Political Violence in the Upcountry Tea Plantation Areas: A Study in Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha Area

By

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Reg. No. GS/SS/1476/2001

M.Sc Human Security

June 2004
Declaration

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. S.I. Keethaponcalan and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any University for another Degree Programme.

Loganathan Vijayanathan

Date: 14.7.2004
Declaration by the Supervisor

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this thesis is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation.

Dr. S.I. Keethaponcalan
Date: 14/07/04

Senior Lecturer – Department of Political Science
University of Colombo
POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE UPCOUNTRY TEA PLANTATION AREAS:
A STUDY IN NUWARA ELIYA PRADESHIYA SABHA AREA

BY

LOGANATHAN VIJAYANATHAN

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYAWARDANEPURA AS A PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN SECURITY – JUNE 2004
DEDICATION

This Research Report is dedicated to my mother Shrimati Vijayaletchumi Loganathan and father late Shri R.V. Loganathan Naidu.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This piece of Research would have been impossible if not for the tireless support and encouragement given to me by my supervisor Dr. S.I. Keethponcalan, Senior Lecturer – Department of Political Science, University of Colombo. I thank him whole-heartedly.

My special thanks to Dr. Deharagoda for his continued support with an understanding of our regular work an encouragement given to all of us in the Human Security programme.

It is with deep appreciation I thank my fired Mr. Shanthakumar of the Central Province, Ministry of Education for his support during my field work in Nuwara Eliya. I also wish to place my appreciation to Mr. Balendran, Mr. Yogesh and Mr. Athimani for helping me in my field work. I also thank Channa and Vijitha for their continued assistance for my studies.

It would have been impossible to write my thesis if not for the support from my beloved wife Dharshini who assisted throughout my course and research work. I wish to acknowledge the help and assistance given to me by brother in law Suresh and nephew Eshodharar.

Last but not least I wish to record my gratitude to all my respondents for their free and frank discussions during the interviews which helped me immensely in my analysis and report writing.
ABSTRACT

Political violence has come to the forefront dominating the electoral process and also the governance at various levels. While the causes of such violent acts are different and manifold, the affects also differ in its extent of damages and its intensity. This research was undertaken to study the violence with political characteristics in the tea Plantation Areas affecting the Upcountry Tamil Community in Sri Lanka. When we consider political violence of the Upcountry Tamil community it automatically implies the act of trade unions that have caused violent incidents that have severely disrupted the normal life of the people in that area. Violence with political dimension since Upcountry Tamils are a distinct minority. Given the scope and complexity of the study, it was undertaken in Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha Area in Nuwara Eliya district of the Central Province of Sri Lanka.

The research study has explored the positive relationship between the violent actions of the Upcountry Tamils with the Trade Union action. There is a clear link between the micro level clashes between the individuals and groups to the macro level violent incidents in the event of those whom clashing at the micro level are from different trade unions or with affiliations to different political parties. The action of the police exacerbates the condition when there is interference from the powerful TU, which is a common scenario. The TU also to demonstrate its dominance over the other propagates violent means through the use of youth members. The political clashes have not been as server as in other areas of the country.
The Conditions prevailing in the upcountry especially in the tea plantations may have lead to a state of depression and frustration that would have lead to violent incidents. Their perception is that the continued discriminatory conditions is a barrier for them to realize their unfulfilled human needs for mainly security and recognition and that they are increasingly not willing to accept that position. It is also manifested by their action of meeting violence with violence during the communal riots that took place in the year 1987 and 2000.

Having fewer opportunities to further their skills for marketable employment they were confined to the estates that has lead to frustration that generally leads for aggressive behavior. The social conditions in the Upcountry the plantations exacerbates this situation. Having fully realized that a rebellious action is not possible given the geographical terrain of the upcountry, the youth are of the opinion that such action alone could bring recognition to their problem. This perception is not a good sign in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in the country.

L. Vijayanathan
24 June 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACEWU</td>
<td>All Ceylon Estate Workers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACEWF</td>
<td>All Ceylon estate Workers Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BW</td>
<td>Bindunuwewa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIC</td>
<td>Ceylon Indian Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CICLU</td>
<td>Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
<td>Ceylon Workers Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Ceylon Democratic Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWC</td>
<td>Democratic Workers Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LJEWU</td>
<td>Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSSP</td>
<td>Lanka Sama Samaja Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TULF</td>
<td>Tamil United Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU</td>
<td>Trade Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPF</td>
<td>Upcountry Peoples Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNP</td>
<td>United National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VV</td>
<td>Veera Vidanaya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Chapter -1

Introduction

1. General Introduction

Violence has inevitably come to the forefront of political, social and cultural life in Sri Lanka more particularly since the early 1970s. Political violence pre-dominated the electoral process and spread all over the country with different intensities. While the causes of violence are different and manifold, the affects also differ in its extent of damages and its intensity. This research report is an outcome of study of ‘The Political Violence in the Tea Plantation Areas’ affecting the Upcountry Tamil Community in Sri Lanka. The study was undertaken to analyse the causes of violence emerging from a political perspective that were perpetrated by and against the community for various reasons. The study focused to find out the major causes for political violence in the plantation areas and what provocative factors that leads for the people to involve in violent acts in these areas. Human Needs Theory was studied in detail to relate violence and identify actual causes of the violence concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community. The study was undertaken in Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha Area in Nuwara Eliya District, which comprises Nuwara Eliya, Thalawakele, Kotagala, Patana, Agarapatana and Diyagama towns and the adjoining Tea estates.
2. Definition of violence

Understanding of the term violence in general is complex or sometimes vague. The society views violence in many different ways with overall perception of that it is a causative of injury to people and property (Silva, 1996). Most people will probably agree that homicide represents violence, but differences arise when we consider violence as actions of governments, police agencies, etc. Violence could be viewed in the perspective of criminal justice, social services, legal, medical and public health among others. Most of the research has focused on violence related to crime (Moore, 1990). The other important aspect of violence is domestic violence, which is widely addressed today.

Most attention focuses upon interpersonal violence (aggression by one or more persons against another). Another category of violence outside of this realm is violence directed against oneself. In lay terms, this refers to suicides or suicide attempts (Biyanwila, 1997).

To understand the importance of the problem it is important to define the term violence. Attempts have been made to define violence from a criminal justice perspective, a domestic violence perspective, an injury perspective, a medical perspective, and a sociological perspective, among others (Moore, 1990). There are few agreed upon standards regarding the appropriate definition for violence. The earliest works all considered violence primarily from the perspective of police-reported crimes. Recent works have broadened the characterization of violence. Violence was defined (Reiss. A.J and Jeffrey, 1993) as “behavior by persons against persons that intentionally threatens, attempts or actually inflicts physical harm”. This
definition includes both physical injury and threats. It does not include self-directed violence.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines violence as unlawful exercise of physical force. Olweus (1999) quoted by Moore' also confines violence to the use of physical force. He defines violence/violent behaviour as aggressive behaviour where the actor or perpetrator uses his or her own body as an object (including a weapon) to inflict (relatively serious) injury or discomfort upon an individual.

However, violence has been defined in a broader sense to include behaviour by people or against people liable to cause physical or psychological harm (Gulbenkian Foundation, 1995).

Violence is also explained as behaviour of persons against others that intentionally threatens, attempts, or actually inflicts physical harm. This explanation includes both physical injury and threats. It does not include self-directed violence. In this research thesis violence is studied in the tea plantation covering issues related to political aspects. The violent incidents that have taken place in the tea plantation areas had lead to disruption of social and economic life of the community either for short or long time period. These violent incidents would have been as a result of aggressiveness. However it should be noted that aggressive behaviour is not apart from social conditions or aggression does not necessarily end in violent action. Social influences are likely to make individual behave violently (Turpin, 1997).
Hartogs & Artzt (1970) quoted by Johan M.G. first identified organised violence, which is "patterned and deliberate". All organized violence is instrumental in the sense that it is one means of social combat among many, and it functions in a context of group interests and goals. The second type of violence is spontaneous violence, which is an "unplanned explosion set off by the unique chemistry of internal and external conditions". While organized violence is both instrumental and impersonal, spontaneous violence is reactive, compensatory, or gratuitous. As a reaction, it is a way of striking out directly against frustration. As compensation, it is a way of making up for frustrations suffered in the past. As gratuitous violence, it is a way of displacing aggression from an object, which cannot be attacked (because it is too powerful or because it generates ambivalent feelings) to an object which is too weak to resist and which arouses clear feelings. Spontaneous violence may be collective or individual.

Organized violence may be divided into criminal and political types (Grundy & Weinstein, 1974). Criminal violence, while impersonal or instrumental, is not directed at the defence, disruption or restoration of a normative order, although it may unwittingly contribute to such outcomes. Political violence is directed at the maintenance or change of a normative order.

Violence in this study is the causation of the harm or injury to property and life arising through deliberate action by the community themselves or action that is directed against the community. The definitions mentioned above include apart from physical injury also the 'threat'. The 'threat' that leads to the disruption of normal life.
Therefore, in this study the act that has threatened the normal people and that has caused disruption of normalcy in the areas has also been looked at.

In the above context an attempt was made to define political violence for the purpose of this research as a 'process where deliberate use of physical force or threat is carried out with an intention to cause death or injury to persons or destruction of property and or disruption of normal life by organised groups or members of such entities to their perceived political enemy'.

In this study the focus will be on violence with political characteristics, which in the plantations has caused intentional threats or actual harm in the form of physical injury to the persons and property and attempts that disrupt normal life for political gains. However since the trade unions play an important role as political units in the plantations areas the action of trade unions, which are of violent nature and caused conditions that are explained above are considered to be political violence. These acts by the trade unions can also be considered as for gaining political supremacy in the plantation areas and or in the national politics of the country. All other forms of violence be it domestic or otherwise has not been dealt in this study.

3. Significance of the study

Violence has been studied with different perspectives; broadly sociological perspective, psychological perspective, political perspective, and with specific social and economical context. In Sri Lanka attempts were made to study violence with the ethnic based and class base both in the Northern conflict to the Southern Insurrection. Academics have studied in detailed the insurrection under taken by Sinhala youth
predominantly in the southern parts of Sri Lanka twice in the post independent era. Large volumes of literature are available on the ongoing ethnic conflict from its evolution to its different dynamics nationally and internationally. Political violence dominated the Sri Lankan electoral process in a bigger scale since 1970s with ideological conflicts in the early 1970s to mere gaining preferential votes¹ (Uyangoda, 1997) to gain entry to the legislature bodies. Considerable focus was on party based violence when it comes to the electoral violence in the south between major political parties in the country.

The Upcountry Tamil community has been identified as a separate ethnic minority in the country. It differs from the Sri Lankan Tamil community who predominately live in the north and eastern parts of the country. Majority of this community has been living in isolation (Little, 1998) in pockets in central, Uva and parts of Southern and Sabaragamuwa provinces of the country (see also table 1 for population figures). The community though separated from the Indian sub-continent still resembles inherent characteristics of South Indians. For egs cultural practices when worshiping their deities, practices adapted in marriages that are specific to some caste(s) etc. There are literatures produced on social, economic and cultural life of the Upcountry Tamils living in the plantation areas. However there seems to be a dearth of literature that focuses on violence with political characteristics in the plantation areas that has identified the causes for such violent incidents. It is also important to note that the community has been a significant player in the decision making party when it comes to electoral politics in Sri Lanka from early parts of 1980s and thereafter.

¹ Preferential voting system was introduced in 1978 constitution and came in to practiced during the parliamentary elections in 1988. In preferential system of voting the voters cast their vote first to the political party and then their preferences to three candidates of their choices within the party by marking the numbers of those candidates given by the election commission.
This study attempts to elucidate the causes of the violence that have political characteristics. The findings could be well used to elicit the theoretical aspects of political violence of a minority community of whose majority are living in a plantation agriculture system. It also could lead to look at the relationship between the causes in similar geo-political situations elsewhere for e.g. Tea plantations in Malaysia or plantations in Fiji Islands where the workforce are Indian Origins.

The Upcountry Tamils have been identified as a separate minority given their isolation from the Sri Lankan Tamils living predominately in the north and east of the country. Under such circumstances studying the causes of violent incidents could lead to seek answers for prevention of such incidents in future.

Trade Unions in the tea plantations play a significant role in the day today affairs of the Tea Plantation workforce. Trade Unions are also the political bodies of the Upcountry Tamils, which seek to work for the development of the community. In this context it would be pertinent to look at the relationship between the violence with political characteristics and Trade Union action in the Upcountry Tamil areas.
4. Background of the study area

The Upcountry Tamils live in a large area of the hill country and in some parts outside the hill country tea plantations. Their main concentration is in the Nuwara Eliya, Kandy, Badulla and Matale districts. They also live in other areas of tea and rubber plantations in the country. Outside the hill country they live in Colombo and in few thousands in north and east (see table 1 for population figures). However the upcountry Tamils are in majority in Nuwara Eliya tea plantation areas. It was impossible to research for issues related to political violence in all these areas. Therefore Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha (P.S) was chosen for the fieldwork.

The study was undertaken in Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha area in the Nuwara Eliya District of the Central Province. The Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha comprises of Thalawakele, Lindulla, Agarapatana, Diyagama, Kotagala and Nuwara Eliya towns. The main economic activity in the region is the Tea Plantations. Upcountry Tamils live in majority (Table 2 Gives the population figures) in the Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha area and majority of them live and work in the tea estates. The townships mentioned above have a mixed population but the majority are Tamils. The economic activity of these towns mainly depends on the estate residents. The main town in the Pradeshiya Sabha area is Nuwara Eliya which also the district capital. It is the second largest town in the Central province and one of the primary tourist attraction centres of the country. The Upcountry Tamils living in the estates are poor and their economic status is low when compared to others in the region and in the country. The housing in the tea plantations is of poor quality. Their dwellings are called 'single or double barrack line rooms' which consists of one room and a small veranda to be used as kitchen (see also box 2 for detailed explanation of life of an estate worker).
Table 1 District viz. distribution of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka – 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Population in Dercentage</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Sri Lanka Tamils</th>
<th>Sri Lanka moors</th>
<th>Indian Tamils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colombo</td>
<td>2,234,289</td>
<td>76.59</td>
<td>10.96</td>
<td>9.18</td>
<td>1.16</td>
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<td>Gampaha</td>
<td>2,066,096</td>
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<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kalutara</td>
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<td>1.28</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>2.71</td>
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<td>Kandy</td>
<td>1,272,463</td>
<td>73.95</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>8.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matale</td>
<td>442,427</td>
<td>80.24</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>5.27</td>
</tr>
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<td>Nuwara Eliya</td>
<td>700,083</td>
<td>40.03</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>51.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galle</td>
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<td>94.33</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>3.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matara</td>
<td>761,236</td>
<td>94.16</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.23</td>
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<td>Hambantota</td>
<td>525,370</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
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<td>Jañna</td>
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<td>95.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mannar</td>
<td>115,577</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vauniya</td>
<td>149,835</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullaitivu</td>
<td>121,667</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killinochchel</td>
<td>127,263</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batticaloa</td>
<td>486,447</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Ampara</td>
<td>539,344</td>
<td>39.33</td>
<td>18.7</td>
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<td>Trincomalee</td>
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<td>33.4</td>
<td>343</td>
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<td>Kurunegala</td>
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<td>91.74</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>6.73</td>
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<td>73.77</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>18.70</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Anuradhapura</td>
<td>746,466</td>
<td>90.78</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>Polannaruwa</td>
<td>359,197</td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td>Badulla</td>
<td>774,555</td>
<td>72.07</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>18.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moneragaia</td>
<td>396,173</td>
<td>94.54</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratnapura</td>
<td>1,008,164</td>
<td>86.62</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.95</td>
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<td>Kegalle</td>
<td>779,774</td>
<td>85.61</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>5.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,732,255</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>8.01</td>
</tr>
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</table>


Table 2 - Population by Ethnicity - Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Sinhalese</th>
<th>Sri Lanka Tamil</th>
<th>Indian Tamil</th>
<th>Sri Lankan moors</th>
<th>Burghur</th>
<th>Malay</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N Eliya</td>
<td>206944</td>
<td>43497</td>
<td>22266</td>
<td>134554</td>
<td>5850</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>28795</td>
<td>15405</td>
<td>6279</td>
<td>4388</td>
<td>9571</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate</td>
<td>140309</td>
<td>7344</td>
<td>11100</td>
<td>120595</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>37840</td>
<td>20748</td>
<td>4877</td>
<td>9571</td>
<td>2365</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Department of Census and Statistics 2002
5. Conclusion

Political Violence is a predominant occurrence in the recent times in Sri Lanka that has threatened the society and its components to the very existence. It could be seen that every day happenings end with some kind of politically related violent incident occurring in any parts of the country in the recent times. Political violence in the tea plantation areas has too being very frequently taking place though its impact has not been very serious as in other parts of the country. This research document attempts to study the political violence in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community. The study has been undertaken in the Nuwara Eliya P.S. area in the district of Nuwara Eliya of the Central Province in Sri Lanka.

Political violence in this study has been defined as a 'process where deliberate use of physical force or threat is carried out with an intention to cause death or injury to persons or destruction of property and or disruption of normal life by organised groups or members of such entities to their perceived political enemy'. Since the Trade Unions in the tea plantations are also the political units of the Upcountry Tamil Community, any action by the trade union that threatens the normalcy of the area is considered as an action of political violence.

Violence has been studied with different perspectives and attention in Sri Lanka has been paid to the conflict in the north and east and also on southern insurrection. However the analysis pertaining to the violence with political characteristics of the Upcountry Tamil community is little discussed. Therefore this study identifying the gap is attempting to identify the causes of violence and the relationship of it with different stakeholders within the tea plantation areas.
Chapter 2

Conceptualization and theoretical construct

1. Introduction

In this chapter attempts are made to study the violence detailing the human needs theory. The Human needs theory explains the basic human needs with reference to identity, security and recognition (Daucet, 1996). The identity is required basically for one’s existence. Security encompasses human needs for survival it not only deals with the personal security but also deals with economic, food, health, and environmental and political security. Security is primarily important for one’s survival. Recognition is required to be identified by rest of the members of the society for effective and legitimised participation in social, economic and political system for one’s sustenance. Human need theory is also discussed as hierarchy of needs for human survival and growth (Maslow, 1954). The Human Needs theory is very closely linked with the behaviour of the people that with the social conditions produce frustration and aggression (Clark, 1993). In this chapter the theory is discussed in detailed and explained how it is linked with the Upcountry Tamils community in studying violence concerning the community.

In this chapter attempt is made to describe the violence that has taken place in the past due to trade union action and communal violence that has affected the Upcountry Tamil Community. This is done to relate how the human needs in unfulfilled situations cause conditions for violent incidents in the tea plantation areas. It will provide an overview and take the readers to the subject of violence with political perspectives in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community.
2. Basic Human Needs theory

Basic Human Needs Theory (Burton, 1993) explains the conflicts as causes of lack of adequate needs. Needs refer to underlying basic human needs for identity, security and recognition, which are universal and non-negotiable (Doucet, 1996). These needs should be satisfied for human development and social stability. Human beings will seek to satisfy these needs at the expense of social disruption (Doucet, 1996). When social institution fail to help satisfy these human needs, it will give rise to protest, rebellion and violence.

The Human Security of an individual shall be partially ensured with the satisfaction of all the above identity, security and recognition needs. Identity is one of the basic conditions for one's existence. Identity seems to have two complementary parts - a sense of being 'X' and of not being 'Y'. The 'X' and 'Y' may be two individuals, two groups, different ethnicity or any other two entities. The perception of a threat to a group from a particular source may last long and even passed on to next generation (Doucet, 1996). The perceived threat may result in conflict, which shall be expressed as violence. The security needs are of manifold. The security for personal safety, for survival with sustained livelihood opportunities and ensured basic requirements for life and safe and sound environment for living shall form the basis for human security.

With denial of human needs, and the fears, anxieties and insecurities it produce social cleavages which often form around the issue of social identity of which ethnicity has become the most prominent manifestation (Jenifer, 1997). Protracted conflicts are located in the denial of fundamental human needs for security, a distinctive identity, the recognition of that identity by others and effective and legitimised participation in social, economic and political system. These needs are often expressed in and
fulfilment sought via identity groups. Lack of fulfilment of these needs or suppression
of them often manifest in structural, economic, political and social inequalities, which
could lead to violent conflicts.

Maslow (1954) explained the human needs in terms of human motivation. He posited
a hierarchy of human needs based on two grouping deficiency needs and growth
needs. Within the deficiency needs, each lower need must be met before moving to
the next higher level once each of these needs are satisfied, if at some future time a
deficiency is detected, the individual will act to resort to overcome the deficiency. In
this hierarchy of needs the first four levels have been identified as follows.

a) Physiological needs- hunger, thirst, bodily comfort etc.
b) Safety or security needs – safety of individual from any danger and
   or threat to ones body
c) Belongings and love- affiliate with others, be accepted by others
d) Esteem needs- to be competent gain approval and recognition

The above needs can be grouped in to deficiency needs. Human being is ready to act
upon the growth needs only if the above deficiencies needs are satisfied.

e) Cognitive needs- Need to know and understand and explore
   betterment
f) Self actualisation- to find self-fulfilment and realise one’s
   potential.
g) Transcendence- to help others find self fulfilment and realise their
   potential
The hierarchy thus explains when one need is satisfied the individual opt for others. It is obvious to one to have his needs on hunger is satisfied to go for being competitive and explore other things for the betterment. When the Malsow theory is related to the life of the Upcountry Tamil people it is interesting to note that for decades the interests and concerns of the them have been to secure their basic needs for food, shelter and free from diseases has been one of their primary concern (Kamphuis, 2001). The struggle for minimum wages in order to fulfil their basic needs testifies their immediate focus was on their basic requirements.

Another dimension to Human Needs theory focuses on the fact of emotions. It proposes three important needs referred, as psychic needs (Clark, 1993). They are explained as essential needs for survival that include food, water and sex, Group bonding that includes family bonding, group bonding to which the individual belong including the need for love and affection and finally the identity needs which ensures the existence and communication with others. All three psychic needs are heavily guarded by emotions. When this is threatened the aggression comes in (Clark, 1993). When dialogue to realise the needs fail the threat persists and the reaction could be psychological or physical violent.

Human needs theorists argue that one of the primary causes of protracted or intractable conflict is people's unyielding drive to meet their unmet needs on the individual, group, and societal level (Daucet, 1996). For example, the Palestinian conflict involves the unmet needs of identity and security. Countless Palestinians feel that their legitimate identity is being denied them, both personally and nationally. Numerous Israelis feel they have no security individually because of suicide
bombings, nationally because their state is not recognised by many of their close neighbours, and culturally because anti-Semitism is growing world-wide. Israeli and Palestinian unmet needs directly and deeply affect all the other issues associated with this conflict. Consequently, if a resolution is to be found, the needs of Palestinian identity and Israeli security must be addressed and satisfied on all levels.

Human needs theorists offer a new dimension to conflict. Their approach provides an important conceptual tool that not only connects and addresses human needs on all levels. Furthermore, it recognises the existence of negotiable and nonnegotiable issues (Burton, 1993). That is, needs theorists understand that needs, unlike interests, cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for. It is generally that these needs are not met with there are chances of meeting the needs at the expense of what ever perceived as best way by the people.

In the Upcountry one could see the struggle the tea plantation workers have undertaken for a minimum wage and better living conditions from time to time (Mohideen, 1995). The Trade Unions have undertaken to disrupt the normal functioning of the tea industry when all other methods of negotiations have failed (Sabaratnam, 1986). Some theorists point out that the basic needs are non-negotiable (Maslow, 1954). If it is for the minimum wage for food and better living conditions was the main requirement for the tea plantation workers to agitate, then these needs become difficult for negotiation. Later stages it was their identity and recognition issues that cropped up besides better working condition and minimum wage.
The issues related to identity of the Upcountry Tamils that can be established by the struggle for rights and citizenship. The main trade union in the tea plantations, the Ceylon Workers Congress was demanding the franchise of the Indian origin Tamils right from its formation (Thondaman, 1994). It joined with the Sri Lankan Tamils in support of their struggle for identity and equal status putting the demand for fundamental human rights for the Indian Tamils (Sabaratnam, 1990). During these struggles too the CWC wanted the identity of the Indian Tamils established and sustained. It did not go along with the Sri Lankan Tamil when their manifesto for general elections in 1977 demanded a separate state (Sabaratnam, 1990).

The issues of recognition were also seen in the struggle in the upcountry. The recognition for the trade unions, recognition for the job and recognition as equal and on par with others in the country were the issues evolved from time to time since independence (Nadesan, 1996) The DWC, which broke away from the CWC in 1956 under the leadership of Aziz, had to launch a biggest strike in Diyagama estate in 1956 (Vijayakumar, 1995). The CWC then wanted to maintain a monopoly played the role of lackeys. The labour department did not recognise the DWC. Hundreds of DWC workers gathered in the hills of Diyagama to dissuade 30 workers of the rival union CWC (Kader, 2002). The police intervene and shot at killing a worker. This created a bigger scenario and lead to a situation that more and more people from other areas joining the strike. The then Prime Minster Bandaranayaka intervened to solve the issue and accorded recognition for the DWC.
3. Structural theory of conflict

The other dimension to acts of violence is the status of the community in the society taking in to account their conditions of living, education status and services delivery to the areas of tea plantations. The Structural theory of conflict assumes that organisation of society itself creates the causes and conditions for conflict. This theory by Gaultung as quoted by Doucet (1996) focus on the general forces and dynamics at play, which make a society more or less prone to different levels of conflicts and violence. They tend to explain why a conflict develops and how it sustains. Gaultung explains that violence is in built into unequal, unjust, and unrepresentative social structures. The living condition in the plantation itself may provide causes and conditions for violent behaviour since they are not in par with the rest of the country. Wide structural inequalities between ‘have's and ‘have nots’ and unequal distribution of resources and access to services provided by the state will constitute one of the major causes for conflict.

In the theory of structural violence, it is explained that the institutions and norms of society hurt the members of the society, including such inequalities and discriminations (Burton, 1993). Therefore the members tend to respond sooner or later accordingly. Frustration behaviours include drug usage, domestic violence, youth suicide, gang violence, robberies and school violence. Even in the work place and in other relationships, which fail to recognise the individual as more than a robot, we see negative behaviour such as lack of co-operation and absenteeism. In the same way at the international level it has been assumed that we can deter any movements for independence or ethnic identity.
The above theories can be related to the violence with political perspectives in the plantation areas where the settlements of the Upcountry Tamil Community are isolated and comparatively underdeveloped to the adjoining areas. Continuous poverty and substandard living conditions often lead to depression and influence the behavioural pattern of the individuals. Their living environment and authoritative management system exerted on them will exacerbate this. The continuous living in substandard provides for a behaviour, which with little provocation can lead to immediate violent reactions.

4. Violence with political characteristics in the tea plantation areas in Sri Lanka – An overview

This subchapter describes some of the violent incidents that have taken place in the past in the tea plantation areas. An attempt is made to elucidate their relationship with the theories mentioned above. The trade union action and their struggle for minimum wages is described here to elucidate that the human needs were of primary concern to the Upcountry Tamils in the tea plantations. The succeeding paragraphs explain the incidents in the past that had an impact on the trade union movement and the plantation industry itself. Attempt is made discuss some incidents of communal violence that has affected the Upcountry Tamil Community. This is done to relate how the human needs in unfulfilled situations cause conditions for violent incidents in the tea plantation areas. It will provide an overview and take the readers to the subject of violence with political perspectives in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community.
The struggle of the Upcountry Tamils has been up to now for meeting their unfulfilled basic needs as explained in the preceding chapters. There has not been any major organised violence undertaken by the Upcountry Tamils except for few incidents that started in middle 1980s in support for the youth movements in the northeast. (Thondaman, 1994). However these attempts were successfully controlled by the state with the help of the TUs in the plantations. The struggle had turned in to scenes of violence in many times that had severely affected the life of the Tamils and also affected the economy. The disruption of normal life is often the case when attempts to control their struggle were set in by the state or the estate management (Vijayakumar, 1995) Trade Unions played an important role here in the incidents what ever it may had taken place in the plantations or areas in the plantations. The economy in the towns in the hill country mostly depends on the tea plantation Industry and its labour force (Sinnathamby, 2004). Any incident(s) that take place in the tea plantations was sure to affect the economy of the nearby towns and its people. Therefore the trade unions had an impact not only within the plantation system but also the areas adjoining the plantations. The other issue is that there is a considerable proportion of Indian origin Tamils living in the towns close to the Plantations in the Nuwara Eliya district (see population figures in the table-1).

4.1. Trade Unions and their struggle

One of the first trade unions to be active in the tea plantation industry is the Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union (CICLU) the trade union wing of the CIC (Jayawardane, 1986). The CICLU was formed because of the estate management refused to have negotiations with the CIC, which was said to be a political entity of
the Indian Tamils in the country (Nadesan, 1996 and Kader, 2002). The CICLU proved to be successful in getting membership to its union. It had to play a vital and important role in the life of the estate workers. There were several strikes organised and implemented for getting basic requirements of the estate workers. The CWC, which replaced the CICLU, continued with working for the welfare of the workers (Nadesan, 1996 and Thondaman, 1994). All the struggles in the form of strikes, Satyagraha or action that lead to violence were fundamentally fought for achieving a basic human standard of living besides the right to get their citizenship.

Historical perspectives of the Trade Union action have been documented by many for egs. Nadesan, 1996, Sabaratnam 1996, Thondaman, 1987 and 1994 and many others. In these writings major trade union struggles have been well described. All most all such major struggles have focussed on wage issue and living conditions of the estate workforce. For the purpose of understanding a brief description some of trade union struggles have been mentioned in the succeeding paragraphs.

Nadesan, (1996) in his book "History of Upcountry Tamils in Sri Lanka (pp 238) wrote "During 1946 with the unemployment problem hitting hard on the government of Sri Lanka together with the landlessness, the government wanted to settle the Sinhalese landless people in the areas of Upcountry Tamils habitats. They cleared some of the tea plantations and provided those lands for the Sinhalese landless. Around 400 acres in Knarvesmire estate were cleared and provided to Sinhala landless labours and ordered the Indian Tamils to leave the estates without any assurance of resettlement. This sparked a labour union action and estates went on to launch a hartal in Kegale, Kelani valley and Hatton areas in which around 125,000
workers participated. The hartal was organised by CICLU. The unions perused the case in Privy Council in London, which passed the verdict in favour of the unions.

The estate workers in the country formed one of the largest trade unions in the country. Yet the benefits of trade unionism could not be drawn in full and the relationship with the management was always curdle (Kader, 2002). One of the reasons is that the workers of Indian origin were always considered sub nationals since they were migrants from India and had an inclination to India. While the trade union in other parts of the country were demanding better working conditions, special allowances fringe benefits etc the Upcountry Tamils were still struggling hard to put their minimum human needs (Jayawardane, 1986).

The plantation management too was not flexible in negotiations and always considered as a privilege for the workers to get these basic human needs. The other reason also may be the Indian workers were always moving in until the ban on emigration imposed by India in 1929 took place (Kodikara, 1991). Thereafter the workers started settling in one place and majority chose Sri Lanka. The Indian Emigration Act (1929) shocked the planters (Nadesan, 1996). They were still in demand for workers but reluctant to provide better facilities. The low social category and poverty have prevented them from turning back to India. They were heavy in debt to management. There were little resistances to their extreme conditions of living and this also created conditions of dependency (Weeramunda, 2001). The struggle to improve their living conditions was a primary concerned for the trade unions associated with them. The colonial planters kept the estate worker under extreme conditions of control (Sabaratnam, 1990). When they left, elite Sinhalese took the
planning job. The elite Sinhalese too were keeping the planting traditions were following their colonial predecessors only when it came to labour issues. After nationalisation the government made it point to appoint only Sinhala planters to manage and administer the estate Tamils (Jayawardane, 1986). Therefore the planters did not have a better understanding of the social, cultural life of the tea plantation workers. The gap between the Tamil estate workers and his Sinhala boss were too wide besides their class status. The end result was to get any thing in favour of the workers interference of trade unions was essential.

Wages was one of the most prominent issues that the trade unions have been fighting since the establishment of the Trade unions in the plantations (Mohideen, 1995). Next came their living condition more prominently the housing, water and sanitation, and health of the workers. The plantation did not increase the wages of the estate workers as and when the government and private sector took up wage increase in other trades (Thondaman, 1987). This resulted in agitation and some cases violent actions by the workers to win their demands. In 1957 cost of living index was high that lead to the strike trade unions in the public service (Jayawardane, 1986). The then government lead by S.W.R.D. Bandaranayaka granted an interim allowance called special living allowances of Rs. 17.50 a month (Thondaman, 1987). This special living allowance was not given to the plantation workers. A strike was launched by the DWC, which took place for three weeks with no result (Kader, 2002). The estate workers were unable to continue the strike thereafter. However a concession was made to the estate workers to give a 10-cent increase in their daily wages. Here the government and planters considered giving anything to the estate workers as a privilege and concession and not as there legitimate right.
After 1970 with the SLFP coming into power with the support of left parties, drastic changes in the government trade union were noticed (Thondaman, 1994). The government allowed negotiations with the trade unions on all matters pertaining to the work and life of the workers. However this was not the case for the plantation workers. Their wages largely remain unchanged since 1955. The other major problem was reduction in working days. This still reduced the monthly earnings of the estate workers. With the sharp rise in the prices of all items consequent to the international energy crisis in 1973, the living conditions of the plantation workers deteriorated leading to food-crisis and starvation especially in the upcountry tea plantations (Nadesan, 1993). The demand for monthly wages was put forward by the joint trade unions in the plantations. After several deliberations the government failed to respond to the trade unions. The joint trade unions went on a strike. The collective action by the trade unions angered the government.

Nadesan reported "The then Minister for Finance Dr. N.M. Perera's trade union were too demanding a monthly wage though the Minister refused to budge with the demand saying that nowhere in the world that plantation workers are paid a monthly wage. The monthly wage did not realise but instead the government declared that minimum of 108 days of work should be given in every 6 months" (History of Upcountry Tamils in Sri Lanka, PP 249). The massive strike halting the work in the entire plantation industry demonstrated that they were no longer tolerating discriminative action of the government or planters and would turn drastic to realise their basic needs.
The eagerness of the Indian Tamils to join trade unions was clearly seen in the year 1938 and 1939 (Nadesan, 1993). A British Controller of Labour Gimson stated, as quoted by Nadesan "the most important feature of the year is the manifestation of widespread unrest among estate labours prior to 1929 few associations had shown any prominence. The Ceylon Labour Federation founded by Natesa Aiyer, has developed an organisation, which has its agents in almost every estate in the upcountry with offices in Hatton, Nuwara Eliya, and Badulla. The CIC is gaining considerable influence through the planting districts. The Estate Workers' Union has been formed with its head quarters in Kandy under the auspicious of Sama Samaja Party and has come in to prominence of late. Gimson also stated that even incidents like slight change in the mode of issue of rice, high handed action on the part of the subordinate staff, refusal to recognise an association spark off strikes" (History of Upcountry Tamils in Sri Lanka, pp 109).

One of such incident is Kotiyagala strike in which the estate residents wanted to form society to promote better social life and do away with alcohol, gambling etc. (Kader, 2002). The Superintendent refused to give permission and threatened the worker with dismissal. Police were brought in to control the workers from organising themselves. These actions provoked and a large number of men and women went on strike. With the intervention of the Labour Department in favour of the workers the strike was called off.

Formation of the TUs gave way for the workers in each estate to bring their case to the estate management. As said earlier majority of the cases that were brought to the estate management was problems related to individual workers. They were usually,
refusing to give work for the day when the workers arrive late and workers quarters’ problem etc. However collective problems like wage, number of days of work, housing and other common issues was also placed with the estate management for action. One such TU action was the Mooloya estate strike (Vijayakumar, 1995, Kader, 2002). The agitation for better housing conditions, increase in the wage was organised by the All Ceylon Estate Workers Union which was lead by the left wing political party Lanka Sama Samaja Party. There was a great deal of dissatisfaction from the management and the state council. A prominent member from the state council for Nuwara Eliya E. W Abeygunawardane went out of the way to support against the strike. The workers issued a leaflet against the three-pronged attack by the planters, police and state council member. Deliberations to break the strike failed and the police went in large crowed to the estate. A policeman opened fire killing one worker by name Govindan. This act on an unarmed worker provoked indignation throughout the country. The commission appointed later to inquire in to the incident said law couldn’t justify the shooting of Govindan. However no action was taken against the police officer.

4.2. Communal riots and its impact on the Upcountry Tamils

Majority of the Upcountry Tamils resides on tea or rubber plantations that are located in the interior hill region of Sri Lanka. The Upcountry Indian Tamils share linguistic, religious, and cultural ties with the Sri Lankan Tamil but the two are considered as two distinct groups. Both the groups wanted to sustain their original identity for various reasons. The Indian Tamils share a common language (Tamil) with the Sri Lankan Tamils residing predominantly in the north and east of the country. However there are differences in the traditional practices when it comes to marriages and social
functions. There are also slight differences when it comes to religious practices with different deities' worshiped and rituals that are different. The Upcountry Tamils still follow the practices that existed in south Indian villages where they were originally from. The identity of the Indians was made to sustain both by the community and by the state with identifying them as Indian Origin Tamils in state records (e.g., Records of Census and Statistics).

When Ceylon, as Sri Lanka was formerly known, was granted its independence in 1948, the Indian Tamils were denied citizenship rights (Bastiampillai, 1991). The majority Sinhalese has generally perceived the Indian origin Tamils as an alien population (Little, 1998). Various efforts have been made by India and Sri Lanka to address the citizenship issue including the 1964 Bandaranaike-Shastri agreement and the 1974 Bandaranaike-Gandhi agreement. By the late 1980s, more than 500,000 Indian Tamils had been repatriated to India. The final end came to the citizenship problem with the UNF government in 2003 granting stateless persons citizenship. With that the five-decade-old problem totally came to an end. The Greater political representation and equal civil rights for the stateless Tamils were among the key concerns of the community. In the economic arena, improved working conditions, especially better wages, and greater educational and occupational opportunities are viewed as vital to the future of the Upcountry Tamil Community.

As most Indian Tamils are estate workers, Social and cultural concerns include the ability to use Tamil in dealings with the government, freedom of religious belief, and

protection against attacks by the majority community. The concerns of the Indian Tamils were mostly brought in to attention of others by the trade unions. Their role in the life of the estate workers in particular and Indian Tamil population in general is explained elsewhere.

The Upcountry Tamils as a community were not directly a part with the ongoing ethnic war in the north and east. However whenever there is wide scale counter measure by the State to combat terrorism in the areas outside the northeast theatres the affected persons largely formed the Upcountry Tamils. There were incidents right from the 1950s to show that the incidents in the northeast reflected in the south mostly on the Indian Tamils. Sri Lanka has seen widespread communal violence in 1958, 1977, 1983, 1987 and 2000. In the years 1987 and 2000 it was not spread to all over the country but in most of the cities in the hill country. All these violent incidents have one way or the other sparked from the light lit in the north eastern conflict zones.

During the Bandaranayaka government of 1956, the Sinhala only act was promulgated giving Sinhala language official status (Nadesan, 1993). The major Tamil political party the Federal Party protested against the act and threatened to launch a Satyagraha (Wilson, 1994). The government did not yield to the threat and instead added provocation with the Transport Minister Maithripala Senanayaka adding 'Sri' number plates. The Tamil areas in north and east put Tamil 'Sri' who was tarred in the south and similarly the Sinhala 'Sri' letter was tarred in north and east. In the plantations in the towns like Thalawakele the Indian Tamil youth painted Sinhala name boards and 'Sri' in vehicles. They were arrested and kept in custody. Estate youth and workers

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4 "Upheavals in the Hill Country" Sunday Observer dated 15.1.2001
gathered in the upcountry towns protesting against the police act. This provoked retaliation and attacks on the Tamils (Nadesan, 1993).

In another major incident in the year 2000 took place in Thalawakele and other towns in the Upcountry Tamil areas. Widespread violence took place in these towns when section of the Upcountry Tamils organised and carried out a protest to the incidents that took place in a detention camp in Bandarawela killing 14 Tamil detainees.

The Sunday Leader of 15 January 2001 reported the incident as, “In October 2000, 29 Tamils were killed by Sinhalese villagers in a detention camp in Bindunuwewa in the tea plantation region. During the funeral procession, some Indian Tamils attacked the police forces and burnt some shops. Four Tamil people died when the police opened fire. This incident sparked the hill country. Shops and business establishments belonging to Tamils were looted and set fire by the mobs alleged to be from the Sinhala community together with the armed forces of the state. The violence that shocked and rocked the upcountry in the aftermath of the Bindunuwewa massacre was a flashpoint that illustrated vividly the growing impatience and unwillingness of the plantation Tamil youth to accept the current status quo, unquestioningly”.

There were different views and opinions expressed in the media. Some have depicted it as a manifestation of Tamil racism and equated it with the Bindunuwewa massacre in a futile attempt to absolve the state of moral and legal responsibility for both. Militancy amongst the Upcountry Tamils arose in the initial stages as a condemnation of the Bindunuwewa horror.

^ Bandarawela is town in the tea plantation areas in Uva province of Sri Lanka.
Ratnayaka, K, reported (World Socialist Web 19 Jan 2001) "A Sinhala mob stormed into the camp and systematically hacked to death the inmates. Police stood by while the thugs broke into the centre and shot several detainees as they attempted to flee. As news of the murders became known, demonstrations and strikes erupted in the plantation areas as well as in the north and east. Sinhala chauvinist groups and the security forces responded violently". He added in his report "Demonstrations at Thalawakelle, Kotagala, Watawala, Watagoda and Ginigathhena were subjected to racist taunts, provocation and physical attack by Sinhala extremist thugs backed by the police and army. Police arrested protesters and killed six people in separate incidents. When Tamil youth retaliated, racist gangs went on a rampage looting and burning Tamil-owned shops".

In the incident 17 Tamils were killed. Of these six were due to "official" shooting by police personnel. Three of those killed by the police were unidentified and disposed of by the cops themselves supposedly without any inquest. Eleven others were killed 'unofficially' by Sinhala mobs in association with or under the encouraging eye of security personnel. Four of these victims were not identified. Some of those killed were allegedly shot dead by the army. 56 Tamils were admitted to hospitals for medical treatment. Many of these had been hacked by swords and machetes. Several others who sustained injuries at the hands of the security personnel and gangs did not get medically treated fearing arrest afterwards. It is estimated that the figure would be around eighty in this respect. Six incidents of sexual violence against Tamil women were recorded. The most serious one being against the three daughters of a 69 year

old Tamil estate bungalow watcher Muthiah Chelliah, at Watagoda. Given prevailing social taboos and the explosive nature of the situation, it is presumed that many other sexual assaults have gone unrecorded.

Thalawakele town is perhaps the worst example of anti-Tamil violence in the upcountry areas of the country. Despite the proximity of the police station and the security personnel deployed to serve and protect the community by preserving the peace, many Tamil businesses including restaurants and textile, jewellery and provision stores were attacked, looted and destroyed. Some Sinhala businesses were also damaged due to spreading fire. 63 Tamil businesses were affected. Of these 16 were completely burnt down. The remaining 47, some partially gutted, were totally looted. 451 persons from 115 Tamil families were displaced. This included 59 students and 16 infants. Many of the businesspersons in Thalawakele had struggled against great odds to achieve these positions. Some had been affected in 1983 and later in 1987 too. In 1987 some sections of the youth erupted against the state indicating their resistance to the deprivation of opportunities and better living conditions to the upcountry plantations Tamils. The rising militancy was effectively controlled by the pragmatic approach of the then government with the assistance of the leader of the largest trade union Thondaman who was also considered to be the leader of the community. The primary concern of the then government was to ensure that plantation sector Tamils do not get alienated and estranged thereby paving the way for armed militancy to rise with perhaps the aid of northern militant infiltration. Opening up a third front had to be avoided for political, military, economic and social reasons.
5. Conclusion

The theoretical construct above has described that unfulfilled human needs creates causes and conditions for conflicts. The literature review indicates that the struggle of the Upcountry Tamil Community right from their arrival on this land to the present day revolves around articulating their basic needs more particularly their security needs. Security needs encompasses the basic needs for their survival and sustenance. The Trade Unions of the Upcountry Tamil community in the tea plantations have consistently striven to get a basic wage to support the workers to realise their basic requirements. It was for mere basic requirements to get adequate food and better living conditions including housing and better surroundings. These were the primary concerns at the initial stages and at later stages the needs for personal security, better health facilities and opportunities for furthering their lives were also discussed. One of the main struggles for recognition and identity was to get the citizenship rights. This was a long struggle for the Upcountry Tamils.

The failure of the state and the plantation management to fulfil these requirements gave rise to uprising from the community's part at different times. The counter measures taken by the state and the plantation management paved for conflicts and violence in the tea plantation areas. The Human needs theory is closely associated with the study of violence in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community and thus it has been used well in the succeeding paragraphs to explain the causes and conditions that has lead to violent incidents in the study area.
Chapter 3

Methodology

1. Introduction

Study of Violence can be done in assessing the incidents in terms of its number of incidents and intensity of damages that it has caused. It can also be analysed the number of conflicting parties and the reasons for such violent incidents by advocating a quantitative method. However this quantitative measure may not give rise to identifying the actual causes for the people to be violent.

Given the scope and complexity of the study, it was intended to do a qualitative study of the political violence with the primary and secondary information. This method was selected to give the people who have involved in the actual perpetration of violence and those who have been the victims of violence a chance to express their opinion about violence. This helped to recognise their perception of violence and the apparatus responsible for such conditions. The perception of the community was important since it strongly influences violent behaviour given the other causes and conditions for such aggression.

2. Objectives

2.1. Primary objective

To study the causes of violence with political characteristics and examine the role of frustration and identity in violent incidents concerning the Upcountry Tamils in the
tea plantation areas in Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha area in the district of Nuwara Eliya of the Central Province in Sri Lanka.

2.2. Secondary objectives

➢ To study the relationship between the trade union action and political violence in the tea plantation areas.
➢ To understand the dynamics of the violence with political characteristics in the tea plantation areas.

2.3. Research questions

The study identified the following as research questions

a) Why does the Indian Tamil Community in the tea plantation areas involve in violence?

b) What is the role-played by frustration in the violent behaviour of the Indian Tamil Community in the tea plantation areas?

c) Has there been a direct relationship between issues of ‘identity’, ‘security’ and ‘recognition’ and political violence in the plantations?

d) What are the characteristics of the violent incidents in the tea plantation areas in Sri Lanka?
3. Research Methodology

The results of this study was based on a qualitative analysis of data collected from the field. The data collection was done from over 50 individual respondents chosen from categories mentioned below.

1. Persons who have been victims of violent incidents or witnessed
2. Persons who have been directly involved
3. Persons who are prominent in the locality (teachers, lawyers etc)
4. Persons who have associated with maintaining law and order

The data was collected using snowball sampling. This was done to avoid the constraint to identify and sample the respondents before going to the field. This is a sensitive study and it was not possible to get the names of persons who are directly involved and also the victims’ fear of being further victimized. The potential respondents were not living in one area to do a comprehensive sampling. Therefore identifying one person and building a rapport with him and further through the first set of respondents identifying further respondents was done. The first set of respondents was done after getting records from the police station. The data collection was through a discussion focused on the subject of violence and the discussion centered on the incidents in which the respondents were a victim or perpetrators. Similarly the local prominent personalities were interviewed to get their views on political violence. The law enforcement officials gave their point of view. Views of the local level political leaders who were often identifying as primarily responsible for political related violence were also interviewed.
### Description of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Thalawakele</th>
<th>Nuwara Eliya</th>
<th>Agarapatana</th>
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<tr>
<td>Victims and Witnessed</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perpetrators</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local politicians</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local prominent personalities</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>02</td>
<td></td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law enforcement officials</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. Field investigations

As the time was one of the most limiting factors, I planned my fieldwork in three phases.

First phase – Visit Nuwara Eliya, Kandapola and adjoining areas.

Second phase- Visit Thalawakele, Lindulla, Diyagama and Agarapatana areas.

Third phase – Visit to cover any lapses of the two visits.

(see table for details of respondents from each area selected)

The first field visit was undertaken during the month of October 2003 to Nuwara Eliya. Nuwara Eliya is at the elevation of around 8000-Ft above mean sea level and the climate is cold during all most throughout the year. The month of October is rather cool with intermittent rains. I planned my fieldwork in such away that I could cover Nuwara Eliya during my first visit and Thalawakele and Agarapatana during second and third visits. Identification of respondents for the study was rather a crucial task. Given the nature of the study identifying those who have involved in violence was very difficult. I set out to meet the Senior Superintendent of Police to appraise him
about the study and get the support of the police officials for my field visits. The SSP directed me to the different police stations from where I started my field investigation. It was easy from the police officials to identify first set of respondents. But I was not permitted to see the records of the police since almost all cases of recent incidents were pending in courts. The next difficult task was to build up rapport and talk to the identified respondents. Nuwara Eliya is my native district and the contacts I had established earlier helped me to approach the identified respondents easily. My friends also helped me in introducing me the subject of study to the respondents. From each respondent it was easy to identify others in the case of perpetrators. In the case of the victims it was easy to identify them since most of them were known to people involved in politics and development work.

In the interviews were conducted with Police officials attached to the Head Quarters Police station. It should be noted that the responses from the police officials were very good. They spoke frankly and freely. When speaking to the police care was taken not to highlight what the others said and at the same time to verify the information got from the victims and those who witnessed incidents.

Discussions were done with respondents separately and care was taken to avoid all others. However in certain cases there were some people associating with the respondents who were his/her confidants. In all cases at first after the initial introduction to the study, the respondents were allowed to talk freely about the incident(s) that was described. This covered most of the questions that were to be asked. When the discussions took a different turn it was brought back to track by asking questions. The interviews were not a question and answer session since it
could create a suspicion of an investigation. During the field visit in selecting respondents care was also taken to get the views of different TUs. For this local prominent political personalities were also interviewed. The interviews were also done with the local level prominent personalities to get their views on political violence. These prominent personalities were at estate level, teachers and in the towns Lawyers and NGO leaders. These interviews were essential to get an overall picture of what the community sees on the violence of political nature that has disturbed the Upcountry Tamil community. For the purpose of the report writing the names of the respondents were changed. This was done on the request of the respondents that their names should not be published.

5. Constraints for field work

The study was a qualitative analysis of information pertaining to violence that could lead unearthing the causes of violence in the tea plantation areas. The analysis of why the Upcountry Tamil Community has reacted aggressively was done using the information collected from the field investigations by talking to different respondents selected from categories mentioned above. A scientific sampling was not done as the respondents were not in a given in a particular area. Therefore the respondents were selected from a ‘snow ball’ type of sampling. The interviews took lot of time as the respondents talked a lot about the incidents and their views over violence. Fixing a time for interviews was not possible. This consumed a lot of time and it was not possible to complete the interviews within a time frame. Therefore repeated visits had to be undertaken to the Nuwara Eliya district. This was one of the main constraints. As the respondents were from different locations within the research area travelling was difficult and to cover the interview planned for a day was difficult. This increased
the time spent in the field. There were some areas where the transport was difficult because the vehicles could not go due to heavy rains. Therefore more time was spent in walking to reach the respondents. One of the limitations was to identify women respondents. There were no women respondents from the category of perpetrators. However it was difficult to reach women who have been serious victims of violence due to cultural barriers. However it was possible to interview women who have witnessed the incidents.

The other limitation was that the respondents from Thalawakele and Agarapatana gave more importance to violent incidents that took place during 2000. They could recall the communal riots that took place during the year 2000 because that was the incident most remembered and most serious according to them. There were many victims and witnesses to this incident. Their perceptions were mainly based on this incident and that of communal violence in 1987. The respondents from Thalawakele though spoke about violence involving political parties and trade unions their main focus was on the incidents described above.

6. Limitations to the study

The geographical area chosen for the study was Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha Area. This area though is a representative region of the Upcountry Tamils live, the study couldn’t cover a larger area beyond Nuwara Eliya where violent incidents have occurred.
The study results are purely based on qualitative analysis and quantification of responses or incidents over a period of time was not done. The scope was limited only to the analysis of incidents based on what the respondents said about the incidents and their perception. There were no cross-checking done.

The study focussed on unearthing the reasons for violent incidents and through use of the theoretical construct identifies causes. During this exercise it was identified that a comparison of violent incidents in Nuwara Eliya and Badulla could have been useful but was unable to do so with limited time available for the study.

It could have also been useful to explore the violence in similar plantation agriculture system where the immigrant Indian workforce lives elsewhere in the world. For egs the Indian immigrant workforce in Malaysia and Fiji Islands. This could have identified genetically factors that cause for aggression and violence.

7. Conclusions

The methodology to study the Violence with political characteristics in the tea plantation areas can be amongst others quantitative and qualitative. This study in order to identify the causes of violence amongst the Upcountry Tamils and also to analyse the underlying reasons for the Upcountry Tamil community to be aggressive chooses qualitative methodology. The method focused on investigations by means of a checklist and elaborate discussions with respondents chosen from different categories of people connected to violence.
Chapter - 4

History of the Upcountry Tamil Community

1. Introduction

In Sri Lanka according to national statistics the Tamil Population has been classified into two; viz. the Sri Lankan Tamils who live in majority in the north and eastern parts of the country and the other is the Indian Origin Tamils brought in for the purpose of labour for the tea plantations during the British colonial period in 19th century. There is still debate over the nomenclature used to refer this population. Whether they have to be called as Indian Origin Tamil or Upcountry Tamils is an ongoing debate among the intellectuals of this community. The author of this report chooses to refer this particular community as ‘Upcountry Tamils’. However when referring to other literature the term 'Indian Tamil', 'Indian Origin Tamils' have been used. The Upcountry Tamils according to government account for around 870,000 which is around 5.1% of the total population of Sri Lanka and out of which around two third live in the plantations (Department of Census and Statistics –Census of Population and Housing 2001). However the total percentage of the Upcountry Tamil Population widely known in non-published is 8.01%7 (see also table-3). Sri Lanka’s population in the year 1981 was 14,846,750 out of which the Indian Tamil population was 818,656. It is pertinent to see that the population of Indian Tamil origin is 855,8918 (Statistical Abstract 2002) in the year 2001. There was a definite increase in the population, which has not been recorded by the enumerators accurately.

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8 Excluding the population of the north and eastern parts of Sri Lanka
There are many reasons for such wrong entries being made by the enumerators. One reason is that the Indian Tamils living outside the central hill country did want to identify them as Indian origin fearing deprivation in schooling, jobs and other difficulties when they approach state services. The other is that the misunderstanding of the enumerators in enrolling everybody (those who do not want to express as Indian Tamils or who were not sure of the two official terminology) outside the plantations as Sri Lankan Tamil. The proper tool for identification of Indian Tamils can be derived from the fact that all those Tamils who do not have any roots of origin in the north or eastern parts of Sri Lanka must be of people of recent India origin.

**Table 3- Population by ethnic group ('000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6,657.3</td>
<td>6,087.9</td>
<td>10,582.0</td>
<td>12,589.9</td>
<td>14,846.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low country Sinhalese</td>
<td>2,902.5</td>
<td>3,469.5</td>
<td>4,470.3</td>
<td>5,425.8</td>
<td>10,979.4*</td>
<td>13,815.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kandyan Sinhalese</td>
<td>1,718.0</td>
<td>2,147.2</td>
<td>3,042.6</td>
<td>3,705.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lankan Tamils</td>
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<td>884.7</td>
<td>1,164.7</td>
<td>1,424.0</td>
<td>1,886.9</td>
<td>730.2</td>
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<td>Indian Tamils</td>
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<td>974.1</td>
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<td>1,174.9</td>
<td>818.7</td>
<td>855.9</td>
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<td>Sri Lankan moors</td>
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<td>464.0</td>
<td>626.8</td>
<td>828.3</td>
<td>1,046.9</td>
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<td>Indian moors</td>
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<td>55.4</td>
<td>27.4</td>
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<td>Europeans</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Burghers and Euro Asians</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<td>Malays</td>
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<td>33.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veddahs</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
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<td>41.4</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
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</table>

* Excluding the districts in north and east
* Low country and Kandyan Sinhalese have been combined
** Included in others category

They had come to Sri Lanka either to work in the tea plantations or for trade and other purposes from time to time and later settled in Sri Lanka (Devaraj, P, 1985). By this it is reasonable to estimate the total percentage of the Indian Tamil population in Sri Lanka should be 7% that is widely accepted by scholars and professionals.
It is important to review briefly the history of the Upcountry Tamils before we study the political violence concerning them. In this chapter the historical perspectives of the Upcountry Tamils is browsed through looking at some aspects of violent incidents that has taken place. Attention is paid to the trade union activities that have taken place in the plantation areas causing disruption to life and property. Political violence affecting the Upcountry Tamils as also studied through the perspective of communal violence that has taken place in the Upcountry more prominently in the late 1980s and thereafter. This chapter also deals with TU action and communal violence in relation to the political aspects and attempts to identify the gap that this research document has studied.

2. Descendants from South Indian Communities

While an attempt is made to study the violence with political characteristics affecting the Indian Origin Population in the tea plantation areas in Sri Lanka, it is important to trace the origin of this particular community in brief.

Sri Lanka is separated from India with a thin strip of seawater of 33 kilometres called as ‘Palk Strait’ in the northwestern waters of Sri Lanka. On the Sri Lankan side it is the Gulf of Mannar and the Indian side it is Dhanushkodi in the Southeastern coastal area of Tamil Nadu. This thin strip of seawater has promoted the inflow of Indian immigrant labour force from time to time ending a large number of Indian labours in Sri Lanka at one point. First large-scale migration of Indian labour force was seen in the 19th century after the initiation of the Coffee plantation industry in Sri Lanka (Kodikara, 1991).
After abolition of the slavery in the British colonies elsewhere in the world in 1833 the labour force in those British colonies were hesitant to work in the coffee plantations (Nadesan, S 1993). This resulted in the expansion of the coffee plantations in Sri Lanka by the British colonial masters since there was an increase demand for Coffee. However the peasantry Sinhalese farmers were not prepared to work in difficult conditions in preparing the land for coffee plantations.

The first English planter to bring about the Indian labour was Governor Barnes. He used the term *cooie*\(^9\). They came to work in Barne’s own garden (Sabaratnam, T, 1990 and Nadesan, 1993). However Col. H.C. Byrde brought in the first group of *coolies*. The main source of supply of labour to the British held plantations in the world was from India’s the northeastern and southern region. The Northeastern region comprised the West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar and Southern region comprised the then Madras Presidency. The migration was facilitated from the ports of Calcutta and Madras. The labour force brought in to Sri Lanka was from South India through the ports in the Tamil Nadu. While the socially lower class (low caste) who were under extreme poverty was the main source of the labour supply, the somewhat higher caste people were facilitating the organisation of the transportation of the labour (from south India) force. The organisers were also on the move with the labours and later they settled in the plantations. The large scale demand for labour forced the planters to devise different schemes for the importation of labour from India.


\(^{10}\) A cooie is a term used to describe casual workers. This term was first used by British planters.
Until 1904 individuals facilitated the system. The planters together with the Government of Ceylon formed the Ceylon Labour Commission whose primary function was to recruit labour from India. The government directly dealing with the government of India facilitated the final phase of the recruitment in late 1923. To facilitate a smooth recruitment process in the initial stages the planters evolved a system, which was known as the Kangani system. This served twin system one recruitment and the other retention of the labour within the estate. The Kangani system was essentially patriarchal and took in to the consideration of immediate social and economic conditions of the labours in Indian soil.

The recruiting agent was the Kangani\(^\text{11}\). Under this system the Planters advanced money and sent a trusted worker with dominant personality the ‘Kangani’ to India. The Kangani went to his village and painted a rosy picture about the conditions here in Sri Lanka and terms and conditions of employment. This created a ‘liking’ to travel and work here. The Kangani also advanced money to clear the debts of the prospective labourers. The recruits were thus obliged to the Kangani by one way or other. Under the Kangani-system the workers were forced to be in the estate and was unable to leave the hazardous job they undertook for three main reasons. First they were heavily indebted to the Kangani and thereby to the estate, secondly they felt to oblige to the Kangani for providing an opportunity, which they though will better, thirdly no planter would employ a worker without reference being made to his previous employer. The Kangani too was obliged to his employer for the benefits and privileges he enjoyed in one estate. This system of chain slavery helped the planters to

\(^{11}\) Kangani is a Tamil term used to denote a person who supervises work
run the tea industry smoothly. This systematic recruitment of labour from India began in 1839 with 2432 labourers arriving in Ceylon that year.

The transportation of the labour force was facilitated mainly through two routes. The first was via Gulf of Mannar and other was from the port of Tuticorin to Colombo (see Map from History of Upcountry Tamils in Sri Lanka). In the first route served the most important part for the immigrants until the end of the 19th century. It was easily for the immigrants to come to Mandapam in Pasumpon district (then Ramanad district) of the then Madras presidency (now Tamil Nadu) because the native Indians were from nearby districts of Salem, Thiruchirapolly, Madurai, Ramanad and Thirunelveli (see map below). The port of landing was Pesalai from where the immigrants travelled through Medawachiya, Mihinthala and Dambulla to reach Kandy. The distance from Pesalai to Kandy was 156 miles.

It took average around 6 days for them to arrive at Kandy. The path was so dangerous that many died while taking their journey. But yet the immigration did not stop. The main reason for this would have been the extreme poverty situations in their own towns that pushed them to take hard decision (Thondaman, 1986 and Nadesan, 1993). The dry conditions and frequent crop failure pushed them to extreme poverty conditions in India. The second route was a more easy and fast. This route was from the port of Tuticorin to Colombo. The traders, house servants and horse-keepers and some estate workers on their way to Rakwana, Kolonna Korale and Morawak Korale coffee plantations mostly used this. After the opening of Railway from Madurai to Tuticorin in India this route was more opted by the immigrant labours too.
Map showing the migration route of Upcountry Tamils to Sri Lanka from India

SOUTH INDIAN DISTRICTS FROM WHICH LABOUR WAS RECRUITED FOR PLANTATIONS IN SRI LANKA

SOUTH INDIA

SRI LANKA

Major Labour Recruiting Districts
Minor Labour Recruiting Districts
Railways

Courtesy: D. Wesumperuma

Nadesan (1993)- History of upcountry Tamils in Sri Lanka
3. Evolution of Trade Unions in the Tea Plantations

In the Plantations the first people to organise themselves other than the Planters themselves were those who were occupying the intermediary positions between the employers and workers. The Estate Staff Association was formed in 1920 and All Ceylon Head Kangani’s Association in 1921 (Jayawardane, 1986). These associations generally enjoyed the patronage of the European Planters.

The Indian immigrant workers started to settle in the Sri Lankan during the period countries from later parts of 1920s. In 1929 there was a population of around 900,000 (Luddington quoted by Nadesan 1993) Indian immigrants in Sri Lanka. Only about 15% of the Indians revisited India in 1929 (also Devaraj, 1979). When they started to settle in one place in the tea plantations it was quite natural to see that they start to react to the environment. They started resisting oppression whenever they perceived it to be a kind of oppression that interferes in their daily life. However they were not organised to show their resistance.

The organisation of the estate workers had to wait until number of developments such as abolition of tundu system, minimum wage ordinance and granting of rights to vote etc. took place. The organisation of the labour depended on the changing needs of them, which were seen as essential needs for survival and to face oppression from different agencies (Jayawardane, 1986).

The labours in the plantations were first organised in the form of a trade union for the first time in 1931 (Jayawardane, 1986, Thondaman, 1986 and Nadesan, 1993). The trade union was called All Ceylon Estate Labour Federation established by K. Natesa
Aiyar a learned Brahmin from Tanjore District in South India. The estate workers however were faced with great barriers at every stage of their struggle to organise themselves. The estates were sacred territories not to be blemished by any intruder agitator. There was the “Protection or Produce Ordinance N0.38 of 1917” which prevented any intruder from entering the estate (Kader, 2002).

Ponnambalam Arunachalam was the first to highlight the plight of the Indian labour force in Sri Lanka in 1913 (Sabaratnam, 1990). He differed from his elder brother Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan who refereed the Indian labour force as ‘Tamil Estate Coolies’. Arunachalam launched a campaign against the Indian Labour Ordinance, which is said to be the cause of low wages paid to them and poor living conditions. Earlier ordinance were intended to keep the labourers tied in debt to the Kangani and the estate. However all these ordinance were not able to stop the labourers from leaving one estate to other together with Kangani transferring his group from one to other estate.

The planters developed an alternative system called the tin ticket system or the famous thundu system for recruitment of Indian immigrants. Under the Tin ticket system the labours were brought to Ragama from Mannar by train from where they were given the thundu (ticket) for employment in various estates. They were sent to their estates by train after they undertook to work in that estate and payback their debt. If they want to go to other estates their debts are transferred to that estate.

12 The British Indian Government Ordinance from 1841 to 1863 were intended to keep the laborer tied in debt to estate or Kangani.
13 Thundu is Tamil term for piece of paper.
14 Mannar is the coastal town in the northwest where the Indian labors land from ferries. It is the nearest point to Indian subcontinent. Ragama is a railway station 14 kms from Colombo.
The tin ticket system introduced a new type of servitude. There was great deal of opposition in India about the working conditions of the immigrant labour (Bastiampillai, 1991). The opposition of Indian organisation such as National Liberal Federation (1920) on the treatment given to the Indians here in Sri Lanka prompted the Indian government to recommend an investigation into the conditions of immigrant labour in Sri Lanka. This together with the public agitation in India put an end to Tundu system. The Thundu Prohibition Ordinance NO 43 of 1921 that freed the workers from burden of debts and prescribed (Sabaratnam, 1990 and Nadesan, 1993).

Later in 1925 due to the pressure from the Indian government the Ceylon government appointed a committee to conduct an inquiry into the family budget of the plantation workers. There were three line of budget drawn by the committee, upcountry tea plantation, mid country and low country tea plantations. The expenditure of the workers in the three categories of the plantations was different. The government’s move to fix up a minimum wage ordinance was met with great resistance from the planters. Despite the resistance the Government in 1927 enacted the Minimum Wages Ordinance. The Minimum Wages Ordinance came into effect on 1 January 1929 (Thondaman, 1994 and Jayawardane, 1986). On the same year the prices of tea in the world market fell drastically due to the economic crisis. The planters who opposed the minimum wages quickly passed on the burden of the economic crisis to the estate workers by applying a reduction in wage rates. It was during this time that the Trade Union of Natesa Aiyer launched in Hatton in 1931. It was named as All Ceylon Estate Labour Federation with its head quarters in Hatton. The union protested against the action of the planters. There was no reaction from the plantation management and the workers living condition deteriorated due to not been able meet
the basic needs. Aiyer's TU called for general strike. The union urged the workers to quit the estates en-mass and come to Hatton Railway station. The workers started pouring in to Hatton town. Unable to withstand the resistance the planters undertook not to further cut the wages of the workers. This was the first event to mobilize the estate workers to trade union action.

Natesa Aiyer's first active trade union work was through his association with A.E Goonesinghe (Jayawardane, 1986). During the harbour strike of 1927 lead by the Ceylon Labour Union of A.E Goonesinghe, Natesa Aiyer persuaded the Indian workers in the harbour not to work and raised the issue of the labours in the legislative council together with Goonesinghe. He joined the Ceylon Labour Union of A.E Goonesinghe and quickly raised its vice president. When Goonesinghe adopted an anti Indian stance Natesa Aiyer quit his labour union in 1928 and formed All Ceylon Estate Labour Federation in 1931, which was the first trade union for workers of Indian origin in the plantations. However the work of Natesa Aiyer was not successful in his trade union action because of his urban approach (Sabaratnam, 1990).

The setting for political and trade union was first evolved with the formation of Ceylon India Congress (CIC) (Nadesan, 1993). Two main reasons were behind the birth of CIC, one was termed as the 'Chetty Crisis' in which the Nattukottai Chettiyars who were mainly playing a middlemen role in lending money to the planters and businessmen lost their role in financial crisis with the Banking institutions. The second main reason was the raising anti-Indianism and there were many organisations working for the welfare of the Indian community at that time.
which thought that all should rope on the Indian labour because of its numerical strength. During this time Goonesinghe elected on a communal platform to the state council got the state council to pass a resolution to deport 15000 Indian Tamils (Bastiampillai, 1991). This incident shocked the Indian Tamil community. They decided to take the matter to India and Mahathma Gandhiji. Gandhiji in turn sent a special emissary (Thondaman, 1994). He was Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru had several meeting with D.S Senanayaka and others, which was of no use in getting the resolution revoked. Nehru advised the Indian Tamil community to unite under one banner to fight for their cause. With intense discussions and debate amongst the associations the Indian Tamil community decided to form the Ceylon Indian Congress. M.V.A. Laksmanan Chettiar was elected as the president and H.M. Desai and Aziz as join secretaries (Kader, 2002). Nehru also advised the committee to form district level committees in all major towns where the plantation workers lived. At this time the rising anti Indian campaign saw the effectuation of the deportation and around 800 government servants of Indian origin lost their jobs (Jayawardane, 1986). The Indian National Congress in India passed a resolution condemning the deportation. India introduced a ban on labour emigration to Lanka in 1939 (Sahadevan, 1995). This historic move prevented the Indians free movement and allowed the settlement of majority of the Indians in Sri Lanka.

The CIC was increasingly losing its initial enthusiasm. One of the main reasons for lost enthusiasm is that its office bearers all were traders and big businessmen who had close links with India. Its first President Lakshmanan Chettiar was a businessman who contested the state council elections in the Madras Presidency (Sahadevan, 1995). The

13 Nattukottai Chettiyar were migrants from Indian during 1920s played a middle men role of
office bearers had little interest in the tea plantation workers because they were not closely working with them. There was no one in the district level to organize and host the inaugural session. It is this time that Thondaman who was district chairman in Gampola volunteered to host the inaugural session of the CIC on the insistence of Ramanujam and Rajalingam two national level leaders of the CIC. Several delegates from Indian National Congress participated and applauded Thondaman for his organization skills (Sabaratnam, 1990).

The rising wave of Anti-Indianism and post inaugural session in Gampola saw large number of Indian labourers joining the CIC. CIC shifted its focus on Indian labourers in the estate. They took up labour issues with the plantation management. However the estate management took up the position that they cannot negotiate any labour issues with political parties (Kadar, 2002). This prompted the CIC to form Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union (CICLU) in September 1940 few days after the Gampola session. Thondaman was elected as its leader with Aziz as secretary. That was the first appearance of Thondaman in trade union. The CIC was changed in to Ceylon Democratic Congress. In later stages the growing personality clash between Thondaman and Aziz due to ideologies and power struggle within the CICLU lead to break of the union. The Thondaman faction formed the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) and Aziz faction formed the Democratic Workers Congress. Today there are many trade unions in the plantation, which are, broke away from above or have been formed in the successive years due to many reasons. The CWC and DWC were strong trade unions for long time with both of them united and divided at the turn of political events in the country.

borrowing from Banks and lending to planters and businessmen at higher interest rate until in 1925
4. Citizenship issue and the Upcountry Tamils

The first batch of emigrants from India to Sri Lanka, which was called Ceylon then, came in 1837. This was followed by successive batches until 1939, when the Government of India banned the movement of unskilled labour to Ceylon (Kodikara, 1991). In the 1920s, Franchise rights were based on a residence of six months and certain property qualifications. Due to mainly property qualifications, the total number of registered voters in Sri Lanka in 1924 was 204,997 or 4% of the total population of five million (Donoughmore Commission Report, 1928, p. 82). However, at the time of emigration, until 1947 there was no dispute as to the status of Indian immigrants since at that times India and Ceylon were parts of the British Empire. Therefore persons born and living in the territory of India and Ceylon had identical status.

It was under these circumstances that the Donoughmore Commission in its report of 1928 (p. 87) stated that "we have decided to recommend the adoption of manhood suffrage. On this basis according to the figures supplied to us, the possible voting strength of the electorate will be increased to 1,200,000. We desire however to make two reservations. In the first place we consider it very desirable that a qualification of five years residence in the Island (allowing the temporary absence not exceeding eight months in all during the five years period) should be introduced in order that the privilege of voting should be confined to those who have an abiding interest in the country or who may be regarded as permanently settled in the Island. This condition will be of particular importance in its application to the Indian immigrant population.

when their system collapsed.
Secondly, we consider that the registration of voters should not be compulsory or automatic but should be restricted to those who apply for it.

The Political leadership in Sri Lanka was very apprehensive about giving large numbers of Indians voting rights as recommended by the Donoughmore Commission in 1928 (Bastiampillai, 1995). It would be deleterious to the Kandyan Sinhalese who could lose the representation in the Parliament in the event of split in their votes. This would enable the Indian Tamils being returned as representatives of Kandyan Sinhalese constituencies or Indian estate Kanganies grouping the Indian vote in favour of the candidate of their choice, which would be left, oriented parties.

In 1940, the procedure on revision of the registers was altered in regard to the qualification of domicile of choice and instructions were given that no ‘one was to be registered who was not orally examined’. From 1940 onwards the figures of registration of these Indians declined and the number in 1943 amounted to about 168,000 (Nadesan, 1993 and Thondaman, 1994). Despite all tightening up procedures a substantial numbers have acquired the franchise in virtue of domicile.

Economic pressures brought on by the Depression of the 1930s exacerbated the issues relating to the presence of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka. Due to the gravity of the circumstances, the leadership in Sri Lanka wanted emigration restricted, to the extent of even replacing Indian labour with local labour (Sahadevan, 1995). The Colonial government on the other hand, wanted to retain them. These circumstances resulted in two conferences between Sri Lanka and India. The Indo-Ceylon Relations Exploratory Conference of November 1940 was inconclusive. This was followed by
the Indo-Ceylon Relations Conference of September 1941. The negotiations between
the two governments lead a Joint Report that was signed on 21st September 1941.
However the Central Legislative Assembly did not ratify this agreement, which lead
for rejection. The Sri Lankan attitude to the issue was greatly influenced by two
factors. Firstly, the economic depression of the 1930s caused severe unemployment,
and Indian labour was seen as competitors that deprived the indigenous labour of
gainful employment. Secondly, because of the transient nature of this Indian labour
between India and Sri Lanka, the question of domicile became a critical issue in order
to assure an "abiding interest" in the country and a desire to settle "permanently". The
Donoughmore Commission, the Soulbory Commission and even the Privy Council,
all recognised that commitment to domicile was directly relevant to issues of
Citizenship and Franchise.

The first parliamentary elections held under the Soulbory Constitution in 1947
confirmed the misgivings of the Sinhalese. The Indian Tamil vote enabled them to
secure seven seats in the House of Representatives in the Kandyyan districts, thus
depriving representation of the indigenous Sinhalese in these areas. Furthermore, their
vote enabled them to influence the election of seven to nine left-wing Sinhalese in
other electorates (Bastiampillai, 1995, Thondaman, 1994). The outcome of this
election revealed that the 5-year residency qualification for franchise that had existed
from 1931 worked to the advantage of the Indian Tamils at the expense of Sinhalese.
This disturbed the Sinhala politicians in the government. They made representations
to the Indian government. The Citizenship Act. of 1948 disfranchised large population
of Indian immigrant worker. Another blow to the Indian immigrant workers was the
Amendment Act. No. 48 of 1949, which stipulated that in order to vote in an election
for parliament one, should be a citizen of Sri Lanka. By this large number of Indian origins who were born in Sri Lanka lost their status or identity (Bastiampillai, 1995). The stateless question was discussed with India with the Sri Lankan position that all those who were not admitted as 'citizens' of Sri Lanka were Indians and it is India's responsibility to take them back. The position of the government of Sri Lanka put forward by Sir Kotelawala was not accepted by his counterpart in India thus creating a section of stateless population in Sri Lanka.

The Act of 1948 enabled Indian Tamils to claim Citizenship either on the grounds of descent or registration (Bastiampillai, 1991). It has been recognised that few could have claimed Citizenship by descent under the provisions of the Act of 1948. However, the Act of 1949 contained "less restrictive conditions for the grant of Ceylon citizenship to Indians than the earlier Act" (Sahadevan, 1995 and Bastiampillai, 1995).

These negotiations were followed by the Nehru-Kotelawala talks in which for the first time the question of "illicit-immigrants" was recognised as a part of the Indian Tamil problem, compounding the situation. Finally, negotiations between the two Prime Ministers, Mrs. Bandaranayake and Shastri of India brought this matter to a conclusion. The outcome was the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of October 1964 (Vamadevan, 1985, Bastiampillai, 1995), often referred to as the Sirima-Shastri Agreement. According to this agreement 525,000 Indians and their natural increase were to be repatriated to India; 300,000 and their natural increase were to be admitted to Sri Lankan citizenship; while the future of the remaining 150,000 was to be
considered at a later date. In 1965, India accepted 75,000 and Sri Lanka agreed that the balance 75,000 remain in the country.

The above agreement stipulated that the period of repatriation was 15 years. However there were delays in implementing the Act. when it comes to repatriation and the question of the balance population. After the widespread communal riots in 1983 the passenger ferry movement between India and Sri Lanka came to halt. The Ceylon Workers Congress also continuously took up the issue of 'statelessness' with the successive governments. It was during the period of 1988 the then President Ranasinghe Premadasa through an Act. in parliament stipulated that the Indian origin Tamils born in this country through an affidavit can perform all functions including the right to vote.

The UNF government through an Act. of parliament passed provided citizenship rights to all those who did not possess up to now thus ending 5 decade old problem concerning the Upcountry Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

5. Conclusion

The Upcountry Tamils who are descents from South Indians have arrived in this country more than 200 years ago. The British planters to work in the coffee plantations imported them first. After the breakdown of the coffee plantations and tea was identified as a potential crop. For this more labour force was required for which the easy and available source was from South India, which was also a familiar source for the British Planters. The thin strip of sea that separated India and Sri Lanka and easy movement between the two countries, which was politically governed by British
paved way for thousands of Indians to come and settle in the tea plantations. The Indian labour was a captive labour force provided with minimum accommodation and hard work and for very little wages. Their in-debt-ness did not allow them to resist the difficult environment in which they were living. It was in the 1930s that the first action to resist their near inconvenience took place after the Indian emigration act that prevented the labour movement between India and Sri Lanka and the Indians started settling in Sri Lanka. Thereafter the Upcountry Tamils of Indian origin started the trade union action, which gave way for reactive action against the oppression. Though these were not in very organised and large scale the trade union action has progressively changed the life of the estate workers. These changes are far below the desired level and the political action for their social, economical and political rights continue. This when met with continuous oppression has ended in clashes where the frustration has broke in to aggression. The communal violence has caused severe damaged to the economic and social development of the upcountry Tamil community. This has been a recurrent occurrence from the time of independence. All these violent incidents have caused severe damages to the economic growth of the community besides damaging the regional development. The conflict in the north and east has exacerbated the situation in the upcountry. The state operations to curb the conflict in the north east from splitting to the upcountry where the Upcountry Tamils live in majority has severely constrained the mobility of the youth thereby their own development.

The analysis of causes for the violent behavior has been lacking though the documentation on violence has provided quantitative information. This study attempt to bridge the gap found in the literature review. It is important to study the action of
trade union that has caused violent incidents and other violent incident that has caused severe disruption of normalcy. It is also important to look at the causes, as a reflection of the conflict in the north and east since the most affected population as a result of spill over effects of the conflict are the Upcountry Tamils. Therefore this study significantly addresses the need of the present time in looking at the causes of violent incidents from a political perspective at a time when there are numerous reported incidents of violence is taking place in the upcountry tea plantation areas.
Chapter 5
Growing Unrest in the Upcountry

1. Introduction

The violence with political perspectives in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamils has been described in this chapter. During the fieldwork lot of information pertaining to the study was collected. As described in the methodology this study is a qualitative analysis of the violent incidents that has some political characteristics. The information collected from the field indicated that the results could be discussed in three major headings viz 1, Trade Unions and its role in Political Violence, 2, Communal Violence in the Upcountry Tea Plantations, and 3, Violence as a reflection of the conflict in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The description and analysis presented in this chapter is based on the above three main categories.

2. Trade Unions and their role in the political violence

The violence in the tea plantation areas is very much characterised by the trade union action. Their role in the tea plantations is seen as highly influential when it comes to economic, social, cultural and political life. Before we look in to aspects of trade unions and political violence it is important to see the trade unions and its activities in the estates in today’s context.

2.1. Trade unions in the Tea plantations

Trade Unions play an integral part in the life of an estate worker. The Trade Unions (TU) involves itself in every aspect of the life of an estate worker and his family. The
main economic activity in the tea plantation areas is the employment in the tea estate, which constitute the field and factory work. The trade unionism influences estate residents right from getting registered to work in the field or factory to all other social and cultural activities.

There are 156 TUs registered in the plantation and Agriculture sector in Sri Lanka and out of them the preponderant majority are in the plantation sector. Presently there are about 57 TUs functioning in the plantation sector. Out of these TUs only two of the prominent TUs namely the CWC and the LJEWU has a membership over 50,000. Two unions have more than 10,000 members; three have more than 5000 members, nine have over 3000 and seven over 500 membership. The LJEWU is the predecessor of All Ceylon Estate Workers Union (ACEWU). The ACEWU was a left oriented TU with its heads were from a left party namely the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP). N.M. Perera was the president in 1939. Their activities mostly combined with the other TUs existed in the country. It first remained as working on ad-hoc basis until a militant leadership with revolutionary ideas was brought in the year 1939 by its then president N.M Perera. This was the era when the revolt action first appeared amongst the Upcountry Tamils workers. The Mooloya incident as explained in the preceding chapter (see also box 1) is one of the finest examples. This TU had serious set backs with the ban on the LSSP and split in it in 1940s. The more powerful TU there after was the CICLU. The CICLU was founded by the CIC. The CIC formed the CICLU as the TU to work for the upcountry Indian origin Tamils. The CICLU was a better choice of the estate workers of Indian origin than the ACEWU for two main reasons. One is because the ACEWU did not sustain progressively after the ban of LSSP and the other is that the leaderships were not inclined to the Indian Tamil Community.
The CICLU was lead by the CIC who were of Indians or Indian origins. It right from the formation accepted to raise the voice of the plantation workers of Indian origin thus belonged only to the Indian community. This ideology increased the membership of the TU. It went on the first biggest campaign against the disenfranchisement of estate workers in 1948 but failed to produce any results. The issue of citizenship sustained as one of the major issues until recently. At the 1950 convention in Matale the CICLU was renamed as Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC). The term 'Indian' was dropped from the name identifying them as Ceylonese because it was thought as a negative point in claiming for the citizenship. Due to the personality clash between the two prominent leaders in the CWC, Aziz and Thondaman, Aziz broke away from the TU and formed Democratic Workers Congress (DWC). This was the first major split in the TUs in the plantation sector, which marked the beginning of the intransigent culture within TU of the Upcountry Tamils. It can be said that until the demise of both Aziz and Thondaman remained as leaders of DWC and CWC respectively. Until today the CWC remains the largest TU within the tea plantation sector. TU in active politics also came in to existence with the emergence of the electoral politics in the country. Though considerable amount of the population was made stateless and thereby losing voting rights the Upcountry Tamils still had the strength to send representatives to parliament. However, the disunity within the community caused much difficulty in getting their members elected in the desired numbers.

The intransigent TU culture sustained creating factions and splits in the CWC and in other TUs as well. The major split in CWC was in the 1950s and later in the year 1987s. The split in 1950s occurred with the formation of DWC by Aziz and later in
the year 1987 it was prompted by a youth leader Periyasamy Chandrasekeran with the formation of the Upcountry People Front. Unable to withstand the monopoly of its leaders and also a more uprisng kind of politics advocated by Chandrasekeran led to the split. The youth of the upcountry at that time no longer believed in the traditional non-violent Gandhian style of politics was the best way to address their issues and needs. The radical approach by Chandrasekeran created a big boom in the initial stages of the launch of his UPF.

(i) Trade Unionism in the estate

In order to explain the activities of TU, it is important to look at the structure of a TU in the plantation sector. Since the CWC is the largest TU within the plantations, the structure of the CWC is described here. In the estate the trade union has a committee headed by a chairman who is called as Thalaiwar. Each trade union will have its own Thalaiwar in the estate. The Thalaiwar is the key person who leads every activity of that TU in the estate. Eventually he is the head of all those men and women members of that TU. He is not only an advisor on employment related matters but also on all family and common matters in the estate. The Thalaiwar is the link between the estate management and the workers. He may go beyond his role as the link between management to the outside world involving all matters pertaining to welfare of the estate worker family.

16 Thalaiwar is a Tamil term denoting a head man of a group of members or an organization or a party.
This important role the Thalaiwar assumes not only make the worker families dependent on him but also bluntly follow what ever the Thalaiwar thinks is suitable for the worker families. Such is the influence of the TU on the families of the estate workers.
TUs survive with the monthly subscription of the estate worker. The number of members under his jurisdiction assesses the strength of a Thalaiwar. Therefore increasing the number of members in his TU is the primary priority of the estate Thalaiwar since it alone brings funds for the TU for which the Thalaiwar is given an incentive. When considering the role of TU it is evident that it plays a very important role in the social, economic and cultural life of the worker. This role also prominent in the clashes what ever may be the reason that leads to political violence. Any clash between two individuals end up with TU or political party rivalry if these two individuals belong to two different parties. This is explained later in this chapter.

(ii) Politics of the Trade Unions

The TU also assumes the role of a political party when it comes to politics of the Upcountry Tamils. Here representation in the legislature is an important factor to be power full player that can influence the development of the Upcountry Tamils. Therefore increasing the number of representations in the political bodies is of priority when it comes to electoral politics.

The TUs in the tea plantations entered in to the politics since and before independence. CIC though was not a trade union but worked for the Indian community in Sri Lanka in general. The political victory of the CIC was mainly due to their membership of the Upcountry estate workers. Its strength first was manifested in the elections to the state council in 1947. It had seven members elected from the Kandyan constituency in the pre independence era. The Ceylon Indian Congress grew in its membership after having expanded to areas of the Upcountry

17 Administrative Secretary is in charge of all administrative matters of the TU and is a paid staff.
Tamils of Indian origin. This first happened after the inaugural session in Gampola. Large number of estate workers joined the CIC after the Gampola session. The prevailing anti Indian climate in the country at that time and particularly among the other TUs further prompted large number of Indian workers getting themselves together. The CIC was renamed as Ceylon Democratic Congress as a political unit and created Ceylon Indian Congress Labour Union (CICLU) as the TU. The heads of the both organisations was the same person. In the later years the CICLU was renamed as the CWC. The CWC remained the largest Trade Union cum political organisation of the Upcountry Tamil community. All the political activities of the Upcountry Tamil politicians were based on the Trade Unionism in the plantations. Except for a few no steady political ideologies were advocated by the TU politics in the plantations that are working for the betterment of the plantation workers. All of them were working for the uplifting the life of the estate workers. Principally they were working with one of the two main political parties that existed in the country. The politics of these two major political parties (UNP and SLFP) was such that they were reluctant to grant political franchise in the country fearing losing their own representatives when it comes to elections. Thus they either failed to recognise the legitimate rights of the upcountry Tamils or delayed in solving the problems. The Sirima-Shastri agreement in 1964\(^\text{18}\) alienated the left wing TUs from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. The left wing parties opposed the arbitrary move of the government in dealing with a human problem. The CWC, the representative organisation of the Upcountry Tamils was not consulted. The CWC had a nominated member in the parliament, which supported the government. Since the agreement they acted against the then government by withdrawing its support in the

\(^{18}\) Shrima-Shastri Agreement was signed by the Prime Ministers of Ceylon and India in 1964. It said
parliament. At The time of passing the press bill introduced by the SLFP government in 1964 Thondaman abstained from voting in the parliament, which saw the downfall of the government later that year (Thondaman, 1996). The politics of the TUs in the plantations was that it supported the government being within the government on case by case. The TUs of Upcountry Tamils placed the condition of uplifting the life of the Upcountry Tamil community more than their political rights. Though Citizenship issues were given priority the socio economic upliftment was one of the priority conditions that was laid down by the Upcountry politicians to support any government. During this process of getting the rights for the Upcountry Tamils all the TU political units advocated a non-violent 'Gandhian' principal. The leader of the biggest TU late Thondaman advocated this principal openly in fighting their rights.

2.2. Trade Unionism and Violence in the tea plantation areas

(i) Interpersonal clashes and influence of TU

In an estate the clashes are common between individual workers on issues among others the following;

a) Land disputes  
b) Water disputes  
c) Drainage system that leads others premises  
d) Personal rivalries involving two individual which has a history running to previous generation etc.

that India will accept out of the 900,000 Indians in Sri Lanka, 550,000 and Sri Lanka will give citizenship for 350,000 and the remaining 150,000 will be decided on later date.
These clashes are usually reported to the Thalaiwar and he attempts to solve the issue by himself failing which they are reported to the management or police depending upon the intensity of the problem. It is very easily solved when these two individuals are from one party or TU. The differences crop up when they are from two different TUs. It so happened when two individuals report to two different TUs often end up in the Police stations. The TU representatives according to Mani and Ganesh (two of the respondents) speak for their members in the Police Station. The issues are generally blown out of proportion by the power full TU and Police take very often the side of the men who is backed by local level powerful political leaders. On returning to the estate these small fights in such a situation may take a big event that will see injuries and damages to persons and properties.

Aggressive behaviour is not apart from social conditions that are prevailing in the environment. However aggressive behaviour does not necessarily lead to violent behaviour. The social influences are likely to make the individual aggressive and violent (Walder and Lefkowitz 1971, quoted in Jenifer and Laster, 1997). When the individual assumes social role that gives them powers, they may act violently. The Thalaiwar carries out the social functions in the estate. In general the Thalaiwar mediates any dispute between individuals and he attempts to solve the problem. If it is not solved the Thalaiwar takes it to the police station on behalf of the individual who brings complains to him. At the police station the complaint is more often entertained as an issue of the TU rather than an individual complain. The Thalaiwar does the 'link function' because of many reasons. He assumes the role of a local leader, he is able to converse in the language spoken commonly in the police stations, and the workers think that it is the duty of the TU in which they belong to solve all their problems.
Therefore the Thalaiwar has multiple functions and he intervenes in all the social and cultural issues besides his TU activities. The leadership position he takes up makes him indisputable person in that small group of people. Similarly there are other Thalaiwars of other TUs in that estate. The stronger TU is always leading the estate. When the Thalaiwar's verdict is contested than there is likelihood of verbal clashes that at times lead to minor clashes. This happens when the two men are from different trade unions.

It has been observed in the interviews that the respondents from the estate background reported that the clashes starts with a quarrel between two, which later usually blow up to party or TU violence. The political leaders are taking advantage of the situation and influence their men to instigate violence causing damage to the property of the estate or other party in conflict. Establishing dominance over the other TU is seen more often the reasons for instigating violent action over the other.

The individual fight when not solved at the local level genuinely may leads to greater tensions and violence, which causes very much damage to individuals and properties. The concerned parties feel threatened over the other and think that are not accepted they resort to protective aggressive behaviour. This may provoke them for a violent retaliation. This is explained by incidents that have taken place in an estate 15 kms away from Nuwara Eliya. This estate is famous for potato cultivation in Nuwara Eliya. Mani explains the incident in which he was first a victim and later turned aggressive and retaliated fighting his cause. Mani aged 32 does not work anywhere now. He is a 'trouble maker' according to the police in Nuwara Eliya. Mani says the police are after him after this particular clash (explained here), which took place 5
years before. Anything that happens in the estate now, the police first question him. He has been remanded in Nuwara Eliya and Badulla.

He explains his case as follows;

There was a dispute over a land (land used for cultivation) between me and another person of this estate. We went to police. But we lost; because of the political pressure the police favoured the other party. We also got in to groups to take revenge. Then there was a small clash. The police again favoured the other party. Because of this the incident blew up. Houses were burnt. About 6 families displaced. Some hospitalised, vegetable gardens were destroyed. Weapons – knives, sticks, mammoties were in use.

There were about 100 from both sides involved in the incident.

If the police were not impartial this wouldn’t have happened. They were listening to the local MPs from powerful trade unions. Then we also got hold of the other political parties, which are in rivalry to them. The politicians also used this opportunity to show their dominance. Both parties clash each other. Tensions prevailed for about 2 months. After this incident I was given the title ‘Chandiya’. Police while interrogating asked whether I have connections with LTTE. They want to exaggerate incidents like this and harass youth.

Ganesh who is from the same estate explains his experience. Ganesh is member of the Pradeshiya Sabha who is also the leader of the estate. He represents a TU prominent in this estate.
Ganesh explains in short about his experience

During salary days, people tend to consume more alcohol. During these days small quarrels take place. Some in order to take revenge make these small quarrels bigger and bring in political influences at police stations. Police also favour the stronger TU. This also turns in to bigger clashes. The political leaders who are also the TU leaders use the opportunities when there are minor clashes in favour of them and create bigger conflicts. This give rise to clashes very often. The political leaders at local and middle level try to establish their dominance over the other through fights.

The incidents at local level when not solved genuinely lead to clashes at macro level, which are purely political. The causes of the clashes at macro level may be merely to establish political dominance or to demonstrate the strength of that political party. However one could see the relationship between the micro level and macro level linkages in the violent clashes.

In the plantation areas clashes between groups may be severe but generally do not go to the extent of killing others. It is rarely that these clashes end up in killings. But the damages to the property of others are seen very often. In the case of the Mani the damage is very severe. The total land used for cultivation was damaged and the houses were burnt. This incident though started with just two individuals has taken a turn to political clashes. The two major TUs in the Plantations ie CWC and UPF are seen as often in a very much rivalry position. In this estate during election times the tensions are often very great. The Nuwara Eliya Police officer confirmed this
situation. The rivalry arising out of individual differences persist. Whenever there are political differences these personal rivalries crop up and they are used to take revenge.

This situation is explained by Ganesh and Bala both are Pradeshiya Sabha members but from different parties.

Ganesh says the following:

There are different political groups in the divisions. They tend to clash with other for simple and small reasons. This turn in to political clashes because they belong to different political groups and when they go to the police, the police favour the stronger groups. They are pressurised to do so by the hierarchy of the party. This produce revenge and other groups wait for an opportunity to attack. When an opportunity arises then they attack injuring or damaging.

Bala a member of the Pradeshiya Sabha belonging to a powerful trade union says that the violence indicates the superiority over the others. He explains as follows;

They are involved in violence during the election time to show the superiority over the other party or group. If we involved in this kind of action only others think that we are strong. If not they will think that we are afraid and will not respect us. Our political strength should bring victory to us. It only can get things done for our community.

The membership drives in the Tea plantations take place every six months. The members of one TU are allowed to change or remain in the same union once in 6
months. During this period the local Thalaiwar of a TU has to work to get maximum number of members to his TU without losing their existing members. Rival TUs give lot of promises to the estate residents to get them registered in their TU. This provokes verbal clashes, which leads to violence. The dominant TU in that estate usually are the winners since their numbers are more and they threaten to disrupt the estate activities if they do not get the support of the management.

Ganesh 40 years of age a Pradeshiya Sabha member belonging to Upcountry Peoples Front (UPF) living in the estate closer to Nuwara Eliya has this to say;

In estates about 80% of the violent incidents are due to TU action. Once in every 6 months the workers can decide whether to change their membership from one TU to other. Generally the workers also try to change their TU to get the benefits from the other union. Not all do this but some try to change their membership very often to get the benefits of other TU. When the local leaders try to prevent this then the violent incidents occur. The management when they take one side supporting a TU in the event of a small clash between two individuals for TU reasons, then these small clashes becomes big. Here it splits around two trade unions giving rise to bigger conflicts.

Ganesh lives in the estate and is considered as the leader of the area. The Nuwara Eliya police confirmed that Ganesh is one of the key persons who advise the workers whether to go for fight or remain calm to solve thing amicably. Ganesh being a politician himself says that whatever small the clashes are the politicians use these for their benefit to make it bigger and take revenge on the other party men.

In his words he says;
The political leaders who are also the TU leaders use the opportunities when there are minor clashes, in favour of them and create bigger conflicts. This give rise to clashes very often. The political leaders at local and middle level try to establish their dominance over the other through fights.

The TU membership problem and clashes between two individuals that goes out of proportion are fundamentally the micro level issues of violence. In the tea plantations it is not dealt in detailed the link between the causes of violence at micro level and its link at macro level. In the upcountry in the tea plantation areas the clashes at individual level are manifold. When we look at the clashes with political characteristics as we have seen in the preceding paragraphs, the individual clashes can be considered as at micro level. One of the causes is that to overcome the barriers of one’s economic activity and satisfy basic needs of him and his family, he tends to fulfil the needs at whatever the cost. This situation leads for aggressiveness. When it becomes difficult he is depressed and the aggressiveness is spontaneous. Mani's case is a finest example. It is simply to cater to his economic and family needs. However when we take at the macro level the causes are not similar though it has erupted from the micro level. It is assumed that there is dialectic between the micro level and macro social linkages and posits a relationship between different forms of violence that occur at the interpersonal, collective and global levels. Here there is a clear link between the clashes at micro level to the macro level. The clashes at micro level lead the way to the macro level but to blow out of proportions the causes are different. At the macro level it is the expression or demonstration of dominance of one party over the other has been the major cause.
Violence often tends to be organised around social cleavages or categories of race, ethnicity, gender and or any group (Uyangoda, 1997). Those who have power often use the violence as a means to sustain that power and privilege over the less powerful ones. The dominance of the powerful trade union has been expressed. The interpersonal clashes between two individuals have been expressed later between two TUs when the incident is not properly investigated and settled amicably. The domination of the TU action is evident in all forms of clashes that are generally taking place in the estate.

Bala explains this case clearly. He is a member of the Pradeshiya Sabha.

They are involved in violence during the election time to show the superiority over the other party or group. If we involved in this kind of action only others think that we are strong. If not they will think that we are afraid and will not respect us. Our political strength should bring victory to us. It only can get things done for our community.

A youth member aged 32 from Agarapatana town belonging to a powerful TU but did not want to disclose his identity said;

The TU is the primary cause for the violent incidents in these areas. Their approach is that causes violence. They try to dominate all others in every aspect. Ego is the main reason. There was a time when the two main leaders joined together to contest the election. During that time there was no violence.

The clashes with members involving TU are often mishandled by the police taking the side of powerful TU or the side of the management leaving the poor often the victims
in misery. These acts in the plantation areas as often lead to frustration among the members of the community. The law enforcement authorities working for the powerful is not an incident in the recent times. It has happened in the plantation areas even in 1940s. A classic example is the incident that was reported by Nadesan S. the workers have been suppressed by the action of police and in some instances used force failing which have killed workers protesting against the oppressive management.

One such incident was the Mooloya estate shooting. “Well before 5 months of this incident a general strike of the workers in Kotiyagala estate was undertaken when the management refused to grant permission to form society for workers to whose object was to prevent the use of alcoholic liquor and gambling. The superintendent threatened the workers to use force but failed to stop the striking workers. The labour department in favour of the workers later settled it. This agitation of the workers and their landmark victory shocked the Planters Island wide. The rising tide of revolt against subservience was better understood by the circular of the Inspector General of Police at that time, P.N. Banks asking his subordinates to follow a policy to arrest this rising politically minded labour unrest. The ASP in the Central Province Robinson described this as ‘strike fever’. His standing shooting orders, which inspector Suraweera against the unarmed estate worker named Govindan promptly used, killed him instantly. This killing sparked political controversy. In this estate of Mooloya the workers were striking to get their wages increased”.

The social forces also shape violent behaviour (Turpin and Kurtz, 1997). This is seen in the tea plantation areas as well. Social order governs the behaviour of the
individual besides biological and physiological functions. In the tea plantations the social status of the Upcountry Tamils and its social structure play an important role in shaping the behaviour. From the time of the arrival of this community they have been subjected to heavy oppression and servitude by all forms of social and administrative institutions (Weeramunda, 2001). The Upcountry Tamil workers of tea plantations were under an authoritarian control under the British planters. The trend continued with after the Nationalisation. It is important here to look at briefly the life of an estate workers family (described in box 1). It is more of a monotonous hard life that the Upcountry Tamils in the tea plantations have lived. The education and health improved considerable of late 1990s (Plantation Support Group 2001). However isolation and secluded life with no social activities may lead to depressed nature of the inhabitants in the tea plantations.

**Box 1 - Life of an estate worker family**

In the estate both men and women perform the economic activity. In a tea plantation, there are two forms of functions. First is the work in the field and the other is the work in the tea factory. Work in the field is of two types plucking of tealeaves and other field functions like pruning, weeding, and preparation of beds and bunds. In the tea factory it is the manufacturing process. Women do the activity of tea plucking. It is one of the main functions in a tea estate.

The female worker gets up early in the morning at about 4.00 a.m. to attend to her daily domestic chores. She prepares food for the family, prepares the children to go to school cleans up the house etc. Finally she gets ready to go work at around 7.00 is. The women workers report to work at 7.30 a.m. from where they are allocated to different fields for plucking by the field officer. She is given a break at about 9.30 am. To have tea. She comes back home for lunch at about 12.30 and returns back to work at 1.30 p.m. She comes back home in the evening at about 5.00 or 5.30pm depending upon the distance from the field to her home. Upon returning home she gets to her usual household chores of preparing dinner, fetching water, cleaning house and washing her children. Her evening chores runs even up to 9.00 p.m. or 10.00 p.m. that includes serving dinner for the family and cleaning all the kitchen items.

The men report to work at around 6.30- 7.00 am. They are allocated different fields for pruning, weeding or any other field level work. For the men it is the task that they have to complete and there is not time bound. Some men finish their work early and return home. Those men who have vegetable plots work in their vegetable gardens if not others keep idle. However very few of the men help in household chores.
Natesa Aiyer did the first mass scale mobilisation of the estate youth during the first strike in Hatton areas. Workers vacated in large numbers in protest against not providing minimum wages (Jayawardane, 1986). They assembled in large numbers at the Hatton Railway station threatening total disruption of the plantation industry. This militant act however did not erupt in to violent action. The importance here is uprising was shaped by the social conditions that prevailed. When people were unable to win over their needs and feel oppressed they tend to be aggressive. In order to gain their basic needs through an enhanced wage the workers had to resort to mass scale action disrupting the normal functioning of the industry and their life as well.

The suppression of the estate workers by the planters and their agents Kanganies continued even after the British planters left (Jayawardane, 1986). Later during the decades 1970s after Nationalisation, the role of Kanganies changed drastically and they were reduced to mere field supervisors. The system changed with the appointment of Field Officers. Thalaiwars of TUs later took to the role of Kanganies at the estate level. It was easy during the time when one trade union dominated the Tea Plantation industry. The task became difficult when more TUs came in to the action. It is the Thalaiwar of the TUs who has assumed the role of leader of the community. For this purpose he maintains a membership in his division or set of line rooms¹⁹. The Thalaiwar as said earlier assumes the important role in the plantations, though his authority is increasingly reducing with the younger generation more often did not accepted him as a leader. However the Thalaiwar is still an important person in the estate with regard to TU and politics. His role goes beyond the issues of TU and working conditions to housing and social life that are still linked to the estate
management. This link is made through the *Thalaiwar*. As such all the employed persons are obliged to go through the *Thalaiwar* of his TU. Here the *Thalaiwar* exerts some pressure on the life of the estate workers. He acts as the representative of the workers in his division. The power he has depends on the membership in his TU. Therefore the *Thalaiwar* work towards increasing his membership. *Thalaiwar*'s role is also suppressive but the degree of suppression varies from his predecessor *Kangani*. Thalaiwar in his link role between his men and outside often use his TU hierarchy to solve local level problems. It is a prestige issue if his problems are not solved in favour of his clientele. At this point of time the TUs uses their political influence over the what ever the business that is in need to be solved.

A Regional Representative of a prominent TU in Thalawakele –Lindualla areas describes how violent incidents are provoked.

In my areas I have to solve day today problems of the workers, which are with the management or otherwise. We have to go to the police when there is fight between two individuals or two trade union people. We do what ever the needs of the workers that are connected with the law enforcement, administrative affairs etc. More problems are with the police when there are problems in the estate either with management or problems between two or more individual workers involving two different Trade Unions. People are always dependent on TUs for their day today affairs other than their domestic needs. The main reason here is the language issue. Lack of proper knowledge in other

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19 Line room is the term given for the quarters of the estate workers which is one room with a small verandah used as kitchen
languages other than Tamil makes them heavily dependent on TUs. When there is a fight between two individuals and when they are taken by the Police people come to us for their rescue. When we go there eventually it becomes an issue between TUs. It becomes so that the powerful TUs wins the race. The police will always listen to the powerful man. The people also take advantage of this situation. They think that their TU leaders will take care of them whatever the problem that they fall in to. When there is problem of small incident occurring in one area, if the police is brought in to the scene then it becomes a greater problem. As I said earlier police do not act impartial. So the people who are at the receiving end get agitated over the issue and they are often becoming aggressive and violent.

Social responsibilities submit to exert the authority for control or smooth running of the system in which the society is embedded. When this authority assumes the role of head or control of resources and persons more often tend commit unjust acts (Milgram, 1974 quoted by Jenifer, 1997). TU representatives assume the role of the head of his people. This role he plays may as according the above theory tends to submit to his authority to commit acts of unjust to make things in favour of his men. This instinct often provokes a violent behaviour. The reaction from other TU on being suppressed creates a clash. Mani's case can be considered as a fine example. The authority of the major trade union has made the police to go against the victim Mani. His reaction to the unjust that created a situation where his strive to fulfil the needs of him and his family is prevented a clash occurred by which the rivalry sustained for long time.
When it comes to action of TU, its nearest perceived rival is the estate management. The TU action though is generally related to employment issues, in the tea plantation areas it is everything that encompasses social, cultural and politics of the upcountry Tamils. Therefore any action of the TU other than local level issues of day today work in the estate, can be considered more a political action. This is the case when it comes to TU action within or outside the estate. The first raising wave against the suppressive employers was in early 1940s. The estate workers went on agitation for emphasising their right to form a trade union and demand an increase in their basic wage (see also box 2 for full story).

Box 2 - Mooloya Estate Strike
The Mooloya estate is situated in Hewaheta in the Kandy district about 30 miles away from Kandy. The Mooloya strike marked the beginning of an era of the Trade Unionism in the plantation sector. The strike took place even before the CIC was formed in 1940. Mooloya incident provided a background for the growing consciousness of the estate workers to form in to trade unions. ACEWU was trying to organize their trade union activities and later demand wage increase. The overwhelming majority of the workers on the estate were of Indian Tamils but there were also a number of Singhalese workers. Over 1400 workers asserted their form their trade union in the estate and demand a wage increase. A teacher in the estate named Jeganathan organized the strike. He was an active member of the LSSP. Angered by the teacher's action the proprietor of the estate W.E. Sparling ordered Jeganathan to quit his estate line room. The workers protested the action of the Superintendent and went on strike. The police also arrested a trade union Secretary Velusamy for tress passing and inciting strike, which provoked a full-scale strike by the workers of the estate.

The LSSP leaders supported the striking workers, which drew sharp criticism from the state council member Abeygunawardane. He helped the police to control the strike. The police taking advantage of the situation went to estate in large numbers with heavily armed. The reaction to the workers to the three pronged attack from the planter, police and the state was indeed one of defiance. They refuse to budge with the estate management. When all other attempts to control the strike failed, the police went to the estate. In the name of control and self-defence a police officer named D.G. Suraweera shot at an unarmed crowed of workers killing Govindan instantly.
The strike was with the support of the then left wing political party Lanka Sama Samaja Party. Though the issue is merely between the employees and the management, it was considered as rising left wing politics in the plantations. The action promoted the police to take the extreme step that led to the shooting of an unarmed estate worker.

As pointed out earlier the main economic activity in the tea plantation areas is the work in the tea estate. The majority of the Upcountry Tamils work in the tea estates. When there is a problem related to the tea industry the life of the estate worker gets affected. Anything to do with the tea industry be it globally or locally, with the production of the tea or marketing and to management problems, it affects the life of the tea plantation worker to greater extent. If the global market for tea is affected the wage of the estate worker get affected, if there is a severe drought, the number of days that the estate worker gets to work is reduced thereby reducing their income. The management too resorts to diversification of the crop when some of the tea fields do not provide better harvest. This reduces the employment of the workers. All these leads to the frustration of the worker population leading to aggressive behaviour at times of provocations on small events. When there are no options available to them for earning a living the frustration crops often exhibiting aggression. A Police Officer of in-charge of a police station near to Nuwara Eliya points out that lack of economic opportunities provides for frustration that leads for the people to become violent at times.
The officer in his words explains as follows.

The main reason for such violent behaviour is that the estate residents do not have enough livelihood opportunities or economic activities. So they are totally depended on the estate wages and this is not enough. The estate management also cannot provide jobs and they cannot find jobs in the nearby town or elsewhere since they do not possess a good education. So that they are aggressive to get their things done.

During the time that estate Tamil youth were apprehended in Colombo and other areas on suspicious of being LTTE cadres, a considerable number of the youth returned to the estate for safety. Those who arrested and released after some months too were unable to continue in the place where they were employed. These youth on return to the estate found no employment. Some of them started cultivation but the land was limited. They uproot the tea plants and encroach the tea land. This also provided to conflicts between the management and the workers. On such occasions the TU intervene for the youth. During such times often clashes between the workers and the estate management.

Ganesh describes this as follows;

In these areas uprooting the tea plants and transforming them to vegetable gardens is done to make quick money. The people in the estate do this. About 1500 are unemployed and they are doing vegetable cultivation. For this they also slowly encroach tea lands to expand their activities. More often during such acts detected clashes between the management and people erupt. These also turn in to political clashes when TU leaders interfere.
A youth worker from Agarapatana aged 27 who did not want to identify himself by name said the following:

The workers have the right to know what is happening in the estate when especially there is a change in planting system and with regard to the changes in management system. When the management does not inform the workers about major changes the workers can question. When this happen then the management sometimes is rude and does not answer the queries. This creates problems and workers start agitating. Their agitation goes beyond peaceful means for violence damaging the estate property. This is also done under provocations and under the influence of alcohol.

There are times that the things are solved negotiating with the management. However when the management is adamant and does not negotiate then there is always a chance of violence. The thugerism is often practised by other TUs when trying to talk to management. When one TU wanted to talk and sort out a problem with the management, which is affecting all the workers, then the other wanted to involve in violence and disrupt the whole process.

(iii) TU action against the government

Struggle for wage increase has always been a contentious issue for Upcountry Tamils working in the tea plantations. From the formation of the first trade union in 1939 to till date wage increase has been a contentious issue for the TU in this sector. It has been a practice of the plantation management to consider a wage increase only after some type of strikes or agitation causing substantial damage has been made to the industry (Thondaman, 1996). However no major violent actions has been undertaken by the TU for simply demanding increase of wage. There have been incidents of
violence in the initial stages for oppressive acts of the management and then governments when the issue of wage increase is taken. Mooloya shooting can be considered one of them. The CWC, which advocated non-violent principal at-least when the issue of citizenship and wage increase is taken, disrupt the total industry by mass scale strikes. During such strikes the normal life of the estate worker was greatly affected but no major damages to the estate management or the government was caused. During such agitation reports indicated that the workers were aggressive and were violent within the estate by damaging some properties of the estate management like destroying water supply lines, electrical lines, destroying the weighing shed, preventing smooth passage by cutting down branches of big trees.

(iv) TU politics and electoral violence

Electoral violence as in any other parts of the country was common in the tea plantation areas. However, it is noted that the intensity of the election related violent acts are very much minimal when compared to other parts of the country after the 1970s. The election-related violence has been between the major TU in the estates and also between some major political parties. It is during the election campaigns that these violent actions are seen. Post election violence has not been a major scenario in the tea plantation areas. Thus revenge taking in the form of violent actions is not a common incident as seen in some other parts of the country. It is simply to demonstrate the dominance over the other TU political faction that these party workers engage in during the elections. The preferential voting system is not a major cause that leads to violence in the tea plantation areas. Sri Lanka has become a society where a culture of violence is being entrenched not because of the people want it, but because the politicians who the people themselves have elected on a number of
occasion perceive it as a primary means of governance (Uyangoda, 1997). It is clear that the violence is perceived as a better way to express dominance over the other to larger population to gain electoral victory.

Sakthi a leader of local body belonging to prominent Trade Union living close to Lindulla points out that the electoral violence though not severe as in the other parts of the country the acts of violence have caused damages to other party offices and properties. A Regional Representative of a TU in Thalawakele area describes how violence crops up during pre election periods.

Sakthi says this;

In the upcountry people wanted to live in peace. But there are certain elements that provoke violence. When we look at electoral violence in other areas, we could see bombs, shooting and attack on candidates sometimes killing them. We don’t see such incidents here in the upcountry.

In 1994 during the elections the CWC and UPF and all the parties contested the elections in the upcountry. The two major political parties always wanted to keep the division in the plantations and carryout their political parties. Here with this division there has been always violence to the tune of damaging other parties’ office premises, vehicles and causing injuries. During election in Keledonia booth we witnessed a scene. Suddenly around 25 vehicles belonging to the supporters’ of a powerful Minister from Nuwara Eliya district came in and said they have come to protect the ballot boxes. But their intention was to abduct the ballot boxes. I took prompt action and informed our leader. He in turn sent us more vehicles and men. We took charge and got
the ballot boxes safe. There was tension in the areas. The people who came in vehicles threw bombs and dispersed a crowd that came to vote for our party. We managed to get them away with a very large crowd from the nearby estates. At this time all the parties in the upcountry came together. We went in large crowds to protect our legitimate rights. The police ran away when they saw the mobs throwing stones.

Krishna working in a private company from Agarapatana area but residing in an estate a stringent supporter of prominent TU says;

In the year 2000 Election campaign we contested the elections with PA during the campaign we went on putting up posters. Another group of a candidate from the majority community contesting under the same symbol came in big numbers and started tearing our posters. We said to them not to do that. But they didn't listen. We from our side about 50 boys chased away them using force. During the Provincial Council elections in 1999 a TU had a meeting and our members were campaigning in the area and were to pass the meeting place. The men from that TU attacked our members and vehicles damaged. In this incident one of our prominent candidate's (who is now a Minister - November 2003) his vehicle was damaged.

Soori from Agarapatana who have witnessed violent incidents connected to electoral politics describes the violence propagated by the TU merely to demonstrate their dominance. He says;

During an election rallies at Agarapatana, there were clashes between parties. I saw the men from Chandrasekaran party and Thondaman party fighting. I was
injured though I am neither from Chandrasekaran's party nor CWC. The clashes erupted purely to show the dominance of one over the other. They cannot withstand others getting popularity. There is no unity amongst the Tamil parties. They Tamil youth do not think that they are influenced by others.

Another youth from Agarapatana confirms that TU involves in violence to demonstrate their political dominance and power for securing votes and sustenance.

He says;

During Provincial Council election in 1999, the two prominent TU’s contested separately. Our TU organised a meeting in Agarapatana. For this meeting we put up posters and banners. The men from other TU tried to remove them. They came in large numbers and tried to disrupt the meeting. The police started firing injuring many. In these kinds of incidents the main enemy is the persons from other party. The damages are generally breaking windows, door, and injuring other party. The police came and shot at the air after which the crowd dispersed. The TU is the primary cause for the violent incidents in these areas. Their approach that causes the violence. They try to dominate all others in every aspect. Ego is the main reason. There was a time when the two main leaders joined together to contest the election; at that time there was no violence.

Electoral violence is merely limited to during campaigning. It occurs mostly when publicity for a candidate is given and during canvassing for votes in the estate
divisions. It is as in other areas, the prominent TU in one estate division does not allow others to appear even for campaigning purposes. The posters and banners are usually not permitted for other TU or political parties to be put up in the areas dominated by one TU. The other TU confines itself to areas of its dominance. When contradiction to this occurs there are clashes. In the interviews conducted it is stated that the clashes dominates when there is a poster campaign. However these clashes are not limited to damaging and causing minor injuries to the enemies but it has caused death of individuals as well in some instances.

Assistant Secretary of a TU in Agarapatana area describes several instances where death has occurred due organising party activities.

In troop estate a CWC leader was killed when UPF was organising party activities there. There was problem between two parties, which led to clashes killing one thalaiwar from the CWC. In Diyagama estate when organising party activities a CWC Thalaiwar was killed. In Edinburg a Thalaiwar of another TU was killed. Generally knives and swards are the weapons used to attack others. Though Thalaiwar is a target there is a big competition for that post because the benefits that he gets are more than the damages. Thalaiwar always wanted to dominate the estate when this is contested then often there are clashes. He tries and takes revenge over others who instigate problems against him at appropriate time.

One of the prominent personalities who is a lawyer and social analyst plays his observations as follows;
Political violence is very high during election. The voting rights of the people are often violated. Here gangs of the TU leaders involve in intimidating the people. These gangs are involved in illicit distilling activities and other forms of illegal activities to which they get protected from big leaders. These are often youth that are unable to be employed or go for any other work. There is a new group of rich evolving in the plantations.

(v) Alcoholism, Trade Unions and violence

The social life of an estate worker family has been and is quite different from others in the rural areas and other casual workers in the country. The life of an estate worker family as described in the box 2 is monotonous. The housing conditions in the estates and the social and cultural activities leave no diversification (Care International, 1998; Weeramunda, 2001). The extreme poor housing conditions provide no privacy for married and young girls. With the unfulfilled human needs it leads to conditions of further deterioration of the life of the worker family. It has been shown that alcoholism and extreme poverty are have interconnected cause in the tea plantation areas (Care International, 1998). It is one of the primary causes for the estate residents to become poor and vulnerable. The main cause is the lack of unfulfilled human needs as described in chapter 4. However alcoholism is also a manifestation of depression or frustration. This situation at times causes aggressive behaviour that could cause extra normal behaviour that leads violent behaviour under small provocation. The interviews do confirm that alcoholism is one of the leading social factors for violent action by the estate workers and youth. This situation is best used by the TUs in organising their trade union and political activities. It is no public meeting sans alcohol. The political leaders arrange for provision of alcohol at all times of election.
and other political related events. Under such influences if a small provocation is made the people become violent without knowing the repercussions of their actions.

A school teacher in Kandapola area expresses how frustration leading to drug use helps people to be aggressive and violent.

Lack of proper education is the primary cause for the people to be violent. The other is alcoholism. Youth are increasingly becoming addicted to alcohol and other drugs. This is because of their frustration. They do not have enough opportunities to get jobs and improve their livelihood. They do not have access to proper education. In schools there are no teachers and in some occasions they have to go long distances for higher classes. The girls cannot go long distances because of lack of proper transport facilities. So they get dropped out from school at early stages. They are heavily dependent on the estate job, which is the plucking of tea leaves. The boys after finishing their secondary education look forward for the jobs outside the estate system. They are unable to go for higher learning because of weak financial capability of their parents and there aren’t any opportunities in the near by areas. They are also reluctant to work in the estates due to the low dignity of the estate jobs and that they are considered as day wage earner or coolies. This makes them search jobs elsewhere, which is difficult since they do not have the marketable skills. So when they don’t get jobs they are frustrated. They think government is responsible for their fate. They see the powerful people getting everything and that they do not get anything. So they run after the politicians who use them for their political work. Drugs easily influence them. They are influenced
by these politicians to involve in violent acts. They are in highly depressed state and the government and affluent are responsible for their plight. Frustration combined with this kind of thinking makes them more aggressive and violent.

A Vice Chairman of local body who says how politicians use the youth for their campaign and instigate violence.

We printed posters for our election campaign. When we wanted to distribute it and paste it in the town the other party men came and teared our posters. Then we retaliated and there was a fight. Some were drunk. Actually to instigate the party men to attack some provide alcohol so that the youth and elders for that matter do not know what exactly they are doing.

Kumar from Thalawakele area points out the same;

Youth are addicted to alcohol and other forms of drugs at early stage. This is in the increasing trend in the estates, which we can see now a days. They are highly influenced by these drug problems, which makes them vulnerable for violent behaviour. The politicians are behind all these political and religious or ethnic violence. They are to be held responsible for the youth being addicted to alcohol. They provide alcohol and provoke the youth to involve in violence. The people do not understand at once the implications of the violent acts by them.

It could be seen that there isn’t much of an organised violence with sophisticated arms in the tea plantation areas or in the upcountry for that matter. The prominent weapon is the field level used axe, knifes and pruning knifes all of them are used in the tea
fields. These are the weapons that are in easy access. Use of guns or hand grenades have not been reported by any of the police stations that have been visited for the purpose of this research. It is inferred that the alcoholism provides for sudden aggressive behaviour when provoked and that they often become violent. The provocation is not only instigated by others but also in-built. The addiction for alcohol is that there is not other social life or unfulfilled basic requirements for the estate residents.

As indicated above the politicians use the violence for their dominance and governance over their population and other political parties. The politicians use the conditions of the estate residents who are members of the TU for the violence. The interviews point out that the local level politicians use the youth and the estate workers for their benefit. They provide alcohol and the people are aggressive after consumption of alcohol but not knowing what is the outcome of their violent actions.

A local level leader of prominent TU (who is also Asst. Secretary of the TU) further points out the following:

There are highest numbers of Bars and Taverns in the upcountry than in any other place. The powerful people give licence to destroy our community. People become addicted to drugs. The politicians use this as a weapon to instigate violence. The politicians use violence to show their power and dominance over the other party.
3. Ethnic based violence in the Upcountry tea plantation areas

It has been observed that the political violence in the Tea Plantation areas has an ethnic based dimension too. The communal violence that took place in country 1977, 1983, and 1987 spread to the plantation areas as well. There were also many other occasions that violent incidents had occurred in the plantations areas. Thalawakele is one of the towns that have been severely and repeatedly affected by the ethnic violence. In the 1987 violence the town was severely damaged destroying several shops and houses belonging to Tamils.

It was made to understand from the interviews that the law enforcement officials were present to protect the anti social elements who were alleged to be Sinhalese during the attack on the Tamils. In 1987 as per the recollection of the respondents several shops and houses belonging to Tamil people was destroyed. In the name of dispersing the protesting crowd shooting was undertaken which killed Tamil youths. In 1987 it was a period where other parts of the country faced similarly oppression when the state mechanism was trying to control the southern insurgence group the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). There was great deal of fear amongst all the Sri Lankan for their security and safety. At the same time there was great deal of work done to prevent the spread of separatist guerrillas in the north and east to the up country. It was easy for the armed men to arrest, detained anybody in the name of national security and PTA. This saw youth in the plantation areas also being arrested detained for several months without any inquiry. The Communal violence in the plantations with political perspectives has been explained in this chapter with special reference to the incidents.

20 PTA-Prevention of Terrorism Act. Proclaimed by the government in 1982 to curb the spread of separatist movement that would jeopardize the national security.
that took place in the years 1987 and 2000. In both the incidents Thalawakele has been a town that was affected the most.

3.1. Communal violence in 1987
Some of the political leaders in the tea plantations were organizing themselves to protest against the government for alleged act of intimidating and ad-hoc arrest of Tamil youth from the Upcountry. In one of such demonstrations against the state a youth leader of the CWC was attacked and arrested. The estate workers came en-mass to visit the youth leader who is now the leader of the UPF (former Deputy Minister during the period 1994 to 2000 and a Minister during 2001 to 2003), at the hospital in Wategoda. It was alleged that the police with the pretext of controlling the crowd opened fire killing several people. The respondents revealed that taking advantage of the situation some anti social elements together with the uniformed men who were brought in to control the situation looted and attacked shops and houses belonging to Tamil community in the town. Several of the respondents reported this has one of the serious ethnic violence happened in the area. The perception of the Upcountry Tamils is that use of state mechanism to systematically destroy the Tamils and their economy under the pretext of control of terrorism has seen effectuated by different governments without checks that have caused serious violent incidents in the tea plantation areas. With the destruction of property and lives and weakening the economy of the Tamils leads them to being heavily dependent on the state for any assistance that comes in the form of relief. The regaining control of their lost economy is increasingly becoming difficult because the weakened position of the Tamils is best used to the advantage of the others in the expansion of their business and trade activities.
Anthony aged 55 from an estate near Thalawakele describes the communal violence in the tea plantation areas with special reference to the 1987 incidents:

In 1987 there was a communal clash. Chandrasekaran was injured in the clash. People went to see in large crowed. He was admitted in the Wategoda hospital. He was member of CWC then. Large crowed was coming in to the town, which was already in fire. At this time there was a clash between the people and the Police. The police attacked fired and killed one. Again with help of the uniformed men anti social elements destroyed several shops and burnt them. The violence against the Tamils in 1977, 1983 and 1987 have driven people in the estate to be more cautious to protect themselves. Now they are ready to face any eventualities. That is why under small provocations they are becoming violent.

Another youth working in a private company but closely associated with Trade Union Politics in Agarapatana describes the incidents during 1987 violence as follows.

In 1987 there was a big problem. Roads were blocked. People were attacked. Then people forgetting their political differences protested the action of the police. In order to control the protest the police instigated violence on the civil population. The majority in this area is Tamils so the police used force and along with Sinhala mob they attacked the Tamils. Army was brought in but situation was worsening after the presence of Army. Shops were looted and the Kovil was attacked. The military did not allow anybody to go out. They used tear gas to control the Tamil crowed on the streets. Clashes broke and in the incident one policeman was killed. I see this has a clear case of oppression and that provoked aggression among youth. Because in 1983 we were all in
the receiving end. But there were provocations and Tamils were aggressive this time in 1986. However, with the Police and Military with armed men we were attacked and dispersed. We were blamed as ‘Kotiya’.

The oppression that the Upcountry Tamils had undergone in the hands of their British masters in the early days of their arrival and later by the strict regimentation by local planters has made them dependent and vulnerable. Tea plantation system in earlier days has made this community heavily dependent for any small requirement over generations. During initial stages the management that supplied their basic requirements and later the state took over the responsibility. These supplies are made and deducted from their salary. The oppression for generations has created a dependency syndrome, which is slowly being overcome with education and other social development activities undertaken in the plantation by institutions developed for the purpose (egs Plantation Human Development Trust). However these social developments has yet to make a bigger impact in meeting the aspirations of the youth in the tea plantations. Unrest amongst the rural youth in the southern parts of the country manifested with less opportunities available for youth in accessing for employment. With making an impressive growth in social development indicators as a result of welfare policies the problem saw growing in the southern parts of the country. It could also be seen in the Plantation areas that with the improvement in education and lack of opportunities to further the perseverance of the youth in the Upcountry the youth are left in dark. The youth under such situation are depressed. There is increasingly a reactive sentiments developed from the youth. Some respondents made this point during interviews. Anthony who confirms his son being with the LTTE and says that youth are increasingly becoming reactive to any action
that could suppress their emotions and requirements. With the revolution in the field
of information technology and attaining a level of education, the youth are exposed to
issues around the world. However they lack extra skills to be competent enough to be
employed. This situation if not arrested will likely to further the frustration and
increases aggression amongst the youth. Anthony further perceives a danger that the
youth are becoming restless and are prone to any future breakdown of law and order.

He further states;

The government should ensure the rights of the plantation community are
provided to them. They should try and bring the Up country community on par
with others without discriminating them. Otherwise it is going to be difficult
in the future because the youth are frustrated. They now have enough freedom
to move about in the country. They go everywhere and learn lot of things.
Certainly not good things. After the cease-fire Agreement more and more
youth from this area are going to northern parts in the name of seeing the
country. Some came back some did not come back.

A prominent lawyer in the Upcountry observes;

New dimensions to the violence are that lack of employment opportunities for
the youth. Those who went to urban areas had to return during war times.
They had no other work to do. They are frustrated. They are pushed to involve
in illegal activities. They form in to gangs and easily pushed in to violence.
They use violence as a 'control mechanism, for their existence and to operate
freely. Police are unable to control this.
A school teacher from Nuwara Eliya living in an estate closer to Kandapola town says this:

Education is the primary cause for the people to be violent.

Youth are increasingly becoming addicted to alcohol and other drugs. This is because of their frustration. They do not have enough opportunities to get jobs and improve their livelihood. They do not have access to further their education. In schools there are no teachers and in some occasions they have to go long distances for higher classes. The girls cannot go long distances because of lack of proper transport facilities. So they get dropped out from school at early stages. They are heavily dependent of the estate job, which is the plucking of tea leaves. The boys after finishing their secondary education look forward for the jobs outside the estate system. They are unable to go for higher learning because of weak financial capability of their parents and there aren’t any opportunities in the near by areas. They are also reluctant to work in the estates due to the low dignity of the estate jobs and that they are considered as day wage earner or coolies. This makes them search jobs elsewhere which is difficult since they do not have the marketable skills. So when they don’t get jobs they are frustrated. They think government is responsible for their fate. They see the powerful people getting everything and that they do not get anything. So they run after the politicians who use them for their political work. Drugs easily influence them. They are also influenced by these politicians to involve in violent acts.
3.2. Violent incidents in 2000

The second major incident after the 1987 communal violence is the violence that took place in Thalawakele in the year 2000. It was as reflections of the Bindunuwewa massacre (see box 3). It is noted here in the document as post Bindunuwewa (BW) incidences in Thalawakele.

The post BW saw violence unleashed on the Upcountry Tamil Community in the plantation areas of Nuwara Eliya, Hatton and low country tea areas as well. It was reported in the ‘Sunday Leader’ a leading weekend English that the state’s arm is repeating its misgivings done to the Sri Lankan Tamils in the north in the past to the Indian Tamil origin community in the upcountry and promoting a third militancy.

The post BW incident sparked with the massacre of Tamil prisoners held in custody in Bindunuwewa detention camp in the Upcountry town in Bandarawela. The Upcountry Tamil community in Thalawakele town organised a protest rally to demonstrate their political sympathy over the incidents in BW and to protest to the government for allowing such an incident to happen. This act of protest provoked the local Sinhala community in the town to disrupt the demonstrations. The Tamil community notwithstanding this act retaliated by damaging the shop of a Sinhala person. This lead to large-scale violence against the Tamils. It was alleged that the some section of the Sinhalese and the police in the town systematically planned and attacked the shops belonging to Tamils. This was repeated by number of respondents during the interviews. The Military was brought in by the government to control the situation, which actually worsened the situation killing 4 youth from estates. The post BW incident was at the central point for discussions in all of the interviews conducted in
Thalawakele and Agarapatana. All the respondents confirmed the attack by the armed uniformed personnel on unarmed civilians and their property.

Moorthy a young man from Thalawakele town who was one of the frontliner in organising the protest rallies said so.

‘For weakening the voice of the Tamil people and disrupt the peaceful demonstration a group thugs in motorcycles and vehicles came threatened the crowd. The crowd first dispersed them. The thugs then started attacking the Tamil people. When the Tamils resisted the police with the pretext of controlling started attacking the Tamils. But the crowd was too big to control and the military was brought in to control. They started opening fire-killing 4 instantly. All these people were from the plantations and out of which 3 were youth. The people were un armed and in large numbers. Curfew was imposed throughout Nuwara Eliya district with immediate effect. Those who had come to the town for various purposes were unable to return and those trying to return were caught and severely assaulted. The Sri Lanka army using some thugs looted shops belonging to Tamil people. The shop locks were opened with bullet. 60% of the shops were totally burnt. This happened not only in Thalawakele but other towns in other places in Nuwara Eliya district like Ginigathena and Pundaluoya’.
Box – 3 - Mobs kill Tamil inmates in Sri Lanka prison attack, toll 25

COLOMBO, Oct 25 (AFP) - Hundreds of local hooligans stormed a rehabilitation centre in central Sri Lanka Wednesday, killing 24 Tamil inmates in an orgy of violence that also left another man dead, police said.

Violent mobs attacked the detainees with knives and stones in a riot that also left at least 16 people seriously wounded, a local police source said, adding the facility had been destroyed in a fire.

"There were 40 Tamil Tiger suspects at the centre," a local official said by telephone. "Twenty four of them have been killed while the balance 16 escaped with serious injuries."

He said the body of the 25th man killed was yet to be identified. It was not immediately clear if he was one of the men involved in the attack on the centre at Bandarawela, 210 kilometres (131 miles) east of here.

"The mobs attacked these people and later set fire to the entire place," a police officer said after visiting the scene. He said police had been deployed in the area.

State radio said the inmates had tried to take over the facility on Tuesday triggering tension and the army had been called in to restore order.

However, a defence ministry spokesman here, Sanath Kanaratne, said troops sent to the centre had withdrawn around midnight but rioting had broken out again on Wednesday morning.

"We have sent another platoon this morning, but by the time our troops got there, it was all over," Kanaratne said.

Police sources said it seemed the inmates clashed with their minders and later hundreds of residents armed with knives and sticks came to the aide of the army captain in charge.

The wounded were being treated at three hospitals under tight security.

The centre was located at Bandarawela. The Tamil detainees, who were being provided with vocational training at the centre, were not hard core Tiger rebels, according to officials here.

They said the facility was maintained under a civilian authority, the National Youth Services Council, to provide vocational training to former rebels who had surrendered to security forces.

"These are people who had actually given themselves up to security forces and were being taught some trade or the other so that they could go back to society as free men," a military official here said.

The attack was reminiscent of a massacre of dozens of Tamil prisoners at a maximum-security prison in the capital Colombo in July 1983 when Sinhalese mobs attacked members of the minority community.

The violence that shocked and rocked the up country in the aftermath of the Bindunuwewa massacre was a flashpoint that illustrated vividly the growing impatience and unwillingness of the plantation Tamil youth to accept the current
status quo, unquestioningly (Sunday Leader 15 January 2000). It was very clear in the incidents that a kind of militancy arose in the initial stages as a condemnation of the Bindunuwewa horror. In Sri Lanka close to 100% of the military cadres are Sinhalese and more than 90% of the police force is the members of majority community Sinhalese. The violence destroyed the total economy of the Tamil community.

3.3. Growing polarisation and upraising within the plantation areas

What was different from other parts is that the Tamil youth in the first day of the violence retaliated the attack by responding the same violence on Sinhala business establishments damaging their property. It was clear in this case the rising militancy among the Tamil youth more particularly in Thalawakele area. The adjoining estate areas where the military and police presence were weak the Tamil militancy responded with same treatment which there fellow community members got in the town. Damages to properties of both communities were heavy as a result of the violence.

Meeting violence with violence started with Sri Lankan Tamil in the 1970s in the northern parts of the country. When the non-violent agitation of the leaders of the Tamil Community were met with violent oppression the Tamils youth militancy emerged also to meet the violent action with violent retaliation. This terror action by both the Tamil militancy and the state however were in the peak in the early 1980s. The Upcountry the Tamils of Indian origin protested and took their struggle through the TU in non-violent ahimsa\textsuperscript{21} or the Gandhian style. Late Thondaman advocated

\textsuperscript{21} A non violent principle advocated by Mahathma Gandhi of India
such principles to gain the political and social and economical rights of the Upcountry Tamils (Thondaman, 1996). He wrote in his book My life and Times, "I am happy that I was able to keep the Tamil Plantation workers on the path of ahimsa and non violence in spite of the frequent outbreaks of calculated violence directed at them over many years". However this trend saw a shift in the late 1980s when the youth were increasingly losing their patience and tried to meet the violent action with violence. The initial response to the action of the state law enforcement officials in the 1987 incident testifies the youth uprising.

Systematic organisation of youth for uprising in the tea plantation areas in the years 1987 allows for the thinking that militancy action arising out of an increasing frustration of the youth in the tea plantation areas as an answer to perception that there is a calculated violent action against them. Though the state was meticulously able to control the uprising with the help of the biggest TU namely the CWC (Thondaman, 1996), the thinking of retaliation and meeting violence with violence had aroused in minds of the Upcountry Tamil youth in late 1980s. Many respondents highlighted that the plantation area geography prevents them from creating another rebel movement within the upcountry areas. However the perception that the violence needs to be met from violence exists amongst the youth of the Upcountry Tamils. The responses given to a question what is the best way to win over the rights, it was highlighted by most of the respondents that their political leaders should work towards getting them their rights. At the same time the respondents pointed out that the leaders lack political will and the community lacks good leadership to lead them to win their rights and needs. There were mixed feeling amongst the youth and elders as to a rebellious action could only be the option. The elders describing the prolonged war and its present state in the
north and east proves that it is not possible for the Upcountry Tamils to involve in violence and instead a non-violent way is the best to win their rights. But the youth respondents’ highlighted that the failure of the political leadership will create conditions for frustration that may result in violence. They pointed out that a rebellion action as in northeast is not at all possible given the terrain and geography of the upcountry. However the youth respondents pointed out that a rebel action though not possible in the upcountry is best to make the state understand their problems. It is because of the military strength of the Sri Lankan Tamils movement has brought them up to the situation today.

A respondent who have organised the protest demonstration on post BW incidents says this.

The people should win their rights through a struggle. The attitude of the representatives of the people is not true service oriented and they are not trustworthy. The time will have to determine what kind of struggle in needed to safeguard the right of the poor and minority. It also depends on individual cases like the hunger strike in Sripada College. When non-violent methods fail to give results for genuine demands than violent means are inevitable. People are frustrated and that’s why they are aggressive. During the past and even now our people are secondary citizens. They have no land rights, no franchise; we cannot say this is our motherland. No proper livelihood means. Tea fetched large profits but one who works hard for the industry are under poverty. The economy of the people should improve.
Moorthy who was involved in the demonstrations against the state says this;

We should not involve in revolutions. We cannot do that. Experiences have shown this. But however revolutions only have produced better results for people involved in struggle. Like in the north now we talk about self-rule and self-determination earlier it was not the case. Only armed conflict has produced this situation. But we cannot do this due to our situation and geography being different. We only have to improve our economy. Then we will be strong to fight non-violently against political oppression. We do not enjoy any rights as others do.

Mani who is from an estate near Kandapola and was involved in incidents described before says;

Only wealthy people can become politicians. Educated youth cannot become politicians. But they should come forward to do politics. Armed struggle is not possible but it should be the way to win the rights. Police should be independent of political pressure. Frustration is the main reason for violence. Lack of education and opportunities lead for frustration.

Bala a Pradeshiya Sabha member from a prominent trade union points out his views on revolution;

We cannot win our rights through revolutions like in the north and east. Experiences have shown us. At the earlier occasions some of our youth were trying this means but it proved that it couldn’t be done. Because of the geography in this part of the country. But however, it has been shown that revolutions will take the rights struggle far from what we are now trying to do.
It is not possible with our people. So we should involve in protest rallies show our political strengths.

The social development indicators though comparatively low in the upcountry districts of the country; fair achievement in education and health was achieved with various welfare programs of the state with the assistance from the bi-lateral donors in the last decade (Sivaram, 2001). This achievement however did not match with their actual capabilities and access opportunities for livelihood other than the estate jobs. The employment in the estates was considered as low quality jobs with less social acceptance and low paid. The conditions in the estates were not better. All this added to the situation that it did not match with aspirations of the youth. The struggle for security and recognition remained to be unresolved. This situation was aggravated with their personal security being at stake with the increased arrest and detention of youth from the tea plantation areas during the time of war. All this added to the frustration of the youth in the upcountry that provokes the aggressive behaviour. Unfulfilled human needs lead to two main situations, 'aggression' and 'no action'. For a long time it was a 'no action' situation in the tea plantations. The dependency syndrome and vulnerable to poverty had sustained a situation of 'no action' by the Upcountry Tamils. However as indicated above with the partial improvement in the social development indicators and exposure to open world may lead to a situation of depression due to lack of opportunities for realisation of their perceived capabilities. This may lead to frustration and aggression. The perception that violent action could bring attention to their problems would make them to involve in violence. It could also be seen that political leaders have used the frustrated youth for their advantage too to prove their dominance over the other political party of personnel. Number of
respondents indicated that political leaders' demonstration of violent acts have instigated the youth to be aggressive.

Another youth from Agarapathana area describes,

It is certain that we need to fight to win our rights. If we want to go to government office it is with power that we should go there to get our things done if not they do work for us. We are heavily marginalized. There need to be a political power backing to get our things done. So if we can’t get by reasonable means then we should fight. All the state agencies do not provide services properly. Especially when they know that we are Tamil people they do not bother to give a better service. For eg’s in post offices even to pay a light bill we wait for long hours but since we are estate workers we are looked down upon and do not bother provide us a service. People can be more aggressive if and when their soft approaches fail. You must be knowing that lot of youth from this area joined the LTTE after 1983 and 97.

4 Reflection of the ongoing ethnic conflict to the violence in the plantations

The ethnic conflict manifested by a war that sustained for nearly two decades saw spill over effects to other areas in which the Upcountry Tamils were also victims. The victimisation process not only reflected on the personal security of the Upcountry Tamils but also to their economic and social wellbeing. The achievements in the social development throughout the country in the post independence era reached the Upcountry Tamils late. Though the indicators of health and education in the social development scenario was not on par with the rest of the country, there have been
some improvements made to primary and secondary education of the Upcountry Tamils living in the plantation areas (Little, 1998).

The improvement in their education did not necessarily reflect in their social and economic upliftment since for one reason that the educational attainment did not meet the market requirements and the other is the employment opportunities were far in a state of inaccessible to the youth of the community. This widened the gap between the youth from other areas and the youth in the tea plantation areas. One of the options that was available for the Upcountry Tamil youths in the tea plantation areas was to come to urban areas in search of unskilled work or jobs. The youth with some connections in the cities could be employed in the business establishments owned by the Upcountry Tamils.

Revolution in the information technology creating a kind of an urban syndrome increasingly prevented the youth 'liking-ness' to work in the tea plantation areas as 'labourers'. The inflow to the towns and metropolitan areas increased. At the same time the effects of ethnic war spilled over to cities by the attacks unleashed by the dominant rebel group on non-military targets in the Cities. The state took measures to prevent such acts from spreading to other parts of the country thereby taking measures to arrest and detained youth suspected for involvement with the rebel movement. However this action did not recognise the different between the youth from the north and east-troubled areas to that of Upcountry Tamils. During the periods of 1990 and 2000 decades in general terms there was suspicion amongst the ordinary Sinhala community that most of the Tamil are either active or passive supporter of the separatist movement. The youth were suspected for harbouring separatist rebel
movement. The suspicion did not only lie with the law enforcement authorities but also trickle down to the society polarising heavily on ethnic lines. The impact was severe on the Upcountry Tamils since they were always living and carrying out their economic activity in midst of the Sinhalese and Muslim community.

The search for suspected Tamil youth who were non permanent resident of Colombo and other cities forced the Upcountry Tamil youth to leave their jobs and get back to the estates. Unemployment amongst these youth and lack of any other opportunities increased for the frustration of these youth. This provided for situation where youth were idling in the tea plantation areas. The youth were approaching the politicians for their help to get employment. The politicians also use best these youth for their party activities. In association with the politicians they are getting used to drugs especially alcohol. A situation that consuming alcohol has becoming a kind of 'culture' in the society (Care International, 1998). Their association in Colombo already made them exposed to alcohol. Thus in the estates when they work for the politicians in their party activities alcohol is one of the main components. The frustration of not having a proper job also exacerbates this situation. Therefore under small provocation they are becoming aggressive and thus involve in violent behaviour.

One youth from Agarapatana says this;

The political leaders instigate violence. The people think that their leaders will protect them anyway. Since the CWC is in majority they are perpetrating violent acts on all others for even small reasons.

We have our problems still unresolved. Mainly housing, land and wage of the workers all these things are yet to be solved. People come to the TU to win
The political leaders instigate violence. The people think that their leaders will protect them anyway. Since the CWC is in majority they are perpetrating violent acts on all others for even small reasons.

We have our problems still unresolved. Mainly housing, land and wage of the workers all these things are yet to be solved. People come to the TU to win their legitimate rights. The drugs mainly are a cause of depression and frustration due to lack of opportunity for the youth to involve in meaningful employment to look after their families. This becomes a matter of frustration. The politicians easily drag them in to political movements by giving them petty things.

Another youth from the same area described that they do not have rights and therefore no opportunities for further their income and lead a better life. He says;

The main reasons for violence are the provocation of youth to become violent. The youth in-turn do not have better income earning opportunities so that they are easily diverted to violent actions. It is also because we do not have better access to education and career building opportunities. However yet youth have not involved in planned or organised violence activities.

The rebel movement and their action were intensified during the middle and later part of 1990s. This saw the hastening of the war in the country. While the Tamil separatist war was on the peak there were radical Sinhala movements in the other parts of the country organising them against the Tamil action. One of such initiatives is the Veera Vidanaya organisation with a theme calling Sinhala people to respond collectively against the Tamil Terrorism. This organisation was organising its activities in Nuwara
Eliya as well. The perception that the majority of the Tamils support the separatist movement tends to polarise the society in ethnic lines. This also leads to conflicting position between the communities. The rivalry position was in the peak when Tamil militants unleashed attacks on unarmed targets outside the north and east or when there were heavy causalities within the government military ranks as a result of heavy fighting in the north and east. It is this time that the two communities almost clashed in Nuwara Eliya.

During the 1999 May Day rally one such incident took place in Nuwara Eliya. The major TU wanted to organise the rally in Nuwara Eliya town and seek police permission. At this time there was a big banner of the Sinhala Organisation 'Veera Vidhanaya' in the middle of the town where the stage for the CWC was to be erected.

The incident is described by a former Parliamentarian who is now a General Secretary of a break away TU from the CWC.

The Veera Vidanaya\textsuperscript{22}(VV) in their speech openly attacked the Tamils in the Upcountry. This took place when they organised a rally prior to May Day. The VV severely criticised in un-parliamentary words attacking all the Tamils and especially the CWC and late Mr. Thondaman. They levelled severe charges against us and labelled us as 'Tigers'. This provoked a kind of 'hatred attitude amongst our members and Tamils here. The VV also put up posters and banners against us which was a great hindrance to our May Day celebrations. We got permission to hold the May Day rally in Nuwara Eliya days before. We wanted to organise stage and the May Day celebrations. We requested the
police to remove the posters put up by VV. The police first said they would allow us to make arrangements to organise our stage at 12.00 noon. But they were unable to do so. Then they said they would give us at 2.00 p.m. They were unable to keep their word. Finally one of our leaders spoke to SSP and said we will go ahead organising our May Day celebrations. Large crowds forcefully removed their banners. This lead to tensions. The tension prevailed for several days. Here our rights were clearly violated. Our speakers on the mayday also spoke against the VV. The workers shouted slogans against the VV and largely the Sinhalese. There were tensions.

A member of his TU describes how this TU reacted to the Veera Vidanaya.

There was a big banner and posters of VV in Nuwara Eliya during May Day 1999. We were given permission to put up a stage and hold the May Day rally. However this banner and posters prevented us from doing our work. Our MP came and spoke to the SSP. Fist the police said they will remove it at 12.noon and then they said they will do it by 2.p.m but nothing happened. Our MP went again to speak to the SSP. This time large crowed of VV supporters also gathered outside the SSP office with some small weapons. There was tension everywhere. The SSP assured that in the evening everything will be removed and allow us to put up the stage. Our MP also agreed and came out of the SSP office. When he came one of the VV supporters shouted, ‘apith ekka oya sellang hariyanne nae, owa yapane’

22 An organization formed by Sinhalese to protect the rights of Sinhalese against the rebel movement of Tamils
thiyaganne (You can't do this kind of action with, us keep those to Jaffna), our leaders got angry and he took out the revolvers at shot at the air threatening at the crowd. All the VV supporters ran away. We went on a removed all the banners and posters by ourselves, we broke all the things put up by VV. And started preparing for the May Day celebrations. That night it was very tensed we took up position for any attack by VV and we were prepared. This would have let to communal clashes. We were armed with polla, knives.

This incident indicates that how the north and east war has spilled over effects that could jeopardize the ethnic relations between the communities. It also gives a clear indication that the Tamils in the upcountry no longer withstand the unwanted oppression and violent action against them what they do not deserve. The youth of the upcountry Tamils are of the perception that increased oppressive nature and lack of opportunities make them frustrated. They blame their own leaders for the present day situation.

The ethnic relationship between the Sinhalese and Tamils were deteriorated in the 1990s decade due to the perception that the majority of the Tamils were supporters of the separatist movement. This saw large number of youth from the upcountry taken in to custody in Colombo and other areas and also from within the upcountry itself. These arrest were made either when these young men and women were travelling or from their places of residence. Some of the youth were sent to detaining centres and rehabilitation centres. Bindunuwewa detention centre is one such. In the month of November 2000 local people attacked this centre. It was popularly alleged that there was wide support from the local police that lead to severe damages causing the death
of 27 youth. There were youth from the upcountry as well. The attack on a detention camp by armed men angered the Tamil people from the upcountry. When they started to protest the incident a communal clash erupted in Thalawakele and other areas in the upcountry. This is described as post BW incidents. However the deteriorated relationship between the communities as a result of the conflict in the north and east added to the incidents that broke as communal clashes.

The relationship between the state and the violence has been examined by many scientists Max Weber (1947) quoted by Smith defined the state and its relationship with violence. He indicated that the state in its monopoly is a legitimate entity to use force. The state can use violence and legitimise it in the name of law and order. By the name of the prevention of terrorist activity spread over to the Upcountry Tamil dominated areas the state unleashed violent action against the unarmed men. The state has been dominant in control of violence and their one sided action perpetrated against the Tamils caused severe damages to the ethnic relationship and sustained rivalry. Victims pointed this out to the communal violence in Thalawakele.

A youth from Thalawakele who was a victim of the October 2000 communal violence that took place aftermath of the Bindunuwewa massacre described how the state machinery ran amok in the town.

There was small petty shop with wooden planks that belonged to Sinhala person. Soon this was set fire. The police came and started firing at all sides to control the Tamils. Four persons died on the spot. Thereafter curfew was declared and Military was brought in to the town. Then the Military and local Sinhala people started an organised attack on all the shops that belonged to the
Tamil people in the town. They break opened the shops belonging to Tamils and looted after which it was set on fire. Two more families and ours were only living behind portion of our shops. Others had houses or residencies elsewhere. My mother was a sick person when she heard the crowed shouting and saw fire her blood pressure rose and we had a difficult time. Then the police did not allow anyone to stay in their shops. They asked us to leave our premises. We had to go to the kovil. I could see my shop from the kovil. Our shop is jewellery; I was confident that nothing will happen to our shop. The jewellery was kept in the safe. However after sending us to the kovil the military with local people broke open our shops smashed everything. They brought special lathe equipment to break open the safe and took all the jewels. It took nearly three hours to break open the safe. I was all along watching from the kovil helpless. After the total operation was completed they set fire to the shop. All these were done with the presence of Military.

It is pertinent to note that there has not been a major uprising from the Upcountry against the state or against other ethnic communities. The Upcountry Tamils have not organised or prepared for rebellious actions to safe guard their rights. One of the reasons could be that the geographical terrain makes it impossible for them to organise themselves. A police officer in-charge of a police station in the district pointed out that there are no signs of a revolt of the Upcountry Tamils and it wouldn’t happen in the near future.

He says;
The workers are afraid of the laws of the country and they respect but due to the unawareness they are involved in violence. When these workers get together the politicians use them for their gains. The workers can be easily turned according to whims and fancies of the politicians. This can be prevented if they have diversified economic interests and opportunities. When they have no other opportunities they are generally aggressive. However, there cannot be a major outbreak of large-scale violence in these areas for at-least another 10 years. I can assure that I have been in these areas as a police officer for the past 15 years. Though these people are poor there are no big criminal activities reported in big numbers we have not seen large-scale burglaries or any other crime. They are innocent people.

5. Conclusion

Political Violence in the tea plantation areas concerning the Upcountry Tamils has a direct relationship to the Trade Union action within and outside the plantation system. The Tea plantation trade unions not only play the role of the trade union but also the political parties of the Upcountry Tamils in the country. Any clashes arising out of rivalry between two persons or groups within the estates who are from different trade unions very often leads to rivalry and clashes that end in political violence between the two trade unions. There is a clear link between the micro level clashes to the macro level but the immediate reasons for the micro level and macro level are different. The micro level clashes between two individuals or two groups are due to problems associated with their economic activity (egs disputes over land use for vegetable cultivation), or any other social reasons (like sharing of water, waste disposal etc.) and at the macro level the issues are to demonstrate the dominance of
the political party or to take revenge over the other political opponent. However the causes violent incidents concerning the Upcountry Tamils are many with the unfulfilled basic human needs being the primary that have more often has lead for aggression and violent behaviour. The Upcountry Tamils have been in isolation with a total living environment from being different from others. The social development indicators are low when compared with the rest of the country. The continuous substandard living and unfulfilled needs have created conditions for depression. These social conditions often lead for aggression. They are very often addicted to drugs especially alcohol. Under such influence and small provocation they become aggressive and violent not exactly knowing what are the repercussions. Frustration is one of the leading factors for the violent incidents concerning the Upcountry Tamils, substandard living with suppression together with lack of adequate opportunities for improvement of their lives and the social structures it self (the social conditions) often forms the underlying cause for frustration.

While it is not clear that the sustenance of their identify as Indian Origins or Upcountry Tamils plays an important factor in the violence concerning the Upcountry Tamils, the community has expressed dissatisfaction over the state and its agents in handling their matters. The perceptions that they are oppressed politically and otherwise especially in dealing with political and social issues like that of protest against the state over the happenings of the Bindunuwewa incident. Though the Upcountry Tamils up to now have disassociated with the ongoing struggle of the Sri Lankan Tamils, it is pertinent to observe that their continuous expression of their feeling against the state through violent means demonstrate their uprising. This may not lead to a large scale organised rebellious action but isolated violent incidents of
serious proportion like that of the incidents that took place in Kandapola in May 2004. It is also important to see the growing political affiliations by a section of the Upcountry Tamils political parties to the political parties in the north and east in campaigning for elections. At the same time there is growing consciousness amongst a group to express that Upcountry Tamils are to be identified as separate national minority in solving the ethnic question of the country. This has been demonstrated by the discussions held by a section of 'intellectuals' from the Upcountry community comprising teachers, university professors, professionals and development workers in Hatton. The group also demanded a resolution to express that Upcountry Tamils should be identified as a separate national minority and problems faced by them should be addressed separately (reported by Thinakural\textsuperscript{23} Tamil daily dated 27 July 2003).

The youth believe that the rebellious action is not possible with the given geographical terrain and political nature but do not rule out that it is not an option in the event of continuous oppression. The reflection of the conflict in the north and east has created awareness of the Upcountry Tamils, that, it is not possible for their community to win over their demands through armed struggles. But it also provides for the perception that an armed struggle alone could give recognition to the problems faced by a community. This thinking is slowly trickling down in the minds of youth members of the community. There is also a strong belief that the political power can only solve their problems but recognises that the present political leaders are not leading the community for their betterment. It is also believed that there should be strong reforms within the existing political institutions that work for the Upcountry

\textsuperscript{23} Thinakural is a Tamil Daily news paper in Sri Lanka.
Tamils. This is possible only through a radical change in the leadership with more educated people taking up important places in the political bodies. The youth mindset indicates the straining relationship between the political leaders and them. Their increasing frustrations indicate that the relationship between the youth and the political leaders who are from the three major trade unions (CWC, UPF and LJEWU) is the same relationship that existed between youth in the north and Federal Party. The militancy kind of approach developed in late 1970s. However given the geographical features of the Upcountry it is unlikely that there will be rebellious movement from the plantation areas but the frustration will lead to isolated violent incidents that will seriously disrupt the normalcy in the area.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

Violence is increasingly dominating the Sri Lankan society in the recent decades with electoral politics becoming almost impossible without violence. Political violence came in for domination during the 1970s decades with its quantity and quality increasing making governance impossible and democracy unrealistic. This research document was prepared after a field level study of the violence with political perspectives concerning the Upcountry Tamil Community in the tea plantations of Nuwara Eliya.

The Upcountry Tamils form about 7% (estimated) of the total population in Sri Lanka and live predominately in the Provinces of Central, Uva and in parts of Southern and Sabaragamuwa. They also live in large numbers in the Colombo district and in few thousands in the districts of north and east. The majority of the Upcountry Tamils are workers of tea plantations who were brought to Sri Lanka during the British colonial rule. Several studies related to the Upcountry Tamils have been done during the past mainly focussing on their social and economical aspects. There is much literature available on the trade unions associated with the Upcountry Tamil estate workers who have dominated the trade unions in this country. All these studies have little focussed about the violence of the Upcountry Tamils more particularly the political aspects though they were victims of violent clashes during the recent times and in the past.
Political violence in this study has been defined as a process where deliberate use of physical force or threat is carried out with an intention to cause death or injury to persons or destruction of property and or disruption of normal life by organised groups or members of such entities to their perceived political enemy.

The violence with political characteristics which in the plantations areas has caused intentional threats or actual harm in the form of physical injury to persons and properties and attempts that disrupt normal life for political gains. The trade Unions in the tea plantation sector are also the political bodies of the Upcountry Tamils. Therefore attempts by the trade unions that threaten the normalcy can also be considered as politically motivated violent incidents. The trade union action very much contributes for violence has been analysed and described in detailed in the preceding chapter.

This study focussed on the violence with political characteristics concerning the Upcountry Tamils in the tea plantation areas. The study was limited to the Nuwara Eliya Pradeshiya Sabha of the Nuwara Eliya district in the Central Province where majority of the Upcountry Tamils lives. The study chooses a qualitative analysis of the political related violence affecting the community rather than to quantify them and describe violent incidents. Qualitative analysis was done based on the information collected from about 50 individuals in the form of a discussion guided by a checklist. These individuals were from groups of categories identified earlier. The categories include victims and witnesses to violent incidents, perpetrators of violence, local political leaders, prominent local individuals (teachers, lawyers and local level businessmen) and law enforcement officials.
The initial literature review was done to collect documented information on the history of the Upcountry Tamils together with the struggles that had led to violent incidents in the country. These literatures were useful in tracing the history, violent incidents unleashed against the community and the uprising by them as well. The communal violence and the involvement of the Upcountry Tamils as victims have been described in detail.

When we consider study connected to the Upcountry Tamils trade unions plays an important position. Therefore detail description of trade unions from its origin to present day was described in detailed. The Trade Union action in the tea plantation commenced during the 1930s decade. However arrival of Indian immigrant workers dates back to a century before. There were several barriers that prevented the emergence of associations for workers of this sector who were mainly Indian origins. The main reasons were that the Plantation workers during their inception under the British colonial rule the working population served as a captive labour force under strict security and control. This provided antithesis for any kind of mobilisation within their social system. The poor living condition coupled with extreme poverty provided no room for protest or resistance to near environment. Therefore the organisation of the trade union has to wait a century after the arrival of the workforce and establishment of the plantations in the country, until such time that, 1. Workers started to settle in the country during the 1920s, 2. The Abolition of Thundu system that provided for servitude of the workers and 3. The Minimum Wages Ordinance of 1927, all these were in place.
Upcountry Tamil people were active in politics even during the period before independence. The Ceylon Indian Congress (CIC) had its representatives in the parliament in the year 1947. There were 7 members elected out of the eight contested. This led for the thinking of the then ruling party the UNP that the growing voter base of the Upcountry Tamils will undermine the Sinhalese from the Kandyan constituency and will not let any Sinhalese to win elections from these areas. The thinking was aggravated with the growing support for left parties from the areas where there were considerable population of Upcountry Tamils. The Kanganies from these areas were leading their group of men to vote for the left parties. At the time of independence with the Soulbory commission leaving the issue of Indian immigrant settlers to the future government of Sri Lanka, the decision was taken by the UNP government lead by D.S. Senanayaka to disfranchise the large population of Upcountry Tamils. Repeated protest against successive governments proved futile until the late 1980s. During this period though the citizenship was not fully granted late President Pramadasa gave voting rights. The importance of Upcountry Tamils in the electoral politics emerged. The proportional electoral system worked well with the minority parties allowing more representative in the legislature making them still important when it came to forming the government.

Trade union in the tea plantations were noticeably important in the politics as the trade unions played a dual role of that of a trade union of estate workers and political parties of Upcountry Tamils. This dual role proved added importance for the Trade Unions in the tea plantations than any other trade unions in the country. At the same time it allowed for the violent actions that manifested the electoral process.
Trade Unions play an important role in the social, economic, cultural and political life of the Upcountry Tamils in the tea plantation areas of the hill country. This important role that trade unions play contributes positively for most of the violent incidents that are with political characteristic, taking place in the tea plantations. There is a clear link between the micro level violence with the macro level when the individuals or groups at micro level are from two different trade unions. This at times blew out of proportions that end up in severe damages to the persons and properties. However the electoral violence or otherwise which are with political characteristics do not go to the intensity of loss of lives in a bigger scale as it is seen during elections in other parts of the country.

The communal violence in the past had severely affected the economic, social and political aspects of the Upcountry Tamils. The communal clashes more particularly during the year 1987 and 2000 have destroyed the economy of Tamil people to greater extent in Thalawakele town. It is during the decade of 1980 that the youth in the Upcountry Tamils started resisting violence with violence. This trend increasingly was exacerbated by the conflict in the north and east. In the late 1980s a militant uprising was seen in the tea plantation areas, which was effectively controlled with the help of the major trade union in the plantations. However the attitude of the youth towards a rebellious action was seen as an answer to the increasingly perceived oppression that according to them is persistent right from the arrival of the Upcountry Tamil community in to Sri Lanka. This perception that the Sinhala dominated armed forces unleash violence against the Tamils on a systematic basis to weaken the Upcountry Tamils in their economic, social and political development allows for the thinking that rebellious action is necessary. However they popularly understand that
an armed struggle as in the north and east is not possible given the geographical terrain in the hill country. The youth believe that only the struggle in the north has brought in recognition of the problems faced by the Tamils in Sri Lanka more particularly the Sri Lankan Tamils. This thinking would create increasingly unrest situation in the Upcountry Tea plantations areas though an organised rebellious action is not forthcoming in the near future.

The Upcountry Tamils right from their arrival has to fight for their basic needs. The struggle of the trade unions from the time of their inception revolved around the issue of minimum wages. It is so even today. The struggle to secure minimum wages was carried out to ensure their minimum requirements to meet basic human needs. In the absence of un-realising these needs together with continuous oppression created conditions for frustration that has lead to aggression amongst the Upcountry Tamils. The social development in the post independence era of Sri Lanka though of late reached the Upcountry Tamils in the plantation areas too. With the assistance of foreign funds the education and health were improved. This improvement however did not reflect in their opportunities to further their economic and social living. The improvement in the field of education and health did not match on par with the others in the country. The lack of opportunities to further their lives together with conflict in the north and east that prevented the mobility of the young members of the community enhancing their frustration. This frustration has led for them to be aggressive in the wake of small provocation by social and political forces in the tea plantation areas. The trade unions that are also political entities used the unemployed youth for their work in the electoral process to express their domination over the
others. The expression was done in the form of violence, which is a common method
for political parties in the third world countries.

The causes for the frustration of Upcountry Tamils that had led to violent incidents
are many with the continuous oppression and unfulfilled basic human needs. The
Upcountry Tamils have been in isolation with a total living environment from being
different from others. The social development indicators are low from when compared
with the rest of the country. The continuous substandard living and unfulfilled needs
have created conditions for depression and aggressive nature that have more often
lead to violent actions even on a small provocation for reasons that have been
explained. Frustration is one of the leading factors for the violent incidents. Though
frustration does not necessarily leads to violent behaviour, the social conditions often
produce aggression. When we consider the Upcountry Tamils, continuous
substandard living together with suppression and lack of adequate opportunities for
improvement of their lives forms the underlying cause and conditions for frustration
and aggression.

The trade unions in the plantations form the largest workforce organisation in the
country. The CWC has been largest trade union in the country for over decades. The
polity trade union action of the plantation workers resulted in emerging a powerful
body in the electoral politics in the late 1940s. Thereafter the resultant Citizenship act
downsized the importance in the electoral politics but still stood the strongest
organisations that had an indirect control over resource ‘tea’ the highest revenue
earner of the country. Later towards the end of 1980s decade the importance of the
trade unions as political bodies of the Upcountry Tamils emerged. With the changing
political scenario the prominent trade unions namely the CWC and UPF opposing each other and playing an important role in the mainstream politics has created conditions of rivalry. Though rivalry trade unionism is not new in the tea plantations, the present situation is new with emerging affiliation to the rebellious politics that provides room for increasing unrest in the tea plantation areas. The impact of UPF alliance with the politics of the north and east parties has to be seen in the future. However the concluding elections has shown a way for increasingly heavily polarised politics towards ethnic lines all over the country and in the Upcountry tea plantation areas as well. The greater Tamil alliance in the Upcountry propagated by the UPF prompting an affiliation to the politics of the north and east Tamil parties (especially the TNA) has to be closely studied in the forthcoming period more specifically during elections to local bodies. It is important to note that the UPF is affiliating itself by unfolding the fight for Tamil cause in the Upcountry areas too. This if succeeded will undermine the trade union politics in the tea plantations and allow political parties of the northeast to penetrate the Upcountry Tamils mindset. The impact has to be seen in the years to come.

In the above context it is not clear whether the sustenance of identify as Indian origin plays an important factor in the violence concerning the Upcountry Tamils. However the community has expressed dissatisfaction over the state oppression in dealing with political and social issues like that of protest against happenings of the Bindunuwewa incident. The Upcountry Tamils up to now have expressed their disassociation with the ongoing struggle of the Sri Lankan Tamil. However it is pertinent to observe that their expression of anger through violent means could not be undermined. It could be taken as an expression to demonstrate that they no longer accept the condition what
they called the oppressive state mechanism to control the Upcountry Tamils for any reasons of political or otherwise. It is also important to see the growing political affiliations by a section of the Upcountry Tamils political parties to the political parties in the north and east in campaigning for elections. At the same time there is growing consciousness to express that Upcountry Tamils are to be identified as separate Tamils nation minority in solving the ethnic question of the country. This was demonstrated at a discussion held by the 'intellectuals' of the Upcountry community comprising teachers, university professors, professionals and development workers in Hatton that demanded even a resolution to express that Upcountry Tamils should be identified as a separate national minority and problems faced by them should be addressed separately.

The research report has identified the causes and conditions that are responsible for the violent incidents in which behaviour of the upcountry Tamil community was seen to be aggressive. It is not clear as at what degree of intensity the depression and frustration leads to violent behaviour. While this research has not identified the relationship between degree of frustration and violence it has also not explored the level of human needs that the Upcountry Tamils have so far realised. It will be useful to study the realisation of needs and level of frustration. Therefore, it would not possible to clearly establish that lack of opportunities for basic human needs would enhance the aggressive behaviour of the community. This allows further research in the field of political violence in the Tea Plantation areas.
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Appendix 1

Check list for interviews

Interviews with persons directly involved

1. About the violent incident

1. When did the particular incident take place? Date and time?
2. What made you to go there?
3. Can you describe the incident?
4. According to you what would have been the total damages?
5. Were anybody killed? Injured? If so how many?
6. Do you think the incident could have been averted?
7. Give reasons for your answer.

2. Perception of the respondent

8. What do you think are the reasons for the violent incidents (giving few examples)?
9. Whom do you think are primarily responsible for the violent incidents?
10. Why do you think so?
11. What could have been done to prevent these incidents and what could be done in the future?
12. How do you think plantation community should win their rights? And why?

3. Personal information

13. Gender
14. Place of living: How long
15. Age
16. Ethnicity
17. Religion
18. Education level
19. Occupation and average monthly income
20. Place of work
21. Member of trade union/ political party/ youth movement
22. Positions held in any of the above
Interview schedule for persons working closely with community

1. About the incident

1. Do you know of any violent incidents in this locality? Or elsewhere?
2. Did you witness? If yes, in what capacity?
3. If no, where were you during this period?
4. What do you think are the reasons for the incidents? And why?

II. Characteristics of the violent incident(s)

6. Did you know of any weapons that were used? If yes what type of weapons they used?
7. How many you think were there on the attacking side?
8. Who/ what do you think was their main target? Why?
9. What can you tell about the damages?
10. Was anybody killed/ injured in the incident?
11. How long the fighting/tensions prevail?
12. Was there any incident(s) before this? Like a Political meeting, Incident(s) elsewhere (north east/ Colombo, Strike by workers in the estate, Campaigning, Visit by prominent politicians.

III. Perception of the respondents

13. Whom do you think should look after the interests of the plantation community? And why?
20. How do you think plantation community should win their rights? And why?
22. Do you think violence/revolt is one way to realise your demands? Explain.

IV. Personal details

24. Name (option)
25. Place of living How long
26. Age Sex
27. Ethnicity Religion
28. Education level
29. Occupation and average monthly income
30. Member of trade union/ political party/ youth movement