘In our area a group of JVP supporters went from house to house and asked people to assemble for a meeting. Later the army had raided the place and arrested people. My son was among those who were arrested, and he never came back. As a punishment for supporting the SLFP in the 1988 election, the JVP asked me to kneel down on the road for three hours. However, it was the security forces who abducted my brother on a later occasion’”. p. 160.

taken, JVP leadership seemed to be eager to rub their shoulders in the corridors of power and authority. In the same vein, a window must be kept open so that the LTTE can enter the system. At the same time, it would not be realistic to believe that the LTTE will abandon violence so easily and enter the democratic system in the same way as the JVP did. Nevertheless, step by step, openings must be made available to the LTTE by persuading it to enter into institutions and mechanisms instituted and functioned within the system. The proposed P-TOMS was one such mechanism that could have been utilised not only to control terrorism, but also to offer them an opening to work within the system.

The Commission in its report detailed measures that need to be taken to prevent such alleged activities in the future, covering a wide range of areas including provisions relating to arrest, detention and transfer, the enlargement of the jurisdiction of the magistrate’s courts for Habeas Corpus applications, dismantling ‘alternative structure of command’ and the prevention of their coming into existence, establishing a police-lay visitor panel and a system of citizens advisory bureaus and amending the Human Rights Commission Act. These recommendations of the Commission should not be allowed to face the same fate of other Commission recommendations.

The role of citizens in protecting human rights and democracy has been often discussed. There is a limit to community action in this regard. In light of the underdevelopment of the civil society sphere it is not desirable to count on citizen involvement to check human rights violations by the state and non-state actors. The principle of the continuous vigilance of the informed public is considered a *sine qua non* for human rights, democracy and human security. However, “in the face of state power and manipulation of institutions, the informed public tends to withdraw. People cannot afford to pay the price in blood every now and then. Therefore, it is necessary to have a systemic in-built mechanism to check and balance political power at every step.” In this regard attention must be drawn to the Human Rights Commission in Sri Lanka and the Office of the Ombudsman. To begin with, these two institutions must be given teeth to bite. The purview of these two institutions must be extended beyond simple advocacy and issuing recommendations. When their recommendations are ignored they have no power other than reporting to the higher authority regarding the

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25 Ibid. pp. 75-83.
matter concerned and have to wait till other institutions can take appropriate action. This situation must be immediately changed. As the Commission of Inquiry into Disappearances has recommended, the Human Rights Commission Act must be amended by creating an independent investigating unit to inquire into the complaints received by the Commission.

6.5 HUMAN SECURITY AS AN ECONOMIC PRIORITY

It is true that at the core of human security is a set of freedoms for every one. At the same time, economic security constitutes a very crucial dimension of human security. On the one hand, on its own, economic security determines a person's human security in a number of ways. On the other hand, those who are economically insecure get less access to opportunities and the chance to develop their capabilities. As far as Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender Development Index (GDI) are concerned the situation in Sri Lanka is not bad, at least compared to other developing countries. Indeed, going by these indicators, Sri Lanka is considered a success story. We should not forget that this situation is a cumulative outcome of the welfarist policies and social capital development strategies pursued by successive governments since Independence. But we should not be complacent simply because of these general indicators (HDI & GDI) which sometimes hide regional variations and sectoral inequalities that affect the human security conditions of the people. N. Shanmugaratnam writes that "Distributional conflicts, deprivation, poverty, and violations of human rights assume larger and more complex proportions when one pieces together the diverse contexts of capability failures in Sri Lanka."27 In order to address the distributive and qualitative issues that are concealed in national indexes, economic security—perceived and analysed in the framework of human security—need to be brought to the centre of economic strategy.

The economic dimension of human security cannot be confined only to the issue of poverty and poverty alleviation strategies. The question of economic security has to be construed in relation to a broader framework of economic policies and development priorities. In this context, the role of the state, what it must do and what it must not do, is crucially important. In the changed national and international context directly and indirectly regulated by the globalisation process, it is particularly important for a country like Sri Lanka to define the role

of the state in ensuring the economic security of the people. When the market fails the state has to intervene to ensure human security. How and when the state could intervene must be decided carefully.

From the point of view of human security, both aspects of economic security, namely, the security of the state and the security of the people are to be taken into account in conceptualising economic security. The economic insecurity of the state impairs the human security of the people. On the other hand, the economic insecurity of the people also impairs the economic security of the state. The Commission on Human Security identifies three kinds of crises that impact on the human security of people and of society: economic; natural disasters; and violent conflicts. The category of economic threats includes financial ones, debts and terms of trade crises. How a country weathered such periodic economic shocks depends on the way in which the national economy of the country is integrated into the global economy, in addition to the macro-level economic strategies and policy direction it has adopted. When the financial crisis hit most countries of Southeast and East Asia in 1997-98, Sri Lanka was able to escape from it due to number of reasons. The financial collapse in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea during this period had given rise to massive layoffs of workers and wage and benefit cuts, not only in those countries worst affected by the economic crisis, but region-wide. How to avoid such economic shocks must receive priority in strategic economic planning for a country like Sri Lanka, which is highly vulnerable to the winds of the global economy. The combined use of market and non-market institutions, as Amartya Sen has pointed out, can be used to draw an appropriate policy line. Amartya Sen argues, “Market economies can have many different ownership patterns resource availabilities, social opportunities and rules of operation (patent laws, anti-trust regulations). Depending on these enabling conditions, market economy would generate different prices, terms of trade, income distributions and overall outcomes. The arrangements for social security, social protection and other public intervention can also alter the outcomes of market process. ... It is the combined use of market and non-market institutions that offers best prospects for less global inequality and more human security.” Accordingly, the key to approach human security, particularly to ensure economic security of the people

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28 Human Security Now, p. 73.
in a globalised market economic environment, is the combined use of market and non-market forces—the ‘open economy with a human face’.

Economic growth is essential for reducing incidence of poverty. But the benefits of economic growth should reach the poor. In this regard distributional justice alone would not be sufficient to ensure the human security of the people; policy choices also affect macro-level, long-term equitable growth. Education is the most accessible path to help one rise out of poverty. The inverse correlation between higher-level education attainment and poverty is well-established. State intervention in a systematic plan to develop social capital in Sri Lanka by pursuing education reforms to allow manpower to meet the challenges of the 21st century constitute another important aspect in ensuring human security. The increasing disparity in educational facilities in schools is a matter of grave concern. A wide range of educational reforms covering all areas of primary, secondary and tertiary education were initiated in 1998. These efforts were further strengthened by implementing the ‘Navodya Schools Programme’ in 2004, that aimed at providing greater educational opportunities to the students in remote areas. Education is an investment for the future and with out backpaddling education reforms after every political change, it is necessary to continue them, only with necessary revisions warranted by practical experiences of implementation.

The Samurdhi Programme remains the largest welfare programme of the country. It is necessary to review it in the light of its past experiences. Its entry and exit mechanisms have to be properly planned out to check excessive expansion of the programme. The Welfare Benefit Act (WBA) really initiated the review and the empowerment of the poor and the development of the infrastructure development relating to poverty reduction must receive more attention. Linking the poor regions to rapidly growing domestic and international markets can only be possible by investing more in infrastructure development. It is important to note that small and medium scale enterprises (SMEs) are important sources of employment for low rural and urban households. Nearly 90 percent of industrial establishments in Sri Lanka are SMEs and they account for 70 percent of employment in the manufacturing sector. With firm policy backing, a supportive institutional environment can promote productivity, growth and employment of unskilled labour. Similarly, self-employment also plays an increasingly important role in the Sri Lankan economy. "Regulatory streamlining and simplification of administrative procedures is needed to promote the formation of new

small enterprises. Access to long-term credit is especially important to small and medium-scale industries, for without this, the small firms are unable to obtain the technology needed to produce competitive products.\(^{31}\)

Special attention and programmes of action are required to address the economic poverty prevailing in the Northeast. The development of the war-torn North and East will be a real test of democracy, human development and human security in Sri Lanka. The ‘rebuilding and reconstruction’ of the North-East implies more than restoring the conditions that existed prior to the outbreak of the conflict. What is necessary is to move towards a new and better state. The North-east region has lost its human and social capital. As N. Shanmugaratman so aptly observes “Trauma, deprivation and loss of self confidence are widespread. However, people who remain there have also displayed amazing resilience and creativity in the face of life and death situations. There have also been various attempts at rehabilitation and development at local levels. The social contexts in the war-torn areas are varied and complex and it would be foolhardy to rush with universal prescriptions of ‘Reconstruction’. The priorities of developing this region as seen from below and by the people may be at variance with those seen by policymakers from a macro perspective.”\(^{32}\) The triple R programme is a praiseworthy attempt in the direction of rebuilding and reconstruction of the North-East. But it needs a clear vision and a policy framework. Activities and implementation strategies of rebuilding and reconstruction must be worked out in relation to three frames of reference: the in-conflict frame; the pre-settlement (i.e., ceasefire situation) frame; and the post-conflict frame. At every stage, the triple ‘R’ programme must proceed with a “bottom up” approach. Decentralisation and democracy will ensure the widest participation of different stakeholders in rebuilding and reconstruction programmes. Decentralisation in planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes will result in promoting local-level democracy and empowering the people in relation to decision-making and implementation. In that way, the people in the region will be able to decide their own priorities in rebuilding and reconstruction activities without accepting the priorities imposed from above.

6.6 HUMAN SECURITY AND THE ECOLOGICAL STABILITY

The link between human security and sound resource utilisation and environmental protection highlights the importance of ecological


stability for human security. Threats posed by natural disasters and degradation of the environment constitute only one aspect of the issue. Environmental degradation affects the human security conditions of the country generally. Further, natural resources constitute a critical part of the livelihood of many. As far as the security of the physical base of the state is concerned, the territory of the state can be damaged more by environmental degradation and incorrect development strategies than by external aggression. The damage caused by environmental degradation may be permanent and profound.

Food insecurity is a property of poverty. The nexus of poverty and food security is clear. Access to food is a primary condition of human security. Environmental degradation and natural disasters are two of the main factors that affect people’s access to food security.

Proper resources management relating to land and water constitutes a very important aspect of environmental security in Sri Lanka. Access to land and water is a basic requirement of human security. It is a fact that most poor people depend more on land for their livelihood. Effective and efficient land resource utilisation is a very crucial factor in environmental protection as well as economic security. The main issues pertaining to the utilisation of land resources include tenure, acquisition, alienation and allocation (both for industrial use and habitation). One of the main problems is the existence of multiple government institutions, some of them overlapping, for the management of land. These institutions have been given authority by different pieces of Legislative Enactments—the Paddy Land act, the Town and Country Planning Act, and the Soil Conservation Service Act, to name few. It is observed that “(T)he twelve major pieces of legislation governing land management are implemented by ten separate government agencies. Jurisdiction over land is complicated by legal provisions authorising management or decision-making to multiple agencies.”33 This situation needs to be changed urgently to avoid the delay and inefficiency in the centralised decision-making process in relation to land resource management. The ever-increasing demand for land in and around Colombo and other main cities has resulted in rapid depletion of habitable land and has made land prices exorbitant. Ultimately, the extent of the pressure of man on land and other elements of the natural environment will determine how habitable Sri Lankan cities will be in coming decades.

Access to water resources through proper management is fundamental to human security. Water resource management has acquired an

increasing importance in the face of impending global water scarcity. Issues of access, equity and possible scarcity in the face of ever-increasing demand have made water a priority concern in the national development agenda and has become of international concern. Water was not at the top of the agenda in the Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992. It was the Second World Water Forum, held in the Hague in March 2000, that put the world water crisis squarely on the international agenda. The Hague conference presented the concept of “water security,” a goal to be achieved alongside food and environmental security. Access to water means sharing control over it. Sharing control implies a seat at the decision-making table. Following the Hague Forum, and in line with the recommendation of the Forum, Sri Lanka undertook to develop a programme of action for ‘Water Vision 2025’ under the auspices of the Global Water Partnership.

Water resource management policy with a clear ‘water vision’ based on water security of the people has acquired importance against the backdrop of ever-increasing competition for water between agriculture, industry and urban users. This competition has forced the government to make difficult choices. The objectives of Water resource management policy would include regulating the use of water by large-scale agricultural and industrial enterprises while ensuring water right and entitlement of the masses. Unregulated and free access to water from main water sheds and river basins will benefit only big business and the economically powerful who can employ modern technology to access water in large quantities at the expense of the poor. The community management of water resources should instead be the basis of water management policy. Accordingly, river basin committees, representing all the stakeholders should be given responsibility for the protection and management of water resources in their respective regions while protecting the traditional water entitlement of the people. At the same time, it is also necessary from the point of view economic development to ensure necessary water resources for large-scale enterprises. Bulk water entitlements could be issued under the licensing system after considering supply/demand conditions.

At the same time, attention must be paid in the water resource management policy to enhance water quality and to thwart water pollution before the problem gets out of hand. The sources of water pollution in Sri Lanka are manifold: urban waste, industrial waste,

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rural sanitation, agricultural waste, and oil discharge. Urban waste remains the main source of water pollution. There is a marked difference in the quality of water between rural and urban areas. The problem of waste disposal in Colombo has now become a perennial problem. Approximately 10-15 percent of the inhabitants of Colombo discharge sewage directly or indirectly into surface water. Organic pollution from sewage accounts for approximately half of the total waste load discharge into the canal network in Colombo. Similarly, the discharge of industrial wastes without any treatment is a serious problem. Laws relating to pollution are poorly enforced due to pressure from parties with vested interests. It is a common practice that liquid effluents are discharged directly into surface drainage network, causing water pollution in the vicinity. Ratmalana can be cited as an example, for textile dying and printing industries have caused widespread pollution between Ratmalana and Moratuwa, forcing residents of the area to close down many house-hold water wells. Fertiliser pollution and pesticide use have also contributed to downgrading the quality of water. Water security implies not simply access to water; more precisely it is access to safe water. Long hours of routine daily power blackouts, and long hours of empty water taps with which Sri Lanka entered the new century has convinced the people of Sri Lanka the importance of a broad water resource management policy for human security.

The Tsunami disaster in December 2004 reminded Sri Lankans of the impact of natural disasters on human security. Altogether 13 districts in five provinces of the coastal belt of Sri Lanka were affected by the Tsunami:

2. Western Province – Kalutara, Gampaha and Colombo Districts.
3. Eastern Province – Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee Districts.

Among the countries in the South and the South East Asia affected by the Tsunami, the most affected was Sri Lanka with 0.18 of its total population dead or missing while 2.2 percent displaced. Worst hit was the Eastern province. Of the total number of families affected, families and persons displaced, total deaths, camps, number of children who lost one of their parents and total number of orphans, between 60-68

percent was from the North and East coasts of Sri Lanka. The majority were fishing families.36

The spontaneous and immediate humanitarian response to the needs of the Tsunami disaster victims was very encouraging. The people were united in attending to the immediate requirements of the victims, and set aside all divisions and differences. The same was the case with the government armed forces; they extended their hand to help the LTTE cadres. One after one, lorry loads of civil volunteers, food, water and other necessities were dispatched to the South, the East and the North. Volunteers from the medical profession and paramedical personnel organised themselves and set up mobile camps in affected areas irrespective of the ethnic divide to look after the injured and the ill. The quick mobilisation of the government machinery, especially the armed forces and administrative arms at District and Divisional Secretariat level indicated that though Sri Lanka is a weak state it is not a ‘failed state’. Because of joint community and state action, the disaster was brought under control within the first 72 hours, and before the first relief consignment of foreign assistance had reached Katunayake airport. Once the medium term and long term relief and re-building process came to the forefront, scope for a voluntary civil action was limited. The state had to intervene with a concrete reconstruction plan and with necessary resources. The government was able to mobilise the institutional structures of the state and its international network and commit itself to medium and long-term goals for post-Tsunami reconstruction work in the south and some parts in the east. TAFREN was set up under a Presidential directive, within weeks, with a mandate to facilitate, enable, coordinate and monitor the post-tsunami reconstruction. At the same time, initiatives were taken under the Triple R programme in the North-East with limited success. The gigantic task assigned to TAFREN is broadly four-fold: getting people back into homes; restoring livelihoods; ensuring health, education and protection for all, and upgrading national infrastructure in the Tsunami affected area. How to minimise the waste, coordinate different stakeholders, and avoid delay in implementing projects are the main challenges faced by the government in relation to post-Tsunami rebuilding work in the South. With all the changes and relays, programmes in the south are under way.

The main challenge confronted by the Government in the post-Tsunami rebuilding process of the Sri Lankan Government at present, is to develop an administrative arrangement to attend to the needs of

the Tsunami-hit people in the North and East who live under LTTE control. If the government is not prepared to continue with the P-TOMS, it will be compelled to develop an alternative plan of action without much delay. How long can the victims of Tsunami in the 48 Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions in the LTTE controlled North and East survive in the temporary arrangements? This issue has acquired a very high priority in the human security agenda of contemporary Sri Lanka.

In the final analysis, human security in the real sense of the word covers a vast terrain, encompassing the political, economic, social and environmental aspects necessary for human survival and for the realization of the true value of life. In this connection, attitude change on the part of the people is also necessary. Attitudes influence the behaviour of the people. In every dimension of human security the role and responsibilities of civil society and community action have been emphasised. The underdevelopment of the civil society is a factor in political life in Sri Lanka. Civil Society in the present context is a mechanism in which activities of the people are organised on an issue basis. It is definitely something more than the NGO community or the handful of Colombo-based civil activists. The burgeoning NGO community is a factor to be reckoned with in the contemporary socio-economic landscape in Sri Lanka and NGOs can play an important role in promoting human security. But the NGO sector has not escaped the weaknesses that have plagued public sector institutions. Lack of accountability and transparency coupled with authoritarian leadership are conspicuous features of NGOs. Restructuring the state is considered essential for achieving human security. By the same token, a structural transformation of the NGO sector is also essential for them to be effective and productive from the point of view of ordinary people. A working paper on Public Policy and Management, prepared by the Institute for Development Policy and Management, University of Manchester, observed that "(T)he literature provides no strong evidence that NGOs are developmentally more effective than government, and the weaknesses are clearly tabulated: diseconomies of scale, limited technical and financial resources, modest management skills, political naiveté, and poor understanding of national strategies and priorities. Even successful examples are difficult to replicate, because of the significance of adaptation to national political systems and local cultures. These weaknesses highlight the growing significance of the need to establish adequate evaluations of NGO performance, especially as extensive use of NGO public service partnership is to be expected, in
an elaboration of the 'contract state' associated with the NPM (New Public Management) model."^{37}

Post-Cold War developments demand new thinking. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the problems and limitations of the state-centred non-capitalist path of development in the Third World countries have brought the needs and concerns of the human individual to the forefront of political discourse. At the same time, the neo-liberal prescription also has not been able to provide solutions to the problems from the point of view of the majority of the people. As Ken Booth has observed "(O)n the face of it Capitalism had won the war of the systems, but Third World poverty, alienation, an impoverished underclass and environment-threatening level of consumption indicated that capitalism had not succeeded at a more fundamental level. Soviet-style socialism has failed because, although it could meet basic needs, it could not satisfy wants. Meanwhile, capitalism flourished; it could not satisfy all basic needs, but it could meet the wants of the powerful."^{38}

It is in this context, that we need a new order of thinking. The traditional interpretation of national security could not provide any framework to grasp and address the security problems we confront today. The security problematic of contemporary Sri Lanka must thus be understood from the perspective of human security.

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