

Some comments on the results of the general elections

The UPFA has narrowly missed a two thirds majority in the Parliament. With the results of twenty districts released UPFA has 117 MPs. It is unlikely that the alliance would be able to nominate more than 18 MPs from the national list making it to get elected at least 15 MPs from the remaining two districts that can send only 16 MPs, in order to have a two thirds majority. This is an impossibility and the UPFA would miss the required number by about 5 or 6. However ironically the JVP - SF alliance has 5 MPs elected already and as they are likely to get one more MP nominated from the national list It is this alliance that has prevented the UPFA obtaining a two third majority.

The JVP – SF alliance has attracted a portion of the nationalistic vote in and around Colombo, and in the urban areas in Kalutara, Gampaha and Galle districts. It is not that the JVP has all of a sudden become an urban party or party of the urban lumpen proletariat in the jargon of Marxism. The JVP is still a party of the rural Sinhala youth but it does not have a vote base more than 3% percent of the population. It lost the only seat that they secured in Hamabantota through Galappatti in 1994, and nowhere in the country they would have won a single seat if they contested the Parliamentary elections as the JVP. However in certain urban or suburban electorates they were able to poll more than 10% of the vote thus attracting in general more than 7% of the nationalist vote in these electorates.

There is a section of the nationalists in and around Colombo and in certain urban areas that would be called urban surnationalists with apologies to surrealists. It was a section of these surnationalists who identified themselves with Ven Soma Thera and voted for the JHU at the elections held in 2004. A section of them has now identified themselves with the retired General and they now vote for the JVP – SF alliance. They vote for one political party or alliance not based on party politics but giving priority to issues. They are nationalists but for them very often single issues are important than general policies and live with contradictions. It does not mean that the sets of people voted for the JHU in 2004 and those voted for the JVP – SF alliance in 2010 are identical, though some would have voted for the two parties in the respective years.

What is disturbing is that for the first time when the Sinhala voters were ready to give a two third majority to a political party, based on preferences, the UPFA was not able to grab the opportunity. Sometime ago in the late eighties and early nineties it was driven into the heads of the SLFP leadership that an election cannot be won by appealing to the Sinhala voters alone under the preferential system. Thus the SLFP under Chandrika was made to believe that in order to win an election the so called injustices to the Tamils have to be considered. While the SLFP under Chandrika was going around the country trying to attract the Tamil vote with various promises on so called devolution we showed that a political party can win an election by appealing to the Sinhala voters only. In fact later we showed that the Sinhala voters alone could deliver a two third majority to a party if issues are addressed nationalistically, of course under special circumstances. An opportunity had been created after the defeat of the LTTE and the nationalist voters were prepared to give a two third majority to a party that appealed to nationalism.

However, not all the votes of the nationalists went to the UPFA. The surnationalists with their contradictions voted for the JVP – SF alliance. The JVP was able to market SF successfully to this vote base in the urban areas. The very same electorates that in general voted somewhat heavily for the Hela Urumaya in the 2004 general elections voted similarly for the JVP – SF alliance as well. If the JVP was able to market SF in 2010 the Hela Urumaya was successful in marketing *Soma Hamuduruwo* in 2004 to the urban surnationalists.

The JVP was able to market SF to the surnationalists so successfully due to the apathy of those who handled the propaganda machinery for the UPFA, especially in the state electronic media. They allowed the JVP and Anoma Fonseka to campaign for SF claiming that the retired General had been “arrested” illegally and that it was the retired General who won the “war” but who has been “imprisoned” in a “cell” for challenging the President at the Presidential elections. The UPFA never countered this propaganda successfully and they merely concentrated on attacking the JVP without realising that the people would vote against the Marxist Party. However, the people had already made up their minds to vote against the JVP and the campaign of the UPFA was redundant. Had they spent few more hours exposing SF and showing how the retired General had betrayed the President and the Defence Secretary in order to save his neck by agreeing to be a “crown witness” for the British and the other western governments, after his speech at Dharmashoka College Hall in Ambalangoda, the UPFA could have polled a fare share of the urban surnationalist vote and obtained a two third majority, especially with Tamils and Muslims turning away from their traditional parties that have begun to talk of so called injustices to the minorities again.

The JVP will not be able to sell SF hereafter and even if they find another commodity it would not be able to do better as the people are now more knowledgeable of that party. Wimal Weerawansa has been reduced to a one man party and the JHU is no better. One each from the LSSP and the CP have been returned and it is clear that the SLFP has now consolidated its position as the party of the Sinhala nationalists. The UNP has to change its policies and unless its leadership becomes nationalist it will not be able to do better. On the other hand if the SLFP drops its nationalist policies a vacuum will be created and there will emerge a new party with more nationalistic credentials.

The TNA or ITAK or whatever one may call it cannot go forward by following the policies of the Ponnambalam brothers or those of the other Ponnambalam or SJVC. The former fought for Tamil supremacy which the English educated Tamils enjoyed under the British and any time they lost any of the privileges they complained of discrimination against the Tamils. SJVC having realised that Tamil supremacy cannot be achieved at the centre after the Parliamentary system was introduced demanded a separate state for the so called Tamil homeland in the British demarcated Northern and Eastern Provinces. Prabhakaran took up arms to achieve this dream and he has been defeated conclusively. Tamil racism has been created and nurtured by the Dutch, British and other westerners but even they could not save Prabhakaran and the LTTE when Sinhala nationalism under the leadership of Mr. Mahinda Rajapakse was determined to defeat Tamil separatism.

The defeat of Prabhakaran does not mean only the defeat of the Tamil terrorism. It is a defeat for Tamil racism from the days of Ponnambalam brothers or even beyond that. Thus there is no point in trying to resurrect the politics of the ITAK or TC or even those of Ponnambalam Ramanathan. From Ponnambalam Ramanathan to Velupillai Prabhakaran one could see a continuity of politics and the Tamil parties have to think fresh without trying to formulate their politics in terms of so called injustices. The fact that UPFA has been able to poll votes in the Jaffna and Batticaloa districts augurs well for the future and it is pointless to find a so called solution in terms of a report by an APRC that was clearly non existent after the armed forces entered Killinochchi. All those so called solutions were attempted by non national forces when Prabhakaran was alive and as we are under different conditions now those so called solutions are not valid.

Now we are in a different situation altogether having defeated Tamil racist politics militarily and thus politically (military solutions are also political solutions). If the ITAK or TNA is trying to go back to the days of SJVC or TC or Ramanathan type politics then they are only dreaming of repeating the cycle this time with the help of the so called Tamil diaspora and to produce a Prabhakaran who will bring nothing but agony for the ordinary Tamil people. It will remain a dream and the SLFP should now think of a way of addressing the common Tamil man directly and becoming the party of Tamil nationalism as well without leaving for diasporas and others to continue politics of Tamil racism.