

A change of paradigm if not of chinthanaya

Apparently USA is happy with the steps taken by the government on reconciliation, though we know that in general the statements made by external ministers are for the consumption for the general masses. The USA must be having some ideas on reconciliation and it is not necessary that the Sri Lankan government also has the views on the subject. The USA may be happy as probably it thinks that its ideas on reconciliation would be explored by the Sri Lankan Government.

The views of the Sri Lankan Government on reconciliation are not clear at the moment except for the expression of the need of some kind of development in the northern and the eastern provinces under “Uthuru Vasanthaya” and “Neganahira Udanaya” respectively. Undoubtedly some kind of economic development is essential in those two provinces for reconciliation, though we may prefer a development that is compatible with the history and the geography of the country rather than copying a western model, whether it is Singaporean or Korean or something else. All is not well with these countries and even China and India supposed to be the Asian economic giants of the twenty first century are not doing well almost after a decade of the new century. These so called Asian countries are following the western economic model with western theories of economics and as such they are finally directed and controlled by western economic gurus who would hold the reins. There are some so called sociologists who think that we are concerned with Eurocentric knowledge. However it is not as simple as that and we struggle with the western domination of knowledge and even Eurocentric knowledge is a concept of the western knowledge and consists only a tiny fraction of knowledge created in the Greek Judaic Christian Chinthanaya which is the reason for the hegemony that Gramsci was deeply interested in.

While some kind of development is necessary for reconciliation, USA or any other country including India should not attempt to impose their fancy ideas as so called well thought out solutions for the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. They should at least now, if they are genuine, think why all their solutions have failed so far. I am not writing these lines on the assumption that global power and the zonal power are genuinely interested in solving the problem, and it is not likely that these ideas would be even considered by them. However, the Sri Lankan government with its many Tissa Vitharanas opposing any change of paradigm could spend a little time over the ideas expressed in this article.

The paradigm that has been used to “understand” the Tamil problem is one of injustices and solutions to rectify those injustices. It is said that the Sinhala Buddhists are the worst human rights violators in the world and that they not prepared to do justice to the Tamils in the country. The Sinhala are supposed to have oppressed the Tamils after about 1931 when the first D. S. Senanayake government, though without a cabinet as such was formed through the state council. Even before that, according to the Tamil leaders, the Sinhala leaders had deceived the Tamil leaders with their “promises” and had worked against the interest of the Tamils. For example the Tamils would claim that the Sinhala leaders promised a separate seat for the western province Tamils but did not agree to that later. The Tamil leaders would also say that as the Tamils were bombarded with

injustices gradually the Tamils were united under the Federal party and then finally under the TULF and the LTTE.

As there was no solution for the injustices faced by the Tamils the Tamils according to the Tamil leaders, some Sinhala NGO pundits and western theorists, the Tamils had no alternative but to demand a separate in the so called Tamil homeland that had been in existence for thousands of years. The Vaddukodai resolution formulated all these and demanded a separate state. Chelvanayakam incited the Tamils against the Sinhalas and their culture and language and what Prabhakaran did was to continue the politics of Chelvanayakam with arms. He was assisted by the west and India.

From Ponnambalam Ramanathan days the Tamil leaders had accused the Sinhala people and their leaders as racist and not being prepared to listen to the reasonable demands of the Tamils. As the Sinhalas did not listen to the Tamil demands it was claimed that the Tamils had to intensify their just struggle and finally Prabhakaran and the other terrorists had to take up arms of course provided by the west and India. Thus the west and India and of course the NGO pundits justified terrorism of the LTTE and even today the west is trying to accuse the Sri Lankan government for defeating the most ruthless terrorist outfit in the world. All the so called war criminal charges are brought against the government in order to nullify the victory over the LTTE, if possible.

Prabhakaran is no different from Chelvanayakam or Ponnambalam Ramanathan as they based themselves on the same paradigm. I have described the evolution from Ramanathan to Chelvanayakam in *An Analysis of Tamil Racism in Sri Lanka*. They differed only in the methods they adopted and not in the political paradigm. Prabhakaran was at the apex of the paradigm and at Nandikadal it was not only the LTTE that was defeated but the entire paradigm. The thirteenth amendment was imposed on us by India as a so called solution within the same paradigm and this amendment is not valid now.

The west and India at one stage blamed the Sinhala people for not giving into Tamil terrorism and accused the Sinhala people as racists of the worst kind. Even today the attitudes of the west have not changed and they are not prepared to listen to the Sinhala people. The Sinhalas do not recognize the paradigm of Tamil politics and do not consider that Tamils have a problem in this country merely because they are Tamils. Without accusing the Sinhalas as racists who are not prepared to meet the demands of Tamils the west should have tried to understand the reason for Sinhalas been opposed to such demands.

Even if the west or India wants to go back to the thirteenth amendment with some additions there is no way that the Sinhalas would agree to it originating from the defeated paradigm of Tamil politics. The Tamils claim that the LTTE had to take up arms because the Sinhalas did not want to meet their just demands. Now having taken up arms and having been supported by the Tamil leaders of the TULF, TNA the LTTE has been defeated, in spite of the assistance given by the west in terms of so called theory, propaganda, publicity, diplomacy, and also arms. Having being defeated by the armed forces now the Tamil leaders want to go back not only to the thirteenth amendment but to

the Ilankai Thamil Arasu Kadchchi which could be translated as Lanka Tamil State Party. This is nothing but ridiculous and it is clear that the Tamil leaders want to begin another cycle of Tamil racist politics under the discarded paradigm. If the Sinhalas had thought that the Tamil demands were just they would have agreed to meet them and the thirteenth amendment without sacrificing the lives of the soldiers. Now having achieved victory if somebody wants to go back to the thirteenth amendment it is a betrayal of those soldiers who sacrificed their lives fighting against in essence the thirteenth amendment and the paradigm of Tamil politics.

What is needed is the rejection of this paradigm in Tamil politics without going in circles within the paradigm, and think of the whole problem within a new paradigm if not within a new Chinthanaya. It is time to listen to the Sinhalas at least for want of a change.