

ABSTRACT

By this study an attempt is made to examine analytically a certain aspect of the relationship persisted between the establishment and maintenance of the state hegemony and the deterioration of the Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic relations in the first two phases of political development 1948-1956 and 1956-1965 of the country since independence.

Specific attention is paid to identify the basic characteristics of the post independent Sri Lankan state by using the concepts developed by Antonio Gramsci as a theoretical tool in the first phase of this study. The legacy of the British colonial administration in the formation and moulding of the basic characteristics of political society and civil society of the state is examined in this context.

At the second stage, the attention is paid to unravel the political background prevailed in connection with the competition persisted between the United National Party and the Marxist parties for the political hegemony in the first phase, and mainly between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the UNP in the second phase, examining specifically enactments of the Citizenship Acts of 1948 and 1949 and the Sinhala Only Official Language Act of 1956. The instrumentality and effectiveness of these legislation on the establishment and maintenance of the state hegemony is thus emphasized.

At the third stage, by examining the above factors it is envisaged that the impact of the Citizenship Acts and the Official Language Act is fairly instrumental in the deterioration of the Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic relations which eventually has paved the way for the current ethnic crisis of the country.

Thus, the study eventually concludes that there was a close relationship between the establishment and maintenance of the state hegemony and the deterioration of the Sinhalese-Tamil ethnic relations of the country in the period under review.