

# **Situation Analysis of Nation Building Efforts in Sri Lanka: From Early Years of Independence to Contemporary Days**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Despite the smooth transition of power from the British colonists to the Sri Lankan Sinhalese in 1949, Sri Lanka inherited considerable challenges. After the culmination of the civil war, from 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka confronted numerous obstacles in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. Drawing from Birch's model of national integration, this study attempts to examine the diverse political, economic, and social challenges facing Sri Lanka. The review shows that Sri Lanka needs critical nation building in the following areas: (i) Infrastructural development; (ii) Resettlements and rehabilitation of displaced populations; (iii) Ethnic and religious integration; (iv) Equality in political representation; (v) Educational and employment policies; (vi) Gender equality policies; and (vii) Mental health interventions for children and women. The role of international bodies, like the United Nations Human Rights Council, and neighboring countries is key to creating pressure for national integration and growth. There is fear that if national unity is not at the forefront of state and international policy for Sri Lanka, conflict and instability may arise again.

**Keywords:** Sri Lanka, civil war, nation building, Tamil, Sinhalese

## INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka is an island country lying in the Indian Ocean and separated from peninsular India by the Palk Strait. Its population includes diverse religious and ethnic groups, including Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. Though the country is not geographically very big, it suffers from fragmentation and conflict due to its multiple ethnicities. Like most of the South Asian countries, ethnic identities have played a role in influencing political dynamics of the country. Sri Lanka has been ruled by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British respectively till its independence from the latter in 1948 (Jayasuriya, 2001). At the time of the British arrival, the Sinhalese were the dominant group in the country. Their ancestors arrived from India around 500 BCE and soon became the dominant group with influence and control over the other clans in the region (DeVotta, 2007; Sharma, 1991).

The country has great geographical significance for being the nexus of vital maritime trade channels between Asia and Europe (Karunatilake, 1986). The advent of European powers in the region increased the potential of the Sri Lankan island, because of which the then maritime powers clashed with each other to control its shores. It is also an important strategic partner of China, as major powers in the region are struggling for influence in the Indian Ocean. The new regionalism of the country in the post-war era regarding its relations with India and China is another factor of the strategic position of the country (Hewage, 2018).

Sri Lanka is the only state among the South Asian countries which received independence from the British on February 4, 1948 without any liberation war or freedom movements. It was a smooth transition of power from British colonial rule. However, it is also the only country in the region that experienced a long civil war after independence, lasting

almost three decades. The civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sinhalese government started on July 23, 1983. The Liberation Tigers of LTTE was a minority group struggling for equal representation on linguistic, ethnic, religious and economic grounds (Jackson et al., (2007). The war, after much violence and casualties, finally ended on May, 18, 2009. The military declared the entire island under government control after the defeat of the remaining Tiger resistance groups.

With the civil war, the rebellion of LTTE, and the notorious political struggle for power, the internal political situation of the country became critically vulnerable. In the 21st century when the world is being globalized and finding new ways of prosperity, Sri Lanka still has to struggle with healing old wounds and struggling with contemporary issues of national turmoil. During the long civil war, the country was spending a large amount of its resources and capital on military expenses. As a result, sectors including education, health, and economy remained neglected for many years. Though the country is rich in natural resources, and has an edge for tourism, there are challenges because each community is not benefiting from the tourist industry equally (Takazawa, 2011). In this way, the process of national integration is complicated and requires urgent attention in the present political milieu. The immediate aims for the government must include community solidarity, legal rights for all citizens, and policy planning for “bridges of friendship” to heal the wounds of the civil war (Dharmawardhane, 2013).

## **METHODS**

### **Theoretical Background**

This study draws from Birch’s model of national integration, in order to explore the challenges faced by Sri Lanka in the post-war decade (Birch, 1989). The model proposes that the practice of

national integration involves various elements. Countries undergo the process in numerous manners which complement their geography, social construction and political scenario. The term nation building was first introduced by political scientists Karl Deutsch, Reinhard Bendix and Charles Tilly in the 1950s and 1960s. It was defined as the process of consolidation and integration of a society which has people from diverse origins, into one nation state with common goals. This process of national integration is further defined as a journey of subgroup members of the state from isolation to wider group belonging (Goldman, 1964). Across the world, most nations are usually not characterized by homogeneity and are instead pluralistic in terms of ethnicity and religious beliefs. Therefore, the process of national integration is a common feature in most political governments (Birch, 1989).

According to Birch (1989), national integration relies on the approaches of the governments and is a by-product of political and economic developmental policies. This is also true of the dominant democratic governments of contemporary times. Democratic governments attempt to formulate policies to promote national integration based on the needs and feedback from society. Birch (1989) viewed minorities through a classic realist approach. He argued that religious identities are less permanent than ethnic identities. The religious factor can be tackled through “conversion or the growth of agnosticism” (Birch, 1989). In this way, Birch (1989) concluded that those countries can achieve unity and integration through: (i) the creation of symbols of national identity- like flags and sports teams logos, (ii) creating national harmony and patriotism through the education system and curriculum, and (iii) ensuring representation of all sections of the society through democracy and an electoral process.

## **Study design**

This study is a discussion paper, based on a literature review. Scholarship to prepare this study was collected through secondary sources including books and journal articles. Birch's model of national integration has been used in order to determine which elements of Sri Lankan society are of importance to nation building, including the politics, economy and culture. In order to present a situational analysis of Sri Lanka's challenges, past and contemporary, this paper is structured to cover the following four areas:

1. Independence and the initial years of struggle for Sri Lanka
2. Contemporary challenges: The political and economic consequences of the Sri Lankan Civil War
3. Contemporary challenges: The social, cultural and health consequences of the Sri Lankan Civil War
4. The Global and regional response to Sri Lanka

## **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

### **Independence and the initial years of struggle for Sri Lanka**

The British handed over the governing reins to the Sinhalese, who were a majority group, at independence in 1948. Post-independence, the Sinhalese attempted to take solitary action to alter the political constitution, without consensus from minority groups. The Sinhala Only Act of 1956 replaced English with Sinhala as the sole official language of Ceylon, and excluded Tamil (Fernando, 1977). Similar acts which contributed to uneven distribution of economic resources, linguistic injustice and under-representation in the political administration began to create critical rifts, disunity and mistrust. One separatist group called the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

(LTTE) emerged in 1975 (Wilson, 1988), who strongly disdained the Sinhalese superiority over bureaucracy and educational institutes. The LTTE demanded a separate homeland in the north and east parts of the country.

In aim of separatism, the LTTE began a series of ambushes against the army in the early 1980s, which led to riots and deaths and culminated into a civil war. The civil war witnessed historical bloodshed across the country, with no end in sight. The government of Sri Lanka responded by establishing a ministry in the earlier years of the war to organize modernized arm equipment to fight against the LTTE. The situation worsened to such an extent that the government defied international rules and violated human rights by bombing hospitals run by the LTTE rebels (Customary International Humanitarian Law, 2021). After years of brutal fighting for a separate homeland, in early 2009, LTTE finally faced defeat, bringing an end to the civil war (Bajoria, 2009).

## **Contemporary challenges: The political and economic consequences of the Sri Lankan Civil War**

### ***Human and Capital Loss of the Sri Lankan Civil War***

The Sri Lankan army won the war at a huge cost. The statistics released by the government in 2012 showed that the number of casualties reached up to 7,000; whereas a report commissioned by the United Nations showed that the death toll of the war amounted to 40,000 persons (Mahr, 2013). To add to the complexity, some independent data reported that the number of casualties amounted to 0.1 million innocent civilians. The United Nations records also showed that in the matter of missing persons, Sri Lanka stood second after Iraq. Thousands of civilians, rebels, and

army personnel were believed to be dead in the four last years of the conflict, but were relegated to 'missing people' status.

The long civil war also called for heavy investments in the military budget. The government established a ministry regarding modern arms and military equipment, which required heavy capital and budget allocation over the years. There was a considerable decline in the rate of imports and exports after 1983, due to concentrated efforts by the government on military affairs as opposed to economic development. In 1983, the military spending stood at 1.5% of the GDP and 4% of the total government spending. In another four years, by 1987-88, military spending had quadrupled to over 5% of the GDP and almost 18% of total government spending (Grobar & Gnanaselvam, 1993). Consequently, there was low budget allocation and policy planning for other critical structures like education, health and the economy.

### ***The Post-War Scenario of Resettlements and Rehabilitation***

Amid international pressure for accountability and reconciliation between conflicting groups who had been at war with each other for many years, the Sri Lankan government embarked on a difficult task of national integration. During the war, many people were displaced in the northern and eastern parts of the country. Thus, the main aims were to commence the rehabilitation program of LTTE combatants who had surrendered and to initiate rebuilding of areas that had been destroyed due to the war. A Ministry of Resettlement was established to resettle the refugees living in camps and those who had fled to neighboring India (Saparamadu & Lall, 2014). There were about 40,000 refugees in India. About 70,000 acres of land was retrieved from occupying forces, in the northern and eastern Tamil regions. This helped to support resettlement of the displaced refugees. In 2012, the Ministry of Defense announced that since 2009, a total of

10,049 former LTTE members had been rehabilitated. However, though the government efforts were significant, there has been criticism that not all the displaced and refugee populations have been provided support and to date they are struggling with challenges related to rehabilitation (Saparamadu & Lall, 2014). There is still further need to fulfill the social and economic needs of the displaced and refugee populations, including areas such as: (i) rebuilding of infrastructure, (ii) political participation, and (iii) economic re-engagement. This would only be possible through the combined efforts of state, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

### ***National Integration and Reconciliation***

The Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation was an initiative for promoting harmony across the different ethnicities of Sri Lankan society (Dharmawardhane, 2013). The task of the Ministry was to regulate all the sections of the integration process and to help build unity among the ethnic groups. The mission of the Ministry also included the agenda of building an inclusive society that negates exploitation of humanity and promotes dignity for all citizens of Sri Lanka. A major initiative was to allocate ministries to former Tamil fighters who were rehabilitated and had left the cause of *Eelam* (the desired independent state by Tamil fighters during the civil war). This step was understood to be a beginning for Tamil participation in the government and equal representation in Sri Lanka. However, majority Tamils who were initially amenable to the idea of such ministries and reconciliation efforts heavily criticized the detailed plans and proposal for ministry functions (Samarasinghe, 2009). In this way, only a few of the Tamils were given ministries and this effort by the government was seen as a superficial effort, without any actual benefits of unity in the nation.

### ***Ethnic and Religious Integration***

As mentioned earlier, Sri Lanka is a society with diverse religious groups including the Sinhala Buddhists, Tamil Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. The process of integration of religious and ethnic minorities was not a focus of government policy post-independence. It is agreed that the riots of 1958 which occurred due to language, was the beginning of the civil war and years of conflict and mistrust (Herath, 2015). Even post the civil war, the integration of Sri Lankan society based on language and culture is a major challenge. There was dire need for the national integration of the diverse groups in order to prevent future conflict and instability. A set of progressive alliances were needed in the society where democratic values could flourish and where every group was given equal representation. Equal representation in the government was integral in order to remove layers of structural discrimination and marginalization (Goodhand & Walton, 2009).

At the same time, it is recommended that governments must have state-centric policies to prevent secessionist forces from damaging social and political harmony (Bose, 1991). It was perhaps this difficulty of developing the most prudent political policies which promoted both democratic participation and yet controlled separatist forces which made Sri Lankan government efforts inadequate. In addition, though the Sri Lankan civil war was not based on religious affiliations, but rather on the demand for a separate homeland for the Tamils, the religious factor cannot be ignored. The Sri Lankan Tamils were supported by Indian Tamils during the civil wars, who are predominantly Hindus. Additionally, the dominance of the Sinhalese government has been inculcating Buddhist elements in the national culture, which has been aggravating the other religious minorities (Schonthal, 2016). In this way, there are contemporary challenges related to religious and ethnic divides for which adequate policy has not yet been developed in

the country. No real progress can be achieved without understanding the relationship between political dynamics and socio-religious forces in a country (Kadiringamar, 2012).

### ***Distribution of Power***

Sri Lanka has not been immune to the pressure by the international community about its domestic challenges. The United Nations included the agenda of power distribution as a panacea to solve ethnic and religious conflicts in the country (Hoglund & Orjuela, 2011). When tensions were mounting in 1987, a system of provincial councils was introduced by the Sinhalese government to extend regional autonomy to the provinces and to resolve minority ethnic issues. It was hoped that a policy of federalism would abate the conflict (Shastri, 1992). However, the policy was not welcomed by the minorities because the system of councils fell short of the principles of federalism (Tushnet & Khosla, 2015; Oberst, 1988).

The process of federalism and devolution of power has never been easy for developing countries (Tanzi, 1995). The failure of implementation is linked primarily with inability to fairly delegate power to all groups of society and introduce checks and balances to prevent exploitation by dominant groups. Failure to adhere to principles of federalism has been a cause for civil wars (Elazar, 1987), as is the case with Sri Lanka. The international community and the Tamil leaders demanded the distribution of power with federal principles but the Sinhalese governments restrained power to themselves (Orjuela et al., 2016). It did not help that they won elections repeatedly. This repeated victory contributed to the Sinhala government's autonomous actions and was considered a threat to national unity and ethnic integration. Both Tamil opposition and global leaders have heavily criticized the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 2015 which

gives powers to the president and adds to the unstable political climate of Sri Lanka (Orjuela, 2008; De Silva, 2016).

### ***Political Representation***

Equal political representation empowers the different ethnicities of the society and can become a source of national harmony and development. There are many ways of ensuring political representation. One way is through the electoral system of government (Sinnott, 2009). The system requires regional and national offices with proportionate rates of the votes to have the support of other groups after victory to form the government (Horowitz, 2003). The electoral system restricts many mainstream political parties and the leaders in taking advantage of their majority positions or discriminating and excluding the minorities.

Developing countries with a history of colonial rule inherited a political system of central dominance and structural flaws (Rupesinghe et al., 2016). The Sinhala governments following the footsteps of their colonial rulers did not attempt to introduce policies of democratisation in Sri Lanka. A democratic approach would have promoted political negotiations between the government in power and leaders of the opposition. In fact, it was the lack of democratization in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980's that led to the rise of the Tamil and other militant organizations in Sri Lanka (Yapa, 2010). The attitude of the Sinhalese government with the minorities assumed a colonial and hegemonic mindset. The centralised Sri Lankan governmental apparatus has continuously denied its minorities the rights of citizenship (Hensman, 2015). Due to this political exclusion there is fear of continuing regional and political tensions and also the possibility of future conflict.

### ***Youth Unemployment***

There are not many economic activities available in countries like Sri Lanka and consequently a large number of people are facing unemployment (Gunatillaka & Mayer, 2010). In the 1970s the educated youth faced unemployment, causing great stress and instability. As educated youth were not getting appropriate jobs with due compensation, they became more dissatisfied and agitated, contributing to regional instability (Lakshman, 1997). Post the civil war, the continued lack of governmental support for employment opportunities and encroachment of politics in private sector jobs further disappointed the youth. The Labor Force Survey for the country was first conducted in 2012, which reported that the unemployment rate in 2012 was 5.2 per cent, and by 2018 it rose to 5.7 per cent. Young populations across the country are still struggling to look for opportunities for technical skills and higher education in attempts to secure suitable employment and livelihood (Weerasiri & Samaraweera, 2021). There is fear that if the youth are not supported for higher education opportunities and job placement, it may contribute to instability and conflict in the region.

### **Contemporary challenges: The social, cultural and health consequences of the Sri Lankan Civil War**

#### ***The Psychological Impact of the War on Children and Women***

War can have serious mental health consequences on survivors, their families, and also on many generations after the war is over (Nakai, 2015). The women and children who have lost their male household members and heads of households are particularly vulnerable groups. Despite their vulnerabilities and mental trauma, women have been active agents in supporting negotiations to influence the government efforts for reconciliation between the state and LTTE

(Banerjee, 2008). In addition, many women were integral in supporting protests and raising awareness for the recovery of missing persons. Though the Sri Lankan governments assured the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that they would provide support and assistance to the women looking for missing relatives, they did not resolve the points of the Consultation Task Force (CTF). The CTF was a task force formulated by the Sri Lankan government in 2015 and advised by the United Nations Human Rights Council to support the post-war reconciliation efforts (Dilini & Siriwardana, 2020). The women of the eastern and northern Tamil areas are still struggling and there is no indication yet of government response or assistance (Salih & Samarasinghe, 2017). In addition, women and children who were displaced or whose houses were destroyed during the war still face problems of housing and security in the country (Gomez, 2016). It is feared that the inadequate post-war efforts have augmented the emotional and psychological distress facing women and children from the years of civil war (Jayawickreme et al. 2017).

### ***The Role of Language***

Language in post-colonial societies remains a source of division and identity crisis (McEwan, 2008). This is especially true for a multiethnic society like Sri Lanka. There are 75 percent Sinhalese speakers and 24 percent Tamil speakers in the country. The remaining 1 percent speak Burgher and other languages. Burghers have their origins from the Dutch and British. In a country of numerous ethnic identities, it has been recommended by some scholars that the Sri Lankan government should designate two or three languages depending on the region (Wickramasinghe, 2009). The same policy was pursued by Switzerland where three languages,

including Italian, German and French were listed as the official languages across different areas of the country (Birch, 1989).

In 1956, Sri Lanka, after eight years of independence, introduced an Act of Language, imposing Sinhala as the only official language (Kearney, 2011). Later, in 1958, another act, the Tamil Language Act was introduced in which Tamil was made the official language in Tamil majority areas. The Lesson Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), which was appointed by the government after the war, emphasized that both the languages were important to maintain harmony between two communities (Mohammed et al., 2014). However, the English language, which had been the official language during the colonial period, was also considered an important language. Thus, a policy of trilingual fluency- including the three languages of English, Sinhala and Tamil languages- was implemented. An effort to institutionalize the recommendation of LLRC was made by establishing departments and making commissions across the country to ensure the development of all three languages. Granting language rights to the minorities can lessen the chances of future skirmishes (Laitin, 2000). However, the real hurdle in the language planning in the history of the country is that governments have ceaselessly used political and non-political forces rather than political prudence to tackle the issue (Canagarajah, 2005).

### ***Educational Policies***

There is a history in Sri Lanka of students facing segregation and discrimination based on ethnicity (Davis, 2020). The classrooms before the civil war were divided into Sinhalese and Tamil students. Studies have revealed that children are separated based on the medium of instruction too (Wijesekera, 2019). Although Sinhala and Tamil are mediums of instruction and

English is taught after grade three, yet Sinhala remains the privileged community. Tamil students find fewer enrollments in the field of science since the system of standardization was introduced and they usually have lesser academic opportunities overall. Consequently, there is also discrimination against Tamil students when they seek employment (Little & Hettige, 2014). The Tamil Muslim students face the most neglect in the educational sector (Duncan & Cardozo, 2017). Teachers have also witnessed mistreatment, harassment and bullying against Muslim students (Azmi, et al., 2013).

Another factor leading to further disparity among minorities is history education (Davies, 2017). History can create a great sense of nationalism, but in Sri Lanka the subject of history is not being taught to promote national solidarity. Furthermore, teachers have not been trained to play a role in using the hidden curriculum to promote post-war unity and ethnic tolerance in a divided society (Cardozo & Hoeks, 2015). For countries like Sri Lanka, peace education is recommended, which can help in building ethnic unity and inter-faith harmony (Colenso, 2005). Despite a clear imbalance between the quality of schooling and resource provision for rural versus urban students, the major issue is that there are very few tertiary education opportunities (Gajanayake, 1982). A large number of the Sri Lankan population is employed in the informal sector of the economy and suffering from low wages and irregular contracts (Arunatilake & Jayawardena, 2010). Higher education policies and scholarships at the tertiary level would be the initial step to producing graduates for the formal sector of the economy.

### ***Gender Equality***

During the colonial role, some efforts were made to provide rights to Sri Lankan women (Selvadurai, 2000). However, traditional Sri Lankan society has preferred to keep women

domesticated and not provided them rights for education, employment, and political participation. Post-independence Sri Lankan women became known for the participation in politics, and even as recruits in the Tamil Liberation Movement (Dissanayake, 2017). In recent years, the Sri Lankan government has made efforts to provide equal opportunities for girls in schooling and made concentrated efforts to improve maternal health indicators (Asian Development Bank, 1999). In the South Asian region, the country is considered a role model for high female literacy rate (Azka, 2019).

Despite this, some challenges still remain with respect to gender inequality in Sri Lanka. The textbooks and local norms still promote inequitable stereotypes and the unemployment rate for women is double that of the men (Skard, 2015). Only 35 percent of the women population are working members of the population (Chowdhury, 2013). Few women are represented in the managerial positions and they hold little power in the decision-making process in the economy or politics (Barsamian, 2000). Due to the long years of war, women's rights and cultural reform took a back seat, which many believe is the reason for sustained violence against women in the homes (Brun, 2005; Little & Hettige, 2004). It is agreed that when policymakers and government ensures equal participation for women in the economy and political fields, women will face less violence and inequality in the homes and in society overall (Perera, 1987).

## **The Global and regional response to Sri Lanka**

### ***The Involvement of India***

Culturally and historically Sri Lanka and India are bound by their ethnic ties. There are 60 million Tamils living in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (Goreau-Ponceaud, 2012). Because LTTE was backed by the Tamils of the Indian state Tamil Nadu, India intervened in the civil

war. Initially, India sent a peacekeeping force to negotiate a network between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil rebels. However, after its failed attempt, the Indian government signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 and made the decision to support the Sri Lankan government (Hancock, 1999). This enraged the Tamils belonging to both India and Sri Lanka. In 1991, the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a Tamil Nadu suicide bomber. India then followed a dual policy of banning the LTTE and persuading the Sri Lankan government to come to a peaceful solution by addressing grievances of the Tamil community (Mohanasundram, 2008). The Indian government also sought opportunities of strengthening ties with America during and after the Sri Lankan civil war, making their interests multifaceted and uncertain (Das, 2012). Overall, the geopolitical location of Sri Lanka and the ethnic ties are important reasons for India's involvement in the country (Destradi, 2012). Though the LTTE fighters disintegrated in Sri Lanka, there is fear of future unrest due to the continued support for Tamil separatism in India (Chalk, 2008).

### ***The Role of the United Nations Human Rights Council***

After the civil war in Sri Lanka, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) welcomed the gesture by the LLRC to resettle and provide equal opportunities to the people affected by the war (The Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation - Sri Lanka, 2011). UNHRC later in 2012 passed a resolution sponsored by the USA to promote accountability and reconciliation after the war (Sirisena, 2012). However, this resolution was condemned by the Sri Lankan government and also by the Tamil diasporas. The government didn't want any interference in domestic policies, whereas the Tamils condemned the resolution for failing to urge the president for power-sharing in the east and northern areas belonging to the

Tamil minority. Based on this resistance an amended resolution was passed, which favored Sri Lankan state autonomy and the LLRC recommendations (Sirisena, 2012). More recently on March 23, 2021 a new resolution was passed by the United Nations regarding the Sri Lankan civil war victims. The new resolution is about the scrutiny of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka in the context of the civil war to prevent crimes by the government and the LTTE rebels (Amnesty International, 2021). Such resolutions by the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil groups are seen as interference in domestic affairs and their sovereignty. As the United Nations body is seen with mistrust by conflicting groups in the country, there is little hope for strict adherence to peace and nation building resolutions.

### **CONCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study aimed to present a situational analysis of the nation building efforts in Sri Lanka from early years of independence to contemporary days. The review finds that there are key challenges facing Sri Lanka's national building process, namely lack of national integration and a clear and comprehensive state policy. There has been immense loss of human lives and capital and there is a continued need to rebuild human resources and infrastructure in the country. There is also a critical need to resettle and rehabilitate populations suffering from displacement, war crimes, and post-traumatic stress due to the war. Special attention for rehabilitation and structural support needs to be provided for women and children. Gender based inequalities are a concern, especially with respect to equal opportunities for education and employment of women. Policies for the integration of Sri Lanka's diverse ethnicities and religious minorities are also needed. Political representation through democratic reforms and devolution is needed to eliminate the inequality in power from the central majority powers. There is currently no youth employment

and higher educational policies of any significance, which can become major risks for future stability in the country. Finally, relations with India and international stakeholders like the United Nations need to be considered carefully to promote nation building and state development.

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There is no conflict of interest to declare.

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