



Constitutional Crises in Sri Lanka: Implications for Nation Building

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Abstract

Sri Lanka has been undergoing a conflict, a protracted one at that, which essentially goes back to the pre and post colonial times. The texture of the conflict is different and critics have analyzed it in different perspectives. In this paper, the attempt is to analyze the conflict as a structural aspect of governance ultimately resulting in destabilizing what is termed as national integration. Governance within a demarcated democratic space ought to be carried out in accordance with what is known as a constitution. A constitution provides the basic framework in which a state or any other organization is governed by. Enacted by using the concept titled as sovereignty, constitutionalism is the integral aspect pertaining to the governance of a polity today. To add to this, when the constitution fails, it directly impacts the notion of national integration. Thus, when there is an essential problem/crisis within the rules of governance enacted by the constitution, it is evident that the administration of the state will inevitably suffer and that it will counter any attempt to build up a nation state based on one country one nation bearing equal citizen with equal opportunities. Thus, it is in these lines that I attempt to analyze the conflict within Sri Lanka. To take the discourse a bit further, the constitutional crises in Sri Lanka starting from 1833 down to 1978 have played a fundamental role in destabilizing governance and fundamentally acting against the building up of a nation. I contend within this paper that this is essentially due to the fact that the constitutions in Sri Lanka failed to have a proper constitutional philosophy and ideology when they were drafted and enacted. The lack of a socio, economic and a political philosophy coupled with ethno national tendencies brought about a severe crisis within the polity. Thus, it is on these lines that I hope to analyze the conflict within Sri Lanka.

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